



Life-long Learning with U3A Manawatū

2026

Through its learning groups, U3A Manawatū provides opportunities for reading, research, discussions and field trips. The atmosphere for learning is informal and friendly. There are no compulsory activities or examinations, and costs are minimal. Meetings are held in private homes, libraries, community centres, art galleries, etc.

Annual membership costs \$15 (or \$25 for a couple) and provides access to the learning groups listed overleaf, subject to places being available. Note that some groups incur small charges for venue hire, materials, etc.

To find out more, visit the U3A Manawatū web site
<https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz>, or contact Chris on 021 122 4701, or at
u3amanawatu@gmail.com. To join U3A Manawatū, complete the annual subscription form available on the web site, or request a printed copy.

For more information on the groups listed, including meeting venues, and to check that additional members can be accommodated, please contact group coordinators. The latest version of this document, which is updated as changes occur through the year, is available on the website.

New Groups

DELECTABLE DIALOGUE

A preset discussion topic each month set by members in turn. Aims to promote companionship and social interaction, participate in lively conversation and enjoy good food together. Limited to eight members.

First meeting Wednesday 4th February at 12.30 pm.

Coordinator: Kay Phillips, ph. 027 975 8569. 46nanakay@gmail.com

GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERETTAS (in Feilding)

A full length video each month in a home theatre. Note: There are stairs

Meets on third Thursday each month at 10:00am. Commences February

Coordinator: Mike Lawrence, ph. 06 323 2456. michael.lawrence97@gmail.com

IBSEN: FIVE MAJOR PLAYS

Detailed examination of *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Master Builder*. Translations supplied.

Meets on the fourth Wednesday each month at 10:00am. Commences February.

Coordinator: Stuart Lawrence, ph. 022 372 1792. lawrence1054@gmail.com

MAKING BOOKS

For enthusiasts of handmade books, sharing ideas, skills, resources. A free and easy approach, open to all levels, even if you have never made a book before.

Meets 1st Tuesday each month, 1:30-3:30pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Marja Steur, ph. 027 428 7016. marja.steur@icloud.com

NATIONAL THEATRE LONDON and MET OPERA NEW YORK

Live streamed presentations of National Theatre plays and Metropolitan operas, followed by coffee and discussion.

Meets on the relevant screening dates at Events Cinema (approx 6 plays and 4 operas during the year)

Coordinator: Christine Archer-Lockwood, Ph. 027 8057612.

kiwichristine@fastmail.fm

STORY TELLING

Rediscovering the lost art of telling a short story, off-the-cuff or pre-prepared.

Meets 3rd Friday each month, 10-12am. Commences February.

Coordinator: Stuart Birks, Ph. 021 204 7903. kstuartbirks@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Each culture has its own customs, conventions, manners and expectations. This can often lead to confusion for the uninitiated. We will explore obvious and not-so-obvious differences between cultures in a relaxed, open-minded manner.

Meets 2nd Thursday morning each month.

Coordinator: Franco Vaccarino, ph. 021 222 4532, franco@citymission.co.nz

Established Groups

10-PIN BOWLING

This group gets together for social 10-pin bowling.

Meets third Wednesday each month, 10am. Commences March.

Coordinator: Janet Black, ph. 027 276 3955. janblack2013@icloud.com

AGEING WELL

Small group discussion on issues arising from the Spring 2023 seminar series – how can we plan ahead?

Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at 10am. Commences February.

Contact: Stuart Birks, ph. 021 204 7903. kstuartbirks@gmail.com

ALL ABOUT GARDENING

Gardeners, gardening and gardens. Visits to members' and other gardens. Meetings feature Plant of the Month and our garden stories.

Meets first Thursday of each month at 1:30pm.

Coordinators: Kay Phillips 027 975 8569 46nanakay@gmail.com and

Debbie Morris 021 894 258 debbie.morris2203@gmail.com

ART APPRECIATION

Explore the visual arts through discussion, talks, and gallery visits.

Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 1-3pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Lyn Low, ph. 027 230 1416. lynlow107@gmail.com

BIOGRAPHY

Any life is interesting and our biography reviews range across the spectrum.

