



University of the Third Age
The Age of Active Retirement: People Exchanging Knowledge

Newsletter August 2025

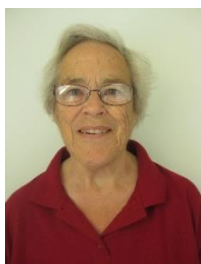
Our next meeting will be on Monday 18th August 2025 at Mt Pleasant Community Centre, 3 McCormacks Bay Road, Christchurch.

10-10.20am: Social time in the foyer.

Meeting starts in the main hall at 10.30am.

Our guest speaker is Anthony Bush talking on “Movement is Medicine”, the importance of movement and exercise on pain, happiness, health and longevity. Antony is a ‘movement activist’ who has been interviewed and featured on *Radio NZ* and *TVNZ Seven Sharp*, *The Listener* and *The NZ Herald*. A previous *NZ Winter Olympic Team Physiotherapist*, he has treated Olympic gold medallist rowers, alpine skiers, World Championship Triathletes and members of the *All Blacks*. He has a special interest in how movement and strength impact our health and wellness. He is a passionate advocate for getting people away from their smartphones and computer screens and moving about in the great outdoors. He recently launched his book *The Back Fix* in New Zealand bookstores, copies of which will be available at the meeting.

Message from the President



Another wintry month has gone by but with some lovely sunny days too. With camellias and bulbs flowering we can see that Spring is definitely on the way.

Several ideas for new Interest Groups have emerged, and if you have others, please let us know. At the next meeting there will be sign-up sheets for these and after that we will be able to see which

have enough interested people to start them.

I hope you have marked your diaries with the talk by David Rogers on Monday 29th September at 10.30. It will be a presentation of his photos of early Scott Base and Antarctica. This will be a similar format to Jim Wilson's talk with a koha/donation on entry.
Pat Whitman

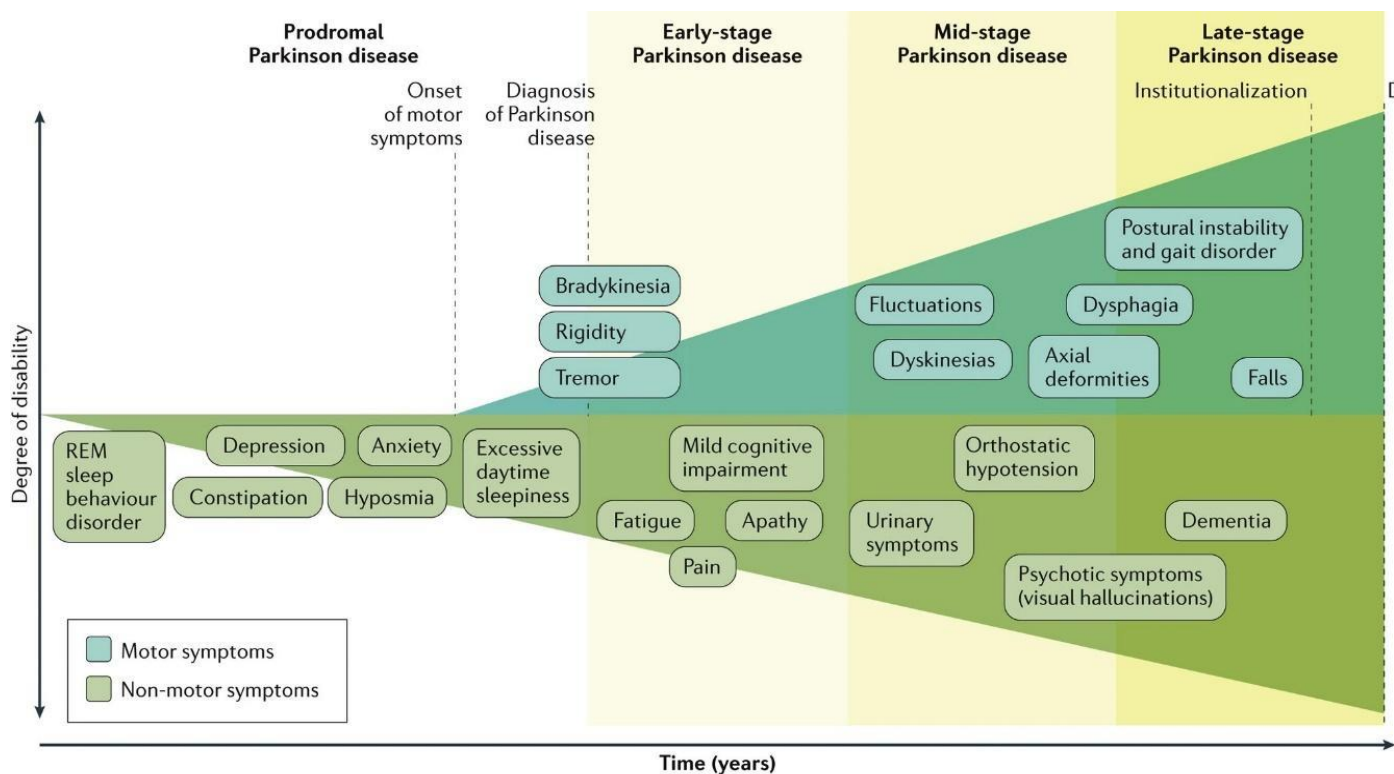
Our Previous Meeting

21st July 2025

Parkinson's Disease with speaker Toni Pitcher

Melissa Haberfeld from the Medical Research Foundation explained their work in providing grants to researchers in Christchurch for the last 65 years. Last year they gave \$1½ million in grants from \$6,000 to \$220,000 for research.

