U3A Meadowbank

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President: John Goodman **Secretary Vivianne Child**

www.u3ameadowbank.nz

NEWSLETTER – MARCH / POUTŪ-TE-RANGI 2026

Greetings from the President

Our February meeting was quite well attended, with 137 present. There were fewer visitors and new members than expected, which was a pity considering the quality of the speaker and the attractive and lively vibe. We will need to attract new members during the year and we do have room for more members and visitors at our meetings, so do please encourage your friends, neighbours, relations and people you meet to come along.

We had an interesting series of mini speakers. First of all, Margaret Davidson said could she have two minutes to remind us about Health and Safety, for which I am grateful, since it is not one of my strengths. Remember to add your emergency contact details to the back of your name badge. Then, Vivianne Child asked for two minutes to promote her new 500 group, which seems to be going very well. So far, so good. Then, instead of the advertised two mini speakers, we had three. I felt somewhat confused at this stage, but everyone else seemed to know what they were doing, so I just went with the flow, and it was good. Gay Williams told us about the Poetry group, Ruth Ruge, the new convenor, about Saints and Sinners and Anneka de Castro about Current Events. We all learned about lots of interesting things, Health and Safety, 500, Poetry, Saints and Sinners and Current Events, and still had plenty of time for a cup of tea (or coffee) and a chocolate biscuit (or two). What a good morning.

After morning tea we heard from our main speaker Dr Stephen Child, a consultant physician at Auckland City Hospital and Chief Medical Officer of the Southern Cross Health Society. Stephen gave us a fascinating talk, taking us through the field of health, with many interesting pieces of information. Many of us were struck by his insistence that alcohol is a system poison with no safe level which should be reserved for a treat, if drunk at all, which advice did not seem to be universally popular. His list of the main causes of mortality seemed to indicate that I could go on for ever, which also may not altogether please the membership, but another piece of advice for happiness is to lower your expectations to fit reality, which should help you to cope.

It may have become apparent that, in my present role, I am not the best at remembering what our speakers have said after the event, largely because it is difficult to see the presentation, and, as well, I have to spend time thinking about what I can say when thanking the speaker, which cannot be prepared in advance, and reminding myself to remember to ask for questions and to hand over the thank you card and koha. It also does not help with concentration or retention to have to go and fetch the foresaid card during the presentation. If anyone who takes notes would like, in future, to forward me a summary or the gist after the meeting, I would be grateful. Thank you.

Just before the meeting I learned that Norman Geary died on February 12th . Norman joined U3A Meadowbank in 2017 and was a valued member of the Money Matters interest group. Lyall Pacey wrote to me of Norman's vast financial experience, and depth of knowledge. Joan Duncan, the convenor of the group wrote "Norman was a very valued member of Money Matters group and his contribution was outstanding.

He was generous to share his time and knowledge on business, politics and financial matters in a quiet and unassuming manner. He will be sorely missed by our group".

So, remember, go easy on the booze, quit smoking, avoid fatty foods and stay active, all in moderation. We were staying with my son and daughter in law last weekend and they seem to have given up having anything to eat with their cups of tea. We visited a bakery and boy, I could have murdered that long jam and cream doughnut. I still dream about it.

John Goodman

February Meeting

Group convenors sharing information about their groups: Gay Williams (Poetry), Ruth Ruge (Saints and Sinners), Vivianne Child (500) and Anneka de Castro (Current Events)

A warm welcome from Jocelyn Goodman, our Membership Coordinator

Our February main speaker, Dr Stephen Child and (right) with Gill Naden

New Member

A big welcome to our new member, Pippa Clegg.
Best wishes for many enjoyable experiences at U3A Meadowbank!

Who's Who for Monday 16 MARCH 2026 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.
Greeters: Dollars & Sense
Mini Speaker: External Speaker, Joanne Hand, Development Manager at the Kidney Society. Topic: Kidney Disease
Guest Speaker: Jooles Clements, Auckland Zoo
Topic: Auckland Zoo – A wildlife science conservation organisation

Jooles Clements

Jooles Clements is Head of Brand Experience & Business Development at Auckland Zoo and has been part of the Zoo's leadership team since 2015. Prior to that he established the international cultural audience research agency, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's New Zealand and Australian operation, based in Auckland. He has worked with numerous high-profile galleries, museums and other mission-based organisations in New Zealand and Australia, helping them to better understand their audiences and leverage those insights to deliver meaningful outcomes.

Who's Who for Monday 20 APRIL 2026 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.
Greeters: TBA
Mini Speakers: TBA
Guest Speaker: Rob Campbell (CNZM)
Topic: Our place in the future world.: Who we are, where we live and where our interests lie

Group News

Create a study group today

Curious about a topic: want to explore it more?