Meets 3rd Monday each month, 10am. Commences January 19th (Wellington Anniversary Day).

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt at 022 406 9819 or kevinroaming@hotmail.com

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP This group will discuss a chapter a month from Joseph Henrich's book, *The Weirdest People in the World: How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous*. This is an opportunity for relaxed, small group, speculative conversation.

Meets first Tuesday each month, 10am. Commences February.

Coordinator: Stuart Birks, ph. 021 204 7903. kstuartbirks@gmail.com

BOOK GROUP 1

Expand your literary horizons. Lively discussion on a wide range of themes and genres.

Meets 2nd Tuesday each month at 1.30pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Sue Stirling, ph: 021 127 4724. susanstirling@gmail.com

BOOK GROUP 2

Continuing monthly lively book discussions – fun whilst stretching literary horizons.

Meets 3rd Tuesday each month at 1pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Merle Smillie, ph. 357 0778. merleiansmillie@xtra.co.nz

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Led by John Ward. Large screen video.

Meets monthly on a Monday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

COMEDY

Led by John Ward. Meets monthly on a Tuesday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

Putting our minds together to solve the mysteries of cryptic crosswords.

Meets 4th Monday each month, 2pm. Commences January.

Coordinator: Helen Chong ph. 063576571 bobhelenchong@gmail.com

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Passionate conversation, debate and comment on current world and New Zealand affairs.

Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month, 10am-12noon. Commences February.

Coordinator: Bernard Letts, ph. 021 123 2673. joan.bernard@xtra.co.nz

EXPLORING RELIGION

Talks and discussions on religious topics both historical and contemporary.

Participants may or may not consider themselves religious; the only requirement is an interest in exploring religious beliefs and practices.

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month, 2pm. Commences February

Co-ordinator: Chris van der Krog, Ph. 021 122 4701. delftnz@gmail.com

FILM GROUP

Film group meets fortnightly to view a current movie. Coffee before and/or lunch afterwards. Many members of the group choose to come to one movie per month and that is fine.

Meets – 2nd and 4th Tuesday morning each month.

Coordinator: Mary Procter, ph. 027 676 4476. maryprocter@hotmail.com

FOR THE LOVE OF PLANTS

Exploring the diverse world of plants and gardens. Topics negotiated and include visits, speakers and discussion.

Meets 4th Thursday each month, 1-3.30pm. Commences January.

Coordinator: Heather Martin, ph. 357 3125. ellalinem@yahoo.co.nz

HIDDEN MEMORIES: WRITING OUR MEMOIRS 3

Sharing and recording our memories and stories.

Meets at a negotiated time each month, 2.30pm. Commences January.

Coordinator: Kathriona Benvie ph. 027 605 1911 timandkj@yahoo.co.nz

INTERNATIONAL GEOPOLITICS

'International Geopolitics' will focus on Ukraine and Gaza, seeking to make sense of these tragic conflicts in the context of great power rivalry.

Meets 4th Wednesday of the month, 10-12 noon. Commences August 2025.

Coordinator: Rod Holm, ph. 021 0296 6983. ad.rjholm@outlook.com

NEW ZEALAND HISTORY

A mix of invited speakers and presentations by the group.

Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10.00am. Commences February.

Coordinator: Graham Slater, ph. 027 441 4023. gandg@inspire.net.nz

OPERA

Led by John Ward. Large screen video.

Meets monthly on a Friday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

ORAL HISTORY

A group for people interested in recording oral history for public archives and radio broadcast on MPR's "Manawatu Conversations" programme.

Meets 2nd Friday each month, 10am. Commences February.

Coordinator: Stuart Birks, ph. 021 204 7903. kstuartbirks@gmail.com

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophical discourse engaging members in critical thinking, based on selections of short texts.

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each month, 2-4pm. Commences March.

Coordinator: Alan Cameron, ph. 358 3848. aacameron@xtra.co.nz

PHOTOGRAPHY

For photographers at all levels to share photos with a monthly theme, and to learn from each other how to get the best out of our cameras (or phones).

