



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

## **Newsletter December 2025**

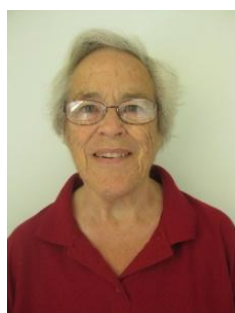
**Our speaker on 15th December is Dr Elsamari Botha – AI in Everyday Life: Benefits, Risks & Surprises**

**Elsamari Botha is an Associate Professor at the University of Canterbury, where she previously served as the Director of MBA and Executive Education Departments.**

***In this lively, jargon-free session, we'll trace how AI has evolved. You'll see demos of the technology and explore the less-talked-about side effects and potential unintended consequences.***

**Following on from the speaker we are having our Christmas lunch to which you are all welcome, whether you let us know at our last meeting or not!**

### **Message from the President**



As we near the end of our U3A year I am encouraged by your support. For most meetings we have had capacity attendance, and that reflects the quality of the speakers who have given us their time and expertise. Our popularity continues unabated and although we have had 46 resignations through the year, we still have 58 people on the waiting list and applicants keep coming. If any of you no longer wish to belong, please let us know so someone else has a chance to join.

Once again I appeal to you for help on the committee. A couple more people would help us share the jobs, so we have continuity when committee members are away travelling or helping families. It is not onerous; just an hour's meeting once a month and an occasional

job to do. Please think about it and get back to me. Contact details are further on in the newsletter.

I hope to see most of you at our final meeting and lunch on Monday 15<sup>th</sup>, but for those not able to come, I wish you a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

## Information about Previous Meeting

David Hodgson, local historian, gave a most informative talk about New Zealander, Harold Gillies.

Harold Gillies was a notable pioneer in plastic surgery. He was born in Dunedin, the youngest of eight children and his father died when he was four. He went to study medicine at Cambridge and was a happy, popular student. There he took up golf and played for the university and later for England. He qualified as an ENT specialist and in 1911 married a nurse.

In 1915 he went to France to treat war casualties, and this included dealing with jaw injuries and teeth. This led to the restructuring of faces, with bone grafts, skin grafts and plastic surgery. Plastic comes from the Greek word *plastikos*, meaning to mould or shape. (The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans practised a form of plastic surgery). The face displays a large part of our personality showing our feelings and giving us speech. Its disfigurement used to be a sign of wickedness or weakness.

In 1916 he assembled a team of surgeons in Aldershot. He realised his patients needed to keep up their strength with good diet and they also needed reassurance. There he did the facial operations incrementally with as many as 15 ops. He documented his work so others could learn from it. War injuries often became infected from microbes in the soil and trenches, so he devised a way of making flaps of skin into cylinders so the exposed side was in the interior, and once these were established with a good blood supply at the site they could be cut free and used to repair injuries. This was especially useful for eyelids.

Sir William Arbuthnot Lane donated a new hospital in Sidcup. It was partitioned into separate buildings for British, Australian, New Zealand and Canadians. Here he developed new techniques and treated 11,000 soldiers during the war years. In 1957 he published a book on plastic surgery techniques that is still used. He was knighted in 1930. After WW1 he worked as a civilian doctor but in WW11 he worked again on soldiers and airmen, where burns were common. Archibald McIndoe, another New Zealander, pioneered work in this field and got more publicity for it with his Guinea Pig Club of experimental patients. Gillies died in 1960 aged 78. He was a great character with a huge sense of humour.

## Latest News & Updates

**Our first meeting in 2026 will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> February, so there is no meeting in January.**

The following has been sent to U3A groups by Jane Leighs, Director of Christchurch Unearthed.

**We would like to draw your attention to a new exhibition of Christchurch Archaeology, Cathedral Square Unearthed, that we think may be of interest to your members.**

- Cathedral Square Unearthed is a new exhibition developed by The Christchurch Archaeology Project Charitable Trust that brings Cathedral Square's early history to life.
- The free exhibition will be held in Christ Church Cathedral, with the support of the Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement Project.
- The exhibition will be open to the public from 16 to 22 February 2026, marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 22 February earthquake.
- The exhibition invites Christchurch people to reconnect with the city's past through everyday objects uncovered during post-quake excavations and the rebuild.

**You can read about the Christchurch Archaeology Project in this weekend's The Press:** <https://www.thepress.co.nz/nz-news/360908616/christchurch-lucky-have-it-how-earthquakes-left-significant-collection-old-rubbish>

Free tickets released on Friday 5th December, and are going very quickly. There are four tours per day, with a maximum of 45 people per tour. Some tours have already sold out.

