



Learning is forever WARKWORTH

Bi-monthly Bulletin — May 2023

<https://www.u3a.co.nz/warkworth>

FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Whaowhia te kete matauranga
Fill the basket of knowledge*

Despite the inclement weather over recent months, Miriam and I have enjoyed a couple of major walks. On a lovely autumn day, we traversed the Tawharanui 9 km South Coast Track and more recently the Orewa estuary 7.6 km walkway. We are blessed with Regional Parks within easy reach, including Scandretts, Atui Farm Park, Wenderholm, and Shakespeare, all with interesting walks and abundant bird life.

Our Interest Groups keep providing stimulating programmes and I've been particularly impressed with the introduction of the Geology programme superbly led by Willo Stear.

Our mid-winter luncheon is in the advanced planning phase and we have some great entertainment from The Muddies and superb speakers. Watch this space!! This will be a splendid opportunity for members to invite friends and neighbours as part of our recruitment drive.

In the meantime, keep warm and stay safe.

Nga mihi

Ken Cutforth, President

DIARY DATES

In addition to Interest Group meetings, others open to all members of Warkworth U3A are:-

Fri 19th May 2.00 p.m. Be Soul, 12 Gumfield Drive.
Talk by Professor Michael Witbrock
Artificial Intelligence – The Future of Thinking
hosted by the Science and Climate Group.

Monday 12th June – Midwinter General Meeting
and luncheon at 10:30 a.m. at Omaha Golf club.
Cost is \$30 per person. There will be a cash bar.

Saturday 29th July – u3a Auckland Network
9:30 – 14:30, 18 Allright Place, Mount Wellington
Celebrating u3a in action – 2023.
<https://u3auckland.net/>

Monday 14th August – General Meeting in the
Warkworth Bridge Club, Alnwick Street.

NEW MEMBERS

Warkworth U3A welcomes:

Marcia Browne, Joy Buckby, Marion Howie,
Greg Judkins, Josephine Murphy, Nicholas Scott,
Marilyn Theobald and Ivor Wilkins.

CATS in the Town Hall



On May 12th to 14th the Warkworth Town hall will host Glass Ceiling Arts Collective's production of the young person's version of Andrew Lloyd Webbers' show CATS.

WHITHER THE WEATHER?

It seems that almost daily the news media report weather-related disasters occurring with what seems increasing frequency. Many are overseas, but we too are now experiencing them in Aotearoa. They include drought-linked bush fires, tornados, and floods. They are often recorded as larger and



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more powerful than anything measured here before. The recent floods here in Auckland and in Hawkes Bay are dramatic examples of the way the global climate is changing.

A month's rain falling in just a few hours suggests that events termed "1 in 250-years" are now a lot more frequent. Our storm water systems may not have been designed to accommodate such volumes.

Learnings from previous experience play a large part in establishing response plans and understanding how events might develop. We have discovered that here in the Rodney area we are as likely to receive heavy rain events as any other place, which means that planning for those high volumes needs to be front of mind in the early stages of our regional development. This is particularly important as rural land is developed for housing, with large volumes of stormwater captured on sealed roads, footpaths, and roofs.

As homeowners and occupiers there are some basic things which we can do to help in reducing possible damage from flooding: -

- Ensuring that gutters and downpipes are sound and kept clear and free flowing.
- Ensuring ground level drains on your property are kept free of accumulated debris and can provide easy drainage of surface water.
- Identify places on your property where water might 'pool' and try to ensure adequate drainage. This would include below street level garages and under-house spaces.
- Reporting blocked or obscured street drains to the local council, (or clear them yourself if possible).
- Chatting with your neighbours about how you would manage in a major storm event.
- Visiting the Auckland Council site "Auckland's Hazard Viewer" to check out flood data and other risk issues:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=81aa3de13b114be9b529018ee3c649c8>

As the recent floods here have demonstrated, when severe weather events occur, existing infrastructure and resources can soon be overwhelmed or rendered useless, e.g. using a car when the road has become a river, or the loss of electrical power needed to drive pumps.

As for all emergency situations: **Be Prepared.**

Jim Flewitt

Warkworth Community Resilience Group.

REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS

Book Reading Group

A fascinating and varied selection of books is discussed at our monthly meetings.



In March our books included a biography of actor Robin Williams a very talented but sad man and "Pull No Punches" the autobiography of Judith Collins, upfront and honest. Authors discussed included Jodi Piccolt, Sebastian Faulks and Fiona Kidman.

Meetings are always informative and full of surprises with members' reading lists growing each month!

Pam Ellender

Current Affairs Group

The March meeting was attended by seven members who enjoyed a very topical presentation



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by respected agricultural journalist Alan Barber from Point Wells. Alan is a former chairman of the Warkworth A&P Association, and he is very well informed on local and national agricultural matters.

