



Meadowbank

P.O. Box 87291, Meadowbank, Auckland, 1742. Email: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com

Secretary: Melda Brunette

www.u3ameadowbank.nz

NEWSLETTER – AUGUST / HERE–TURI–KŌKĀ 2024

Greetings from the Acting President

The July general meeting on the 15th was held in the first week of the school holidays, and was also on a rather wet day. Both factors probably affected our member attendance numbers, which were fewer than 100, but, very pleasingly, we also welcomed five potential new members and a number of visitors. We were treated to three absolutely wonderful presentations.

Shirley Grayson opened proceedings with a follow-up presentation from last month's speaker from Age Concern, introducing a fascinating lively form of strength training for older adults based on the app NymbL. If you are unfamiliar with it, check out <https://nymblscience.com/> She had us up and down in our chairs! The second mini-speaker(s) came from the French group They presented us with an outline of how the group works and, delightfully, also a fun quiz on our knowledge of French foods. (I am relieved to report, as a one-time, reasonably fluent, French speaker, that I got them right!).

The highlight of the meeting was unquestionably the main speaker, Sam Stubbs, co-founder of non-profit KiwiSaver fund Simplicity, established in 2016 to give what they saw as a better deal from the finance industry. He spoke most eloquently of his youth growing up a Westie, going to Kelston Boys High School when Graham Henry was headmaster. He was a very un-sporty schoolboy in a sports mad environment. Like Southern Cross Insurance, now in its 75 year and which was a model, Simplicity is a low-cost provider, which makes big donations to charity. It currently has 157,000 members.

Sam outlined a most interesting survey of inflation and its meaning in this country and demonstrated that the current situation is in fact little different from cyclic rises and falls in the past. For me, the most interesting part of his presentation was his historical analysis of the housing (crisis) industry, both past and present. Sam feels that New Zealanders love affair with housing as an investment needs to change. Apart from providing individual mortgages at better than market rates, Simplicity believes very strongly in investing in build-to-rent apartment blocks and has a number completed, underway or planned, all close to commuter centres, retail and employment opportunities. Sam believes we need to look to the European model of rent-for-life units – maybe even over several generations. The company owns and manages its buildings, its building standards are very high and costs are typically 35% lower than similar builds. They aim to complete around 11,000 units in the coming years. Sam's presentation was followed by some excellent questions and I am sure our members left the meeting with plenty to think about.

On other matters, I am very pleased to report that it looks as if issues plaguing the website in recent months are in hand and, with luck, in the next couple of months we should be up and running again with a new look and enhanced content. It has been rather embarrassing that enquiries from potential new members have gone unanswered because the Contact Us button was malfunctioning, and there have been other smaller problems. We look forward to Gay Williams returning from an amazing few months in France in a few weeks' time, and resuming the presidential role. I hope we have done her proud in her absence. Until next month.

Melda Brunette

Sam Stubbs of Simplicity, our July speaker, with acting president, Melda Brunette



Shirely Grayson has added an Addendum to June main speaker:

After last month's "Falls Prevention" presentation, Margaret Davidson and I both felt the need to finish what should have been included in that – but wasn't. I'm just reminding us all that falls ARE preventable.

Margaret and I are both physiotherapists and were hoping there would be more information forthcoming - that was new and that we didn't have.

I did ask the questions then regarding muscle-mass loss research which was not answered.

Recently I have been reading a book called OUTLIVE by Dr Peter Attia, a medical doctor in USA, who is adamant we have to aim for a long HEALTHSPAN, not necessarily a long LIFESPAN, on when and how to preserve what we have in our 20s and 30s. It is full of insights on how to maximize our immediate and long-term health.

We found an article in the Herald a week later on this very topic. We lose 1-2% of our muscle mass every year. By the age of 80, a sedentary person can have half the muscle – mass they did in their 20s!