Passionate about a topic?

Want to connect with other like-minded people?

We have made it easy for you

- **Write** a short description about the topic you are interested in, so that potential group members know what they might sign up for.

  - How many members is the ideal number in such a group?
  - How often you might like to meet - monthly, fortnightly, weekly?
  - Where you might like to meet - your home or elsewhere? We have numerous suggestions available.
  - What would call the group?
  - Reflect upon the content/activity/angle of the group and how might you attract participants

- **Contact** Vivianne Childs: vivchild@gmail.com or Miles Shepheard: milesshepheard@outlook.com Vivianne and Miles are very willing and available to help you construct your plan or further your ideas.
- We will help you advertise the group.
- **You don't need to be an expert to start a group**

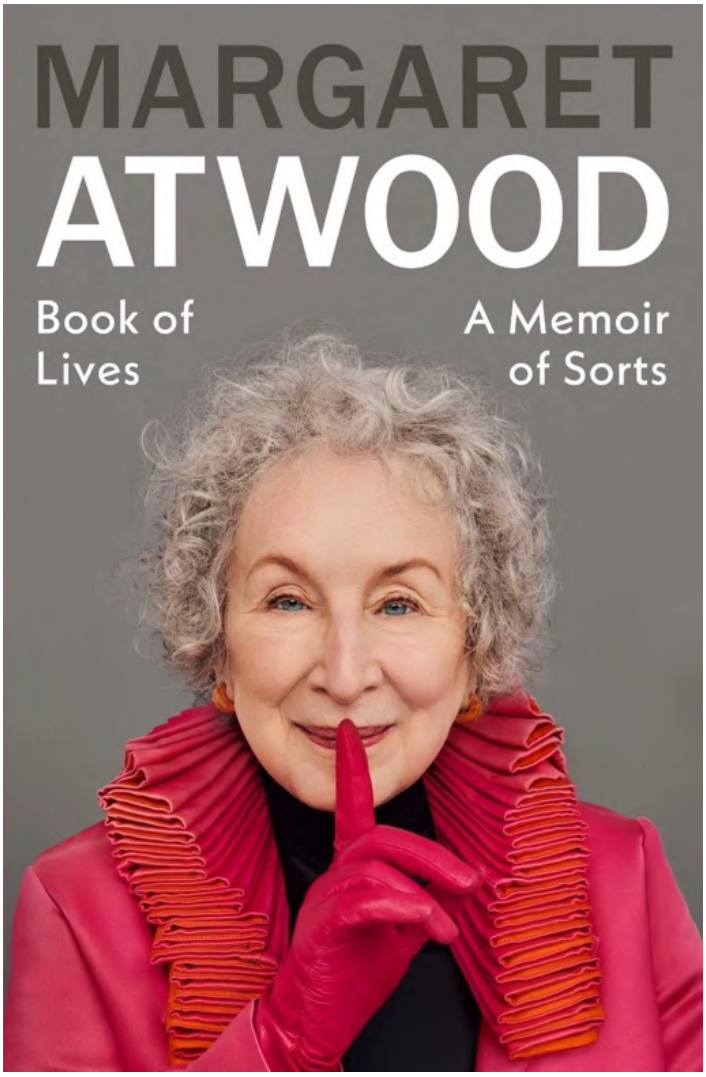
Foodie Group News

On Wednesday the newly enlarged Foodie Group boarded the Waiheke ferry, along with most of Auckland. Our aim was to visit Allpress Olive grove, for an olive oil tasting. All the olives are locally grown and processed. We had a challenging time choosing between the various oils. Did we prefer Fruity? Nutty? Peppery? Perhaps a blended oil? Naturally, all the oils were highest quality extra virgin. After much deliberation most of us were able to make a choice.

The setting was glorious and the sun shone all day, so it was a very pleasant occasion.

Olive oils safely investigated, on with the next task. For our March meeting we have to research and produce a recipe from one of the world's Easter traditions…

Books



I am a fan of Margaret Atwood - a “literary icon famous for ‘The Handmaids tale” which she references many times in this memoir. I have read many of her books, and attended her “In Conversation” presentation in Auckland in Feb 2020 celebrating the release of ‘The Testaments’ the sequel of ‘The Handmaids Tale’. I have listened to her YouTubes including interviews, book promotions, and educational series, and watched her many videos- regrettably not the one on a “Creative writing Master class “.

She has won the Booker Prize twice- in 2000 for the historical novel ‘The Blind Assassin’ and in 2019 for ‘The Testaments’.

This latest 624 page book which she describes as “a memoir of sorts” and was published in November 2025, covers her experiences over 85 years of her life, from childhood to older age.