He spoke on global warming, its effect on agriculture and how agriculture can adapt to meet the necessary constraints so that our agricultural outputs can continue to drive the NZ economy whilst still meeting most of the requirements desired by global warming outputs. This was a comprehensive and worthwhile address and was followed by several searching questions relating to regenerative farming, fertilizer application, stock number constraints, and likely forestry implications.

Members presentations followed, and included:

- Possibility of large-scale wind farms off the Taranaki Coast.
- Women's anger and recent disruption of a rally designed to support women's rights.
- Enduring autocracies. The lust for hanging on to power, exhibited by USA, Israel and Turkey.

For April Simon Morris and Tania Wood from Warkworth Volunteer Fire Brigade told us about their role in the Warkworth district. It was very interesting to learn about the variety of callouts they receive, also about the technology that they are now able to employ in serving the community. Their service is still voluntary, and they can always cope with new recruits to assist in their operations. Not hearing sirens at night does not mean that there are no emergencies to attend. Direct contact with volunteers via cell phones or personal devices ensures that Warkworth remains undisturbed. Thank you very much, Simon and Tania.

Members presentations followed, and included:

- Many issues associated with coastal and ocean-located wind turbines.
- Internationally famous New Zealand scientist Professor Dame Margaret Brimble who has recently had a drug named Trifinitide accepted

for phase three trials for treatment of Rett Syndrome and Fragile X syndrome.

- Political parties' agricultural policies.
- Auckland City Council efforts to minimise rate increases.

Alan von Tunzelman



Geology Group

Last week, the newly formed Geology Group completed its third session of monthly presentations by convenor, Dr Willo Stear, attended by some 30 participants.

The initial series of talks were designed to introduce participants to geological time and the stratigraphic column, plate tectonics and the making and breaking of continents through geological time, rock types and the rock forming cycle, depositional basins and volcanic arcs, the ancient continent of Gondwana and when and how the now submerged continental land mass of Zealandia broke away from it – including what are now New Zealand's two islands.

Willo's illustrated presentations have focussed the participants' attention on the mechanisms of plate collision tectonics and how these have moulded the geology of New Zealand over the past 50 million years. Emphasis was placed on New Zealand's



basement or foundation rocks and how the complex surface geology of its two islands can be viewed as “old and wrinkled in the south and young and fiery in the north”. In addition to telling the story of New Zealand’s geological evolution over this long period, Willo also explained the sculpturing by ice and volcanic eruption of some of New Zealand’s iconic landscapes in the more recent past.

Located as it is at the southern end of the Pacific Ring of Fire and straddling an active plate collision zone, New Zealand is continuously, albeit slowly, moving and shaking in response to underlying crustal pressures and shifts. Examples of the geological products of crustal uplift, depression and shifting of gigantic slabs of rock in the North Island, and Northland in particular, were discussed as a prelude to the next session on 26 May.

In Willo’s absence, this presentation will be delivered by Dr Ian Smith (formerly professor of geology at Auckland University) who will describe the geology of Northland, including the Mahurangi region, in more detail. This will prepare the Group for the first planned field trip to view the geological contact relationships between the basement greywacke rocks and the younger overlying Waitemata Sandstones – the layered rocks which dominate the coastal cliffs and road cutting exposures in Auckland and northwards to Wellsford.

Willo Stear

Science and Climate Group

The speaker at our May meeting will be Professor Michael Witbrock from the School of Computer Science, University of Auckland

Artificial Intelligence (AI) The Future of Thinking

We humans have always sought ways to improve our thinking abilities, from the development of language and writing to the invention of computers and the rise of artificial intelligence.

Recently, strong AI systems have been made available to the public in the form of language

models like ChatGPT or image models like midjournal and Dall-e.

In this talk, we will explore the fascinating history of these upgrades and how they have paved the way for the development of AI. We will also briefly discuss the potential for brain-computer interfaces to revolutionize the way we interact with this technology.

Get ready to explore the future of thinking and the exciting possibilities of AI.

Venue: Be Soul - 12 Gumfield Drive, Warkworth
Date and time: Friday 19th May, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Ralph Cooney

The Silver Oaks SCD Club and the Ranfurly SCD Club meet on a Friday morning at 10:00 a.m. and Monday evening at 7.00.p.m. respectively in the Old Masonic Hall on Baxter Street for 2 hours to learn the traditions of Scottish Country Dancing, which is a fun way of getting and staying fit in a social setting.

For further details contact Steve or Elaine Goldthorpe (0274 849764 or 0274 320032) or Carolyn Cooper (09 425 7690).