Toni is a researcher on brain function especially to do with Parkinson's disease. This diagram shows its development and distinguishes between motor and non-motor functions. For a diagnosis, bradykinesia, (slow movements), rigidity and tremor are symptoms, though 30% have no tremor. Hyposmia is a reduced smelling ability. Dyskinesias is jerky movements, and orthostatic hypotension is a drop in blood pressure when you stand up.



Causes of the disease are death of dopamine producing neurons in the brain. Movement is affected if circuits in the brain are interrupted. Symptoms commonly start at about age 65 and cases diagnosed peak at 85 and then decline, with more men than women affected. Exposure to pesticides could be a link and genetics too. Early treatment is most effective,

and exercise helps; smoking and alcohol don't. There are about 14,000 cases in NZ with 2,000 new ones each year.

Toni finished with pictures of famous people with Parkinson's, Billy Connolly, John Paul II, Dave Dobbin, Muhammed Ali, John Walker, Alan Alda and others, so you are in good company if you have it.

INTEREST GROUP UPDATES



Art Appreciation

Refreshed at Under the Red Verandah our July outing was a short drive to PG Gallery 192 in the villa at 192 Bealey Avenue to see Graham Bennett's "Precipice" 2024 works from his residency in Japan originally scheduled for 2020 but postponed because of Covid. Bennett explores ideas on our "blindness to our global

fragility especially pending environmental catastrophe " through Japanese traditional construction methods combining strength and delicacy. His sustainable materials include Awagami bamboo paper and Kakishibu dye made from fermenting green persimmons and used to dye fabric and waterproof and stain paper and wood.(see photo Fracture 2-PRECIPICE) and close up photo of

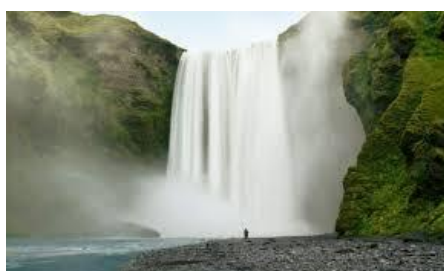


bamboo "pins" used instead of metal nails. Two paintings "A spiral of Unknowing" and "On the Brink" feature acrylic Kakishibu dye on Awagami bamboo paper.

Botany/Geology Group

Iceland

Margaret and her husband have had 3 trips to Iceland. The scenery is amazing with colourful rhyolite mountains, spectacular waterfalls and glaciers. She told us the



country has a wide rift valley across the centre where the North American tectonic plate meets the Eurasian one, giving an area of thermal instability. Eruptions are frequent and the lava forms interesting shapes of rock or columns of basalt as it cools. Volcanic ash can be a problem for air travel and for farmers when it coats their fields. Thermal heating is widely used and is piped under the streets, so they

remain clear of ice and snow in winter. 90% of heating comes from hot springs and some is ducted as far as 64km starting at 97° and still being 78° at the end of the journey. The population is about the same as Christchurch and swimming is a popular activity.

We also had a talk from Dr Charles Merfield on Weeds.

Dr Merfield started his talk with a diagram showing the effects that current human activities

have on our planet. There were nine areas of interest, and we need to improve our way of doing things, especially farming, to mitigate the bad results and avoid major crises. He then spent time trying to define a weed, because what one person sees as something bad is often good for someone else. He used puha as an example. Basically it is a plant in the wrong place which causes harm. For us as gardeners, he said we should treat our gardens as an ecosystem, avoid herbicides and insecticides and use less compost as good plant root systems are the very best soil improvers.

Cycle group - due to inclement weather and cycle group members being away, the July cycle ride was cancelled and we have decided to make the September ride our next one. Contact Jane Cowan-Harris at janechbythesea@gmail.com if you're interested on joining us then.

Garden Group Report

In July the Garden Group visited Fern Factor, a dedicated fern producing nursery in Templeton. A fascinating tour of the premises where we saw the development of the



ferns from start to finish. Start is the cleaning of the underside of a frond with spores. They are then packeted up and refrigerated. They are sprayed onto trays which are sealed and placed in a special room with controlled water and LED lighting. The tiny plants are then tweezered out and replanted into very small plug pots for growing on. Fern Factor has an extensive network of greenhouses in which various fern varieties are harden off.

Each greenhouse has a complex system of machines to regulate humidity, fogging and misting. The nursery supplies plants to the City Council, garden centres and contractors around the country.