This age-related decline is called sarcopenia, making daily life more of an effort, increases the risk of overall metabolic disease, and of course make falling so much easier!

Added to this, bone density declines at a similar rate every year, and this is accelerated at menopause, due to falling oestrogen levels, when women can lose 10-20% of their bone mass, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. I did grieve the loss of HRT in the 70s and 80s due to the research then which claimed to increase rates of both cancer, and heart disease.

Strength training is proven to stave off bone loss, and muscle weakness. It is best to start using your own weight as your resistance, and if possible, you need to do progressive resistance training, gradually increasing intensity.

Practice: Press-ups in sitting, (FEEL the muscle working behind arm) You need strength here to help get yourself off the floor if you fall.

Quads work, 'nose over knees' standing slowly, (FEEL front thigh and buttock muscles doing the work)

This is our attempt at shedding another ray of light on possibilities.

"Nymbi"

This is an App which is an evidence-based programme designed to engage both the physical acts of maintaining balance, as well as challenging our brains AT THE SAME time! We all know what multitasking was when we were younger – and now this is engaging similar parts of the brain to keep us "nimble" ie getting our body and brain to work together.

The aim is to do only 10 minutes per day

Being U3A members, we know you are all super intelligent, have enquiring brains who love a challenge, and this App does that --- albeit on a gentle scale, and can be adjusted to your own capabilities.

It is supported by ACC and is free to all New Zealanders over the age of 65.

The aim is to maintain a posture WHILE you answer easy (ish) random questions within a time fame.

Power point: Selection of NymbL exercises, getting audience to keep in posture at the same time as answering correct options presented

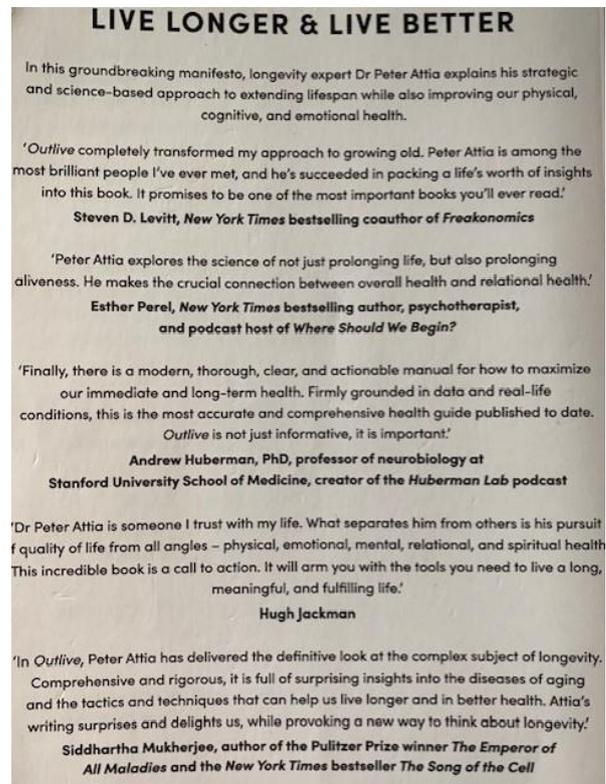
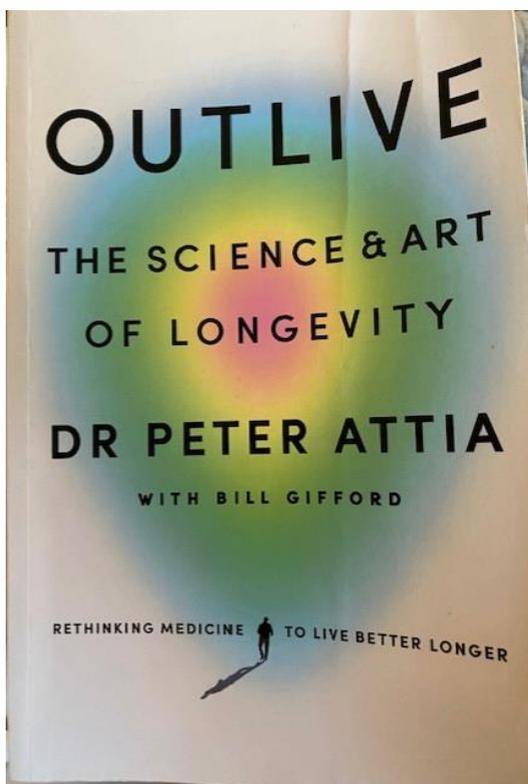
Finally: NymbL does require some personal data in order for the App to function, that some people may be unwilling to provide. Fortunately, it requires anyone signing up to approve each element of that data collection, so it is clear what information it is collecting without you needing to read the fine print.

