



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

U3A Port Hills Inc

Website: www.u3aporthills.org.nz

Bank Account Number: 38-90060413325-00

Port Hills U3A Newsletter March 2024



Next Meeting: **Wednesday, 6th March**

Venue: St Martin's Presbyterian Church, 43 St Martins Road, St Martins

9:30 Morning tea and socialising

10:00 Speaker: Dr John Geddes Bone Health in Older Persons

Dr John Geddes is an ortho-geriatrician in Christchurch. He is the clinical lead for the Canterbury Fracture Liaison service, which aims to decrease osteoporotic fractures through promotion of bone treatments and lifestyle modification. He also leads the Older People Under Surgeons (OPUS) service at Christchurch hospital. This service provides pre-operative high risk and decision making clinic as well as ward based follow-up and reviews. He is currently chair of the NZ Geriatric Medicine advanced training committee, is mid-way through his perioperative masters, and is on more committees than he would like to be. His interests include perioperative frailty, osteoporosis, falls, and medical education. In his spare time, he realises that he has no spare time!

11:00 Monthly Meeting





Membership Subs

Membership subs for 2024 are due now. The annual sub is \$30 per person. There are two ways to pay your sub:

1. You can make an internet payment to our bank account: **38-90060413325-00**. Please write your name in the reference box so we can know who is making the payment.
or
2. Pay by cash at the monthly meeting.

Thank you,
Mureen Turfrey, Treasurer, Port Hills U3A



A Temporary Moratorium on Accepting New Members

The membership of the Port Hills U3A has been growing and growing – we must be doing something right ! It is wonderful that so many adults in our community are interested in life-long learning and are taking an active role in social participation. Our special interest group membership is also increasing – so good to see. And, in our ‘History of Espionage’ study group there are now 17 people, and we now must consider splitting the single group into two groups. The number of members attending our monthly meeting has also been increasing. Our membership is now approaching 220.

It is so lovely to see all this happening, but it does create a wee problem. Our meeting room is not large enough to accommodate many more members, and we do not have enough chairs if more people start to attend our monthly meetings.

Over the past few months, the committee has been watching the membership numbers grow, but have been hesitant to start a wait list. Now we know that action must be taken. At the last committee meeting we decided to have a temporary moratorium on membership until we see how many people pay their subs in March and April. By the end of April, we will know better how many members we still have, and then hopefully we can open the doors to new members again.



Study Groups 2024 Update

The History of Espionage Group

Hi there everyone, Paul Evans here.

Just a quick note to everyone in the History of Espionage group.

This course has proved very popular with our Port Hills members, with seventeen members already enrolled.

Whilst this is good news, we may find that this number proves too large for good discussions where we can each contribute, and also for us all to fit comfortably in someone's house.

So, I suggest we have a brief get-together after the next U3A meeting on Wednesday 6th March to discuss this and explore if we need to split into two groups. This will be before our first planned meeting at Terry's house on Monday March 11th.

Regards

Paul

Tel: 022 655 9544

The Antarctic Study Group

The study groups for the History of Espionage and the Romans have been formed and are underway.

However, the Antarctic group has not had sufficient numbers to make it viable. It is not too late to start this group so if there are any members who are interested, we will ask you to get together after our next meeting on Wednesday.

The Botany Interest Group

The Botany group visited Deb Kendall's lovely native garden.



**Paula, Joy, and Deb
by a magnificent tree.**



**A peaceful path through
the native garden**

The Port Hills U3A Committee sent the following letter to Fire and Emergency New Zealand to acknowledge the outstanding job they did during the Port Hills 2024 February fires



To the Women and Men of the Fire and Emergency NZ Team

The Port Hills University of the Third Age (U3A) would like to thank the Fire and Emergency NZ team, along with the other first responder support groups in your heroic actions fighting the Port Hills fire in February 2024. Your exceptional skills in fighting fires on the Port Hills have saved many families from losing their homes, their livelihoods, and most importantly, you have saved lives.

We can only imagine how difficult and exhausting it must have been to fight a widespread fire in the dangerous heat being produced by the fires, along with the existing hot weather and strong winds, all the time wearing the heavy protective clothes and carrying the heavy gear for hours and hours.

We extend our sincere gratitude and admiration to the whole FENZ Team.



A Letter from a Port Hills Resident

I am a pensioner who has lived in the Port Hills area for all my life, and have witnessed hill fire after hill fire that was fuelled by planted pine trees.

In the 2017 Port Hills fire, 95% of the native trees planted in areas around the TV tower, Victoria Park and over on the Governors Bay side, did not burn. Some burned or singed on the edges of native reserves, but almost all of them started to regenerate after 6 months. The fire jumped over, or went around the native plants. The area that burnt most severely was the 600+ hectares of pine trees.

Pine trees planted on the Port Hills have become a fire risk.

How many times do we have to sit and watch this environmental disaster where homes are destroyed, personal keepsakes and heritage memories are gone, with breathing distress to children, the elderly and those with breathing issues. To say nothing of the poison from pine tree sap dripping into the land and the degrading slash mess that is left in valleys after the pine trees are harvested, and the erosion it causes. Felling materials flood into and harm our rivers.

Photos and text printed with the permission of Karen Whitla,
Committee Member of the Cashmere Stream Care Group.



Government Rates Rebate Scheme

Are you eligible for a rates rebate?

The following article is copied from the Seniors Newsletter, a publication of the Office for Seniors, Te Tari Kaumatua

The Rates Rebate Scheme is a partial refund for people who pay rates to their council. It exists to provide financial relief for low-income New Zealanders owning their own home, including those living in retirement villages.

If you're eligible, you have until 30 June this year to apply to your local council.

The maximum rebate this year is \$750, and the income abatement threshold increased to \$30,100, aiming to help up to 100,000 low-income homeowners pay rates to their local council.

To be eligible you must be living in your own home since 1 July of the current financial year and be listed as the ratepayer in the council's Rating Information Database.

If you own more than one property, you can't claim rates rebate for other properties, even if they're in a different council area.

You can't apply for a rebate if your property is not your usual place of residence or is mainly used for commercial activities such as farming, business, or is a rental property or holiday home.

Most retirement village residents, including people who live under a licence to occupy agreement, can apply for a rates rebate. In your application, you must also complete the retirement village resident's declaration form.

If your name is not on the rates bill, you can still apply if you live in an owner occupier flat such as a company share flat or apartment. Your application must also include the company share apartment declaration form.

Use the [Rates Rebate Calculator](#) to find out if you're eligible. You will need to provide the total rates you will pay for the current rating year (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024) and the number of dependents living with you on 1 July last year.

Click below to **apply**

[Learn more](#)



Contributions and Donations

Thanks to our members for their continued support to the Hoon Hay Foodbank and knitting wool community projects.

Foodbanks

We are continuing to collect cans and/or packaged food, including baby food, as well as fresh food such as fruits and vegetables at our monthly meeting.

Please place your contributions in the boxes in the entrance foyer.
Thanks for your contributions.



December food collection

Knitting Wool

The wool is used by volunteer knitters to crochet blankets or knit jerseys for pre-schoolers. Finished items are mainly given to the Plunket Outreach programme, Salvation Army programme and other charities as needed. Please contact Naida Murray on 338 5030 if you have any questions, or check at our monthly meeting.

Helene Mautner
for the Port Hills U3A Committee
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