**Tickets can be reserved at:** <https://events.humanitix.com/cathedral-square-unearthed>

**It is very important that those with an interest in visiting read the accessibility information,** as the Cathedral is not suitable for those with limited mobility

- <https://events.humanitix.com/cathedral-square-unearthed/accessibility>

Please get in touch if you have any questions, and for updates you can follow Christchurch Archaeology Project on:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090556609428>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/christchurcharchaeologyproject/>

## CLUB DIRECTORY

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## 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.

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

## INTEREST GROUP UPDATES

### Art Appreciation

Despite it being Show Day, PG Gallery 192 in Bealey Avenue was our destination, having car pooled from Under the Red Verandah cafe. On display was “Constant Weave”, described by curator and our guide Marian Maguire as a “celebratory exhibition” of Philippa Blair who had died earlier this year at the age of 79. Regarded as one of NZ’s leading abstract painters, Philippa Blair had also exhibited and worked in Australia and the US.

For those who have difficulty in understanding abstract paintings, the display was set out in the gallery (formerly a cottage), in a helpful way. In the hallway, one side displayed Philippa’s photographs of details from everyday scenes or objects that had caught the artist’s eye (see photo top right). On the other side, small abstract works on paper, some being water colours, had obviously been inspired by the photographs.(see photo bottom left).



Among larger works in the main room of the gallery, “Afloat”(see photo bottom right) one of her large paintings in acrylic, oil and mixed media on canvas, is comprised of 4 parts. How fortunate we were to have Marian, a longtime friend and work colleague, to guide us through the processes that lead to such complex works.



### Book Discussion Group

We have enrolled for the Book Discussion Scheme for 2026. The U3A committee has given us a grant to subsidise the membership cost which should now be around \$65. We still have a couple of vacancies – so if you are interested in joining, please ring Mary on 021 387 088. Titles requested for 2026 include The Hare with Amber eyes by Edmund de Waal, Hamnet by Maggie O’Farrell, Love as a Stranger by Owen Marshall, Earth + 3 others by John Boyne. The group meets in the foyer at MPCC on the third Monday of the month, after our lecture. Several of us order from the café and enjoy our lunch as we discuss the current book.



### **Cycling Group**

Due to a lack of attendees, the November ride was postponed. We are having a final ride from the MPCC along to the Tannery and then onto the Heathcote Cycle Track, before returning towards Redcliffs for a final lunch together at Jenny Bartlett's place. Thanks to Jenny for hosting us!

### **Dining Out Group**

The Dine Out Group held its inaugural meal at Cosa Nostra on Wednesday 12th November with six members attending. A very convivial evening and a really good start to this Interest Group. All members are welcome and we hope that numbers will grow as time goes on. The next dining experience will be held in February. Dining planned for the third Wednesday of the month.



### **Garden Group**

For the final meeting of the year the Garden Group held their Christmas luncheon at "Ambrosia", Strathlachlan Gardens, Doyleston. The farmhouse has been in the family for



several generations and has been lovingly restored by the present owners. The stables have been converted into a dining room and conversation nooks and further down the paddock an old barn has been transformed



into a larger dining room.

A Christmas menu was arranged, we had crackers and a quiz and had a



very enjoyable lunch. We then toured the house taking in the memorabilia and the vintage clothing collection. We all look forward to the New Year and more gardening adventures in 2026.

## **Geo Botany Group**

19<sup>th</sup> November **Castle Hill**



Geo/Bot had a good trip to Castle Hill. We were accompanied by Kate Pedley, from the University Geology department and she explained the four different types of rock in the Torlesse ranges. There are coloured stripes of greywacke and mudstone as well as a greenish layer that was originally below the sea. We wandered through all the formations for an hour.

After lunch we drove back to the lookout at the top of Porters pass. There Kate pointed out the shallow fault line (it is a third

of the way across the photo from the left) and explained about earthquake activity.



## **Canterbury History Group**

We have just had a very interesting trip to the Church of Latter Day Saints on Fendalton Road, but as this was on the same day as the newsletter goes to print, a report will not be published until the January newsletter.

U3A Pegasus email address: [u3apegasus@protonmail.com](mailto:u3apegasus@protonmail.com)

U3A Pegasus website address: [www.u3apegasus.org.nz](http://www.u3apegasus.org.nz)