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## **NEWSLETTER – JANUARY / KOHITATEA 2025**

### **Greetings from the President**

Our November meeting was a busy one, with the AGM, a collection for the City Mission, a talk on AI from our Acting President and the usual post AGM get together. This was all enjoyed by fewer than expected members, about 120 of us in all.

At the AGM the following were elected (after a fierce struggle) with no nominations received for the executive positions of vice-president and treasurer.

**President: John Goodman**

**Secretary: Carole Misra**

**Committee: Margaret Davidson Lesley Elia, Jocelyn Goodman, Shirley Grayson  
Judi Higginson, Chris Hawley, Honor Houldsworth, Barbara Langguth, Maureen Putt,  
Agi Ryan, Judith Stewart, Rose Tait**

Unfortunately, since the AGM, Carole has resigned from the secretary role for personal reasons. We were sorry to receive and accept her resignation. Unfortunately this means that we need a new secretary.

Our constitution lists the executive officers of the organisation as president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Three of these positions are currently empty. I am not sure how we can continue with this situation. It is certainly unconstitutional. If nobody volunteers to fill these official positions the future of the organisation may be in doubt.

At the AGM, I have already thanked the three committee members who were stepping down from their roles, and I should do so again.

Firstly, Gay Williams who stepped into the role of acting president at a moment's notice and has filled the role with her usual calm efficiency.

Secondly, Melda Brunette who has been our secretary for many years and on whom we have all relied enormously for minutes, agendas and what to do at AGMs.

Last, but not least, Chris Hawley who has stepped down from the position of newsletter editor, a position he has occupied so well for eight years. He has been

succeeded by Lesley Elia.

In addition, Judith Stewart will be replaced as Membership Secretary by Jocelyn Goodman (no relation). Judith has been an extremely hardworking, helpful and conscientious Membership Secretary for a number of years and deserves her well earned rest.

We owe them all, and all other long serving committee members a huge debt of gratitude.

After the AGM, our retiring acting president, Gay Williams swapped hats and gave us an informative and, at times, frightening, overview of the past, recent developments and possible future of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Given the increasing influence of AI and its ubiquitous nature, even in our daily lives, this was a very timely introduction to what is bound to be a very major part of the future.

The audience followed closely and particularly enjoyed the more technical aspects of Gay's talk.

On behalf of the committee, I hope you have all had a happy Christmas and an enjoyable and relaxing holiday period.

**John Goodman**

**President**

**Who's Who for Monday 20 JANUARY 2025 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.**

**Greeters:** Short Walks

**Mini Speaker:** Dollars and Sense – Gay Williams (we will break for morning tea at 1020)

**Guest speaker:** James Duncan, Tramway Project Manager, MOTAT (10.50 -12.00)

**Infant Sparks**

“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. The story is brought to life with a large number of digital images, many rare and not seen previously, of this revolutionary form of street transport – this large vehicle that could propel itself along as if by magic, without horses or a steam engine in front!”

James grew up in Auckland during the 1960s and 1970s when Auckland was served by a large and extensive electric trolley bus system.

At age 15, he joined the Tramway Division at MOTAT and has now been an active volunteer member of the tramway for 48 years.

Most of his working life was spent in retail, but in 2011 he was asked to take on managing the operation of the new tramway down in Wynyard Quarter.

Today, together with this role and a full-time position at MOTAT looking after the infrastructure for the MOTAT Tramway, he says he is now like a pig in mud.

**Who's Who for Monday 17 FEBRUARY 2025 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.**

**Greeters: Science & Technology**

**Mini Speaker: Mid Walkers & Jazz**

**Guest speaker: Jacky McLaren, Borneo Bags Foundation (10.50 -12.00)**

**Jacky writes:**

Originally from the UK, I was invited to New Zealand to research mechanically harvested tomatoes for Watties in the '70s for a Masters Degree. I broke a few barriers as a female with Dalgety Stock and Station, then, as a solo mother, began my teaching career in Hawkes Bay.

Two decades of teaching in Brunei and trekking across Borneo brought me into direct contact with one of the last semi-nomadic tribes in Asia, the Penan. As palm oil plantations replace the rainforest, the changes they are confronted with are challenging; lack of food, shelter and medicines take their toll. The charities I helped to establish, the Penan Women Project and Helping Hands Penan, aim to educate and empower the women of the tribe. The women don't smoke or drink, and all funds raised are channelled back into the family. The men have no option but to work for the logging companies that are bulldozing their way of life.