Shirley Grayson mentioned and recommended this book at the July Meeting.

A book dedicated to engaging us in ways and means to teach us how to increase our health span --- not necessarily our life span, through tactics and techniques that can help us live longer and enjoy better health.

“Finally, there is a modern, thorough, clear and actionable manual for how to maximise our immediate and long-term health. Firmly grounded in data and real-life conditions, this is the most accurate and comprehensive health guide published to date.”

Andrew Huberman, PhD. Professor of Neurobiology at Stanford University School of Medicine, creator of the Huberman Lab podcast



Who's Who for Monday 19th August 2024 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: History Group

Mini speakers: Saints and Sinners (Jill Wilson); Do's and Don'ts of Op Shop Donating (Margaret Davidson)

Guest speaker: Gay Williams, Past President/Acting President and member of Meadowbank U3A since 2003. Gay will endeavour to outline the ever-changing scope of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This will include: (1) Common terms used when discussing AI; (2) Major AI chatbots and who produces them; (3) Key people who contributed/are contributing to AI developments; (4) How AI is already used in our everyday activities, and in business and science; (5) What generative AI currently produces; (6) The risks of AI; (7) The future of AI; (8) Learning more and references.

Who's Who for Monday 16th September 2024 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: French

Mini Speaker: Chansina Chin from IHC

Guest speaker: Marie-Ann Quin, Retired Midwife and author. Marie-Ann, visiting from near Te Awamutu, will talk about her life changing transition into retirement following her long career in midwifery, and her recent successful publication of her first novel 'Emerald to Pounamu', set in Aotearoa from the early 1840s onwards.

U3A Meadowbank Membership News – August 2024 Newsletter.

This damp, very chilly weather seems to have seeped into our U3A membership numbers, the total membership static on 239. Our optimal number is 300. But wait! At the July General Meeting six spritely, new, prospective members took away Application Forms and would not have been disappointed by Sam Stubb's presentation on 'Simplicity.' Guy Cowley will be welcomed at our next meeting and 'potentially' all the other folk. The Website Renewal project is hampering many people from contacting us for application details, as illustrated by the six new applicants. Hopefully it will be completed and back up by mid to late September.

Notices and pamphlets introducing us have been accepted for display at BUPA and OCEANIA Villages. WHILE THE WEBSITE IS DOWN, PLEASE COULD YOU RECOMMEND TO ANY FRIENDS INTERESTED IN OUR MEADOWBANK U3A, TO PHONE ME, (as below,) OR USE A COMMITTEE MEMBER'S EMAIL ADDRESS, AS FOUND ON THE LAST PAGE OF NOTICES IN OUR NEWSLETTERS. Sadly, we lost Fred Margetts to a rapidly progressive disease at the end of June. He and Glynis were/are very new members. We are hopeful that you will continue with us Glynis, and send sincere condolences.

Rosemary Lang, our longstanding website manager, has resigned membership due to her increasing business work. Rosemary has given us her time for many years while working fulltime and latterly recovering from significant fractures. We send our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to her.