Adventures in Travel

Travel to the Red Centre.

Sunrise over Uluru and sunset at Kings Canyon were the highlights of our adventure into the centre of Australia. The colours of the rocks came to life at that time. The bright red colour is so different from many landscapes.

We were fortunate to visit after rainfall so there was much more green vegetation than normal. Uluru is now a bustling tourist centre with 1200 people living there catering to 30,000 visitors a year. So different now with even its own airport, from when I visited over 50 years ago as there was only a camping ground.



Yulara, the resort, is owned by Indigenous people and employs mostly indigenous people who are trained in hotel management. Indigenous culture and art are flourishing.

Kata Tjuta, formally called the Olgas, are to many of us, more spectacular than Uluru. Thirty-six domes rise dramatically out of the earth. Visitors can walk between



the domes for a close-up view of the colours as they change during the day.

Simpsons Gap and Standley Chasm are side trips from Alice Springs and are spectacular with deep chasms and sheer vertical walls. Distances here are enormous – 461 km between Uluru and Alice Springs when most of us imagine they are just down the road from each other. It was a very enjoyable week in the Centre.

History Group

What a delightful morning we had today. The sun shone and this weather change was most welcome for us all.

We began with morning tea and a chat before moving across the pathway and into the delightful, old wooden building that is the Anglican Church of St Marys in the Heathcote



Valley. Alistair McKerchar (a U3A member) was our speaker, who shared lots of information about the church and the valley in the early days.

Some things have changed in the last few years at St Marys. Gone are the big wooden pews, now replaced by modern red chairs. Gone is the big pine plantation, replaced by four lovely new houses, two of which are owned by St Marys. Gone is the community garden, now growing across the street in Bridle Pass Road. But retained is the lovely character and feeling of the very old wooden building, long ago removed from Bridle Pass Road. Its lovely stained glass windows remain, and the church feels full of character with its tall, dark beams and high raised ceiling. Retained also is a much smaller pine plantation, kept for providing Christmas trees year after year.



smaller pine trees year after year

CLUB DIRECTORY

Pat Whitman	President	patwandpate@gmail.com	3843475
Sue Beardsley	Treasurer	sueandgrant21@gmail.com	0274134186
Jane Cowan-Harris	Newsletter	janechbythesea@gmail.com	
0210435342			
Anne Fahey	Website	afahey8@gmail.com	021 111 5711
Mary Lynch	Interest Groups	granmarylynch12@gmail.com	3849664
Helen Peate	Meeting 'Greeter'	helens@xtra.co.nz	0272949641
Katherine Peet		kmpeet@gmail.com	3841281
Lyn Russell	Secretary/Speakers	nylrus1951@gmail.com	0212388788
Christine Toner	Membership	christine@toner.co.nz	0274339598

U3A Pegasus email address: u3apegasus@protonmail.com

INTEREST GROUP DETAILS

Below is the list of U3A Pegasus Interest Groups, their convenors and contact details. If you would like to join any of the groups, please contact the convenor

ADVENTURES IN TRAVEL	Meets monthly in members' homes on 1 st Tuesday of the month at 3pm in members' homes. Contact Lyn Russell 021 2388 788 Email: nylrus1951@gmail.com
ART APPRECIATION	Meets monthly, 2 nd Friday of the month. Contact Helen Harkness Ph 384 2890 Email helenharkness294@gmail.com
BOOK DISCUSSION	Meets monthly after the U3A lecture, 3 rd Monday of the month in the Mt Pleasant Community Centre. Contact Mary Lynch email granmarylynch12@gmail.com or Judy Eden edenjudith@xtra.co.nz (This group is now full.)
CAFÉ GROUP	Meets monthly, 2.30pm on Tuesday of the week following 3 rd Monday of the month. Contact Jenny Long jennylong@xtra.co.nz 384 8463.
CANTERBURY HISTORY	Meets monthly, 2 nd Monday of the month. Contact Judy Calder Ph 384 1269 Email judycalder@hotmail.com
CYCLING GROUP	Meets monthly, 2 nd Wednesday. Contact Jane Cowan-Harris Email: janechbythesea@gmail.com , Mob 021 043 5342
DVD INTEREST GROUP	Lists of the DVDs are held by Yvonne Boulton. Contact her on Ph: 021442275 Email yvonneboulton@xtra.co.nz
GARDEN GROUP	Meets 4 th Monday of the month. A mixture of speakers, garden visits and 'tea & cuttings'. Contact: Gaynor Button Email: buttonmg@gmail.com
GEOLOGY/BOTANY	Meets twice a month on 1 st Monday at Redcliffs Bowling Centre and 3 rd Wednesday for an outing. Contact Pat Whitman Ph 384 3475 Email patwandpate@gmail.com
SCRABBLE	Meets fortnightly Tuesdays 1.30pm. Contact Alison Harrington Ph 022 307 4039 Email: alison.harrington@outlook.co.nz

INTEREST GROUPS COORDINATOR

Mary Lynch Email:
granmarylynch12@gmail.com