She outlines fascinating insights on her childhood in Canada, time at Harvard, relationship with Graeme Gibson (her long term partner) and views on the oppression of women.

Gay Williams.

Events in Auckland

AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL 5 – 22 March 2026

Celebrate the best of arts and culture from local and international artists at **Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival.** From **5 to 22 March 2026**, discover shows, gatherings and performances - from riveting cabarets to family friendly activities, there's something for everyone at this much-anticipated festival. Below are our top picks from the vibrant lineup of things to do!

SHANGHAI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 19 – 20 Match 2026

In a historic collaboration of Eastern and Western traditions, China's prestigious Shanghai Symphony Orchestra brings two premium concerts to the Festival as part of its landmark Australasian–Southeast Asian tour.

THEATRE - COMING SOON

GASLIGHT (TheatreWorks)
Patrick Hamilton's classic Victorian thriller, first produced in 1935, gave rise to the term 'gaslighting' and remains a gripping psychological drama 91 years later. Jack and Bella Manningham are a seemingly respectable couple whose elegant home hides a chilling secret. Behind closed doors, Jack is methodically manipulating his wife, convincing her that she is losing her mind. His cruel mind games leave Bella terrified and doubting her own sanity until one night, when a strange man appears at the door and years of secrets are revealed.
Fri 13th March to Sat 28th March 2026 at TheatreWorks, Birkenhead
Tickets from https://www.trybooking.com/nz/BARE

EVERY BRILLIANT THING (The Dolphin Theatre)
The Narrator begins by telling a story of when, at seven-years old, they were taken to see their mother in the hospital after her first attempt to take her own life. Afterwards, The Narrator begins a list. A list of everything brilliant about the world. Everything worth living for. The story explores depression and hope, uncertainty and change, confusion and joy, heartbreak and anger, relationships and solitude, risk and resistance, guilt and forgiveness. Throughout, The Narrator interacts with audience members to tell about life with their mother's depression as a backdrop, including the effect it has had on their life and relationships.
Wed 25th March to Sun 29th March 2026 at The Dolphin Theatre, Onehunga
Tickets from https://nz.patronbase.com/_DolphinTheatre/Productions/26S1/Performances

STONES IN HIS POCKETS (Waiheke On Stage)
Following a sold out run at Artworks Theatre in 2025, Waiheke On Stage is transferring Stones in His Pockets to The Loft at Q Theatre. Winner of two Olivier awards, performed in the West End and Broadway. A fast-paced dramatic comedy set in a small community in rural Ireland where filming of a Hollywood movie takes over the town. The local extras become the stars and the stars become extras. A story of friendship, sorrow, laughter and ultimately hope.
Thu 26th March to Sat 28th March 2026 at The Loft, Q Theatre, Auckland City
Tickets from https://www.iticket.co.nz/events/2026/mar/stones-in-his-pockets

U3A Meadowbank Meetings March 2026

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WEEK 1	2	3 French 9:45 am	4 Time poor walkers 9 am Current Events 10 am Memoir writing 2 pm	5 Ramblers 10 am	6 Jazz 10 am
WEEK 2	9 New Zealand History 10 am Science & Technology 10:15	10 Shared Reading 1 10 am Art History 1:30 Book club 1:30	11 Time poor Walkers 9 am Literature 10 am 500 10 am History 10:30 am	12 Dollars and Sense 10 am Ramblers 10 am Bridge 1:30 pm	13
WEEK 3	16 Main Meeting 10 am Auckland Zoo Mini speaker – Joanne Hand, Kidney Society	17 French 9:45 am	18 Time poor walkers 9 am Saints and Sinners 10 am Shared Reading 2 1:30 pm Music 2 pm	19 Short walks 9:15 am Poetry 10 am Ramblers 10 am Modern American Literature 2 pm	20
WEEK 4	23	24 Money matters 10 am	25 Time poor walkers 9 am Foodie Group 10 am Classic films 1 7 pm	26 Ramblers 10 am Bridge 1:30 pm Books & Authors 1:45 pm	27 Classic films 2 7 pm
WEEK 5	30	31 Wine studies 2 pm			

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.

If a member you know is having trouble with transport to U3A meetings, please let a member of the committee know. We may be able to help.

TO CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS please use the gmail addresses below:

Secretary: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com	Membership Coordinator: u3ameadmemb@gmail.com
Treasurer: u3ameadtrea@gmail.com	Newsletter Coordinator: u3ameadnews@gmail.com
President: u3ameadpres@gmail.com	Groups Coordinator: u3ameadconv@gmail.com

Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 16 March at 10 am at St Chad's

Don't forget to send in your U3A news to include in the next newsletter. We rely on your contributions.
Deadline for the APRIL newsletter items is THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026. Expect receipt confirmation.