**I have learned what is necessary for happiness. Not much.**

### **Walkers in Pink**

**Walkers group in (mostly) unexpectedly harmonized outfits!**



**Photo sent in by Prue Gillespie**

## Chris Hawley's travels in South-East Asia

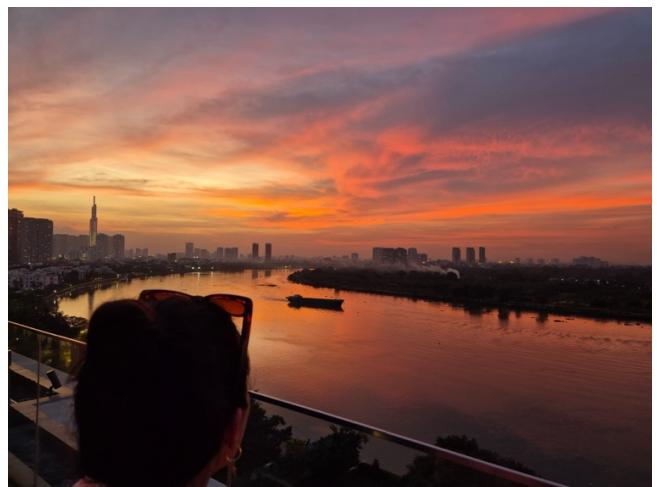
From 21 December: I'm now in Khon Kaen, northeast Thailand, where I worked and lived for 4 years, 1971-74! Lots of friends to catch up with here. They gave me a welcoming ceremony, traditional in Laos and northeast Thailand, yesterday. It was very moving!

Enjoy Christmas and the New Year!

See you in February

Chris





## SAD NEWS

**We are sorry to inform members of the death of Wally Hirsh, OBE, long-time member and former president of U3A Meadowbank.**

**Wally was born in Munchengladbach, Germany in 1936 and came to New Zealand with his family two years later. He grew up in Milton, Otago and was educated at Otago Boys' High School and Victoria University. After working as a teacher, lecturer and school principal Wally was appointed New Zealand's Race Relations Conciliator and a Human Rights Commissioner in 1985. Prior to this he was the foundation chair of the New Zealand Jewish Council 1980 - 1985.**

**Wally was a long standing convenor of the New Zealand History group and will be remembered particularly by many members who accompanied him and his wife Adele on the many tours they organised and led, both in New Zealand and overseas.**

**Wally was a powerful presence in Meadowbank U3A and will be sadly missed.**

**We extend our heartfelt sympathy to his wife Adele and their three children and grandchildren.**

## Push Back Ageism

From u3a UK ([u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk))

We are excited to announce our involvement in a news-style programme

***Redefining Later Living*** produced by *ITN Business*. Growing older is a privilege – and it can be a time of freedom, adventure and reinvention.

*Redefining Later Living* features organisations at the forefront of the sector, sharing case studies and contributions from industry thought leaders. It seeks to challenge the traditional connotations around ageing and explores ways to embrace later life, manage postmenopausal changes, and discover age-related medical developments.

Our CEO, Iain Cassidy, makes an appearance where he discusses the many benefits of non-formal learning and how we promote this within u3a.

You can find the full programme, including Iain's interview, on our website below. Please do share this widely with your members.

CLICK THE LINK BELOW.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/our-impact/pushback-ageism#rl1>

## Books of the month

Promoting and Celebrating the lives, interests, and stories of Women.

Sunday October 27 at the Raye Freedman Arts Centre in Epsom, saw an afternoon of women's words, wit and wisdom. Eleven NZ women authors each presented a chosen book to a sellout audience.

A fascinating list as always, hosted by Carol Bleu and her team, the audience is enriched by hearing authors share and explore their own writings.

The list is set out below.

AMMA - a debut novel by Saraid de Silva, exploring the lives of 3 generations of Sri Lankan women

TALIA - a debut poetry collection by Isla Hula, shortlisted for the 2024 Ockham NZ Book Awards

AT THE GRAND GLACIER HOTEL - by award winning novelist Laurence Fearnley

MADAM - a darkly comic memoir by Antonia Murphy on setting up an ethical escort agency. (Now an international TV series)

THE MIRES - a novel about the power of women by Tina Makereti

THE LADEN TABLE - Recipes reflecting the rich and diverse cultures of Ashia Ismail-Singer's family

THE MERMAID CHRONICLES - by Megan Dunn, a MER-moir exploring the world of mermaids

BIRD LIFE - by Anna Small , a novel set in Tokyo, using food to help deal with grief

SIX-LEGGED GHOSTS: THE INSECTS OF AOTEAROA - the author Lily Duval, enriching her stories with stunning paintings, helps us recognise the vital importance of insects in our ecosystem.

THE GRIMMELINGS - by Rachel King, celebrated children's author and daughter of Michael King, explores some magic and folklore set on a horse-trekking farm in the South Island.

ALL THAT WE KNOW - a novel by Shilo Kino outlines the difficulties for an angry young woman enraged by intergenerational trauma, learning Te Reo .

Available at The Women's Bookshop or at your local library.

Gay Williams

## Whakataukī / Words of Wisdom

### *Three Things to take forward into the New Year*

- 1. You're not always going to get closure. Healing is still possible, even without the answers or apologies you hoped for.*
- 2. Self-care matters: Prioritizing mental health and physical well-being isn't selfish – it's essential for living a fulfilled life.*
- 3. Letting go brings peace: holding on to grudges or the past only weighs you down; release what no longer serves you.*

**Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 20 January 2025 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 the FEBRUARY 2025 newsletter items is WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2025.  
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](mailto: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:**

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## Something Amusing