Judith Stewart, Membership Coordinator: Ph 021 617 481: email u3ameadmemb@gmail.com

Whakataukī / Words of Wisdom

Time to enrich our days with some more words of wisdom from around the world!

The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable.

JK Galbraith

Nobody will ever win the battle of the sexes. There's too much fraternising with the enemy.

Henry Kissinger

On Youth

She cried out,
"Youth, where did you go?
Give me another chance,
I really miss you so."

And Youth called back,
"I'm still in your heart,
nothing can change that,
or keep us apart.

Your body may age,
but I never will,
I'm part of your spirit,
I'm ever so real.

When you giggle at something
or dance in the rain,
when you make
wishes on a dandelion,
remember you are the same
person you were decades ago,
I still live inside you
and go where you go.

Just don't stop looking
at life like a child,
with excitement and wonder,
and your spirit so wild.

*For Youth is not a phase

that simply goes away,
it is a gift you were given
and in your heart, it always stays"

Anonymous

Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 19th August 2024 at 10 am at St Chad's.

Don't forget to send us your U3A news to include in the next newsletter – we rely on your contributions

Deadline for SEPTEMBER 2024 newsletter items is TUESDAY 27th AUGUST 2024. Expect receipt confirmation

If you change your personal details, OR LEARN OF THE BEREAVEMENT OF A U3A MEMBER, please email the change to u3ameadmemb@gmail.com. Please include YOUR full name, physical address, phone number and email address.

TO CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS please use the correct gmail addresses below:

Secretary: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com

Membership Coordinator: u3ameadmemb@gmail.com

Treasurer: u3ameadtrea@gmail.com

Newsletter Coordinator: u3ameadnews@gmail.com

Feedback: u3ameadfeedback@gmail.com

Groups Coordinator: u3ameadconv@gmail.com

Something Amusing

Finally settling down to my vegan, gluten free, soy free, antibiotics free, raw, non GMO, organic, fat free, low carb meal!



**“When a clown
moves into a palace,
he doesn’t become a
king. The palace
becomes a circus.”**

— Turkish proverb

@readwithme4

Something Interesting

Recycling plastic is worse than useless

It’s time to acknowledge an uncomfortable truth, says Eve Schaub in The Washington Post: plastic can’t be recycled. “This seems counterintuitive.” We’ve been told for decades that the answer to the plastic-waste crisis is more, better recycling. “If only we sorted better!” If only we rinsed more thoroughly! But unlike paper, glass and metal, plastic “is not easily, efficiently turned into new products”. What passes for “recycling” is “costly, energy-intensive and toxic”, and needs the addition of a “shocking amount of new virgin plastic”: around 70%. Only about 5% of plastic actually gets recycled – or 30% at the most for certain varieties – compared to 68% for paper and cardboard.

Even if we could properly recycle plastic, we’d be foolish to do so. It’s made from “fossil fuels and toxic chemicals” – when you grind up, melt and re-form it, those thousands of dodgy chemicals “combine to make a Frankenstein material”. Chemicals that are not supposed to be there start showing up. You do not want your food wrapped in this stuff. Recycling plastic also adds to the crisis of microplastics, tiny particles that scientists are finding “everywhere they look”, including in human sperm and human brains. “A study of just one plastics recycling facility discovered that it might be washing three million pounds of microplastics into its wastewater every year.” We should treat plastic “like the toxic waste it is” and send it where it can hurt people least: landfill. Then we need to get to work on the real solution: “making a whole lot less of it”.

Quirk of history

In the Middle Ages, “European beer was hallucinogenic”, says Vinepair. Black henbane, a flower in the nightshade family, was widely used to flavour ale and enhance drunkenness by inducing “mild psychoactive effects”. Such was demand for the poisonous plant, known as *bilsenkraut* in what is now Germany, that whole gardens were dedicated to growing it. These *bilsenkraut* gardens inspired the names of several nearby settlements, including the Czech town of Pilsen – “birthplace of the beloved Pilsner”. *Prost!*