Meets 3rd Tuesday each month, 2pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Hilary Laracy, ph. 027 4460 388. hils.keith@xtra.co.nz

POETRY FOR PLEASURE

Each month, group members select and read poetry of their choice around a negotiated theme.

Meets 1st Monday each month, 1pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Geoff Holland, ph 0273989907 mainlybeagle@gmail.com

RAILWAY TRAVEL

Led by John Ward. Historical and modern. Large screen video.

Meets monthly on a Wednesday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

SCI-TECH

You don't have to be a scientist to enjoy this group. What is essential, though, is an enquiring mind and a wish to better understand how science, technology, engineering and the environment work.

Meets 3rd Friday each month, 2pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Stu Schwartz, ph. 027 355 4276. finearts@taylor-jensen.co.nz

SILVER SCREEN SELECTIONS

Watch and discuss a selection of classic movies each month.

Meets 3rd Thursday each month, 12:30pm. Commences February.

Coordinator Graham Slater, ph. 027 441 4023. gandg@inspire.net.nz

SKETCHING

Tell a story with pictures. Adventures in graphite and other materials.

Meets 3rd Monday each month, 10am. Commences February.

Coordinator: Pauline Wellwood, ph. 356 1977. dandpwellwood@slingshot.co.nz

TED (TECHNOLOGY, ENTERTAINMENT AND DESIGN)

An online offering for members no longer mobile. Monthly notification of a YouTube TED talk, followed by email or other online discussion forum.

Meets first Monday morning of each month. Commences February.

Coordinator: Graham Slater, ph. 027 441 4023. gandg@inspire.net.nz

TRAVEL

Illustrated presentations by group members and invited speakers share diverse travel experiences and opportunities taken from all corners of the globe.

Meets 4th Thursday each month at 2.00pm apart from January 2026 when we will meet on the 5th Thursday.

Coordinator: Alastair Johnstone. Phone: (021) 885 497, a.c.johnstone@hotmail.com

WFPB POT-LUCK LUNCH

Extend your culinary repertoire. Bring a whole-food, plant-based dish to share and a copy of the recipe for each member. Limited to 8 members.

Meets 4th Tuesday each month, 12 noon. Commences January.

Coordinator: Rosemary Krsinich, ph. 326 9598. rkrzinich@gmail.com

WRITE OUR MEMOIRS TOO (in Feilding)

Share and record your memories and stories.

Meets 3rd Thursday each month, 1.30pm. Commences February.

Coordinator: Sally Reed, ph. 027 628 8002. sally.reed@xtra.co.nz

John Ward's U3A programmes for 2026**CLASSICAL MUSIC** Led by John Ward. Large screen video.

Meets monthly on a Monday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

COMEDY Led by John Ward. Meets monthly on a Tuesday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

RAILWAY TRAVEL Led by John Ward. Historical and modern. Large screen video.

Meets monthly on a Wednesday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Coordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

OPERA Led by John Ward. Large screen video.

Meets monthly on a Friday afternoon. See 2026 year's schedule for dates and times.

Co-ordinator: Kevin Smidt, ph 022 406 9819. kevinroaming@hotmail.com

February 2026			
2/2/26	Mon	2:00	Classical Music
3/2/26	Tue	2:00	Comedy
4/2/26	Wed	2:00	Railway Travel: British Rail Journeys European rail journey
6/2/26	Fri	1.30	Opera
March 2026			
2/3/26	Mon	2:00	Classical Music
3/3/26	Tue	2:00	Comedy
4/3/26	Wed	2:00	Railway Travel: British Rail Journeys European rail journey
6/3/26	Fri	1.30	Opera
April 2026			
30/3/26	Mon	2:00	Classical Music
31/3/26	Tue	2:00	Comedy
1/4/26	Wed	2:00	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
3/4/26	Fri	1.30	Opera – Good Friday
May 2026			
4/5/26	Mon	1:30	Classical Music
5/5/26	Tue	1:30	Comedy
6/5/26	Wed	1:30	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
8/5/26	Fri	1:30	Opera
June 2026			
1/6/26	Mon	1:30	Classical Music – King's Birthday
2/6/26	Tue	1:30	Comedy
3/6/26	Wed	1:30	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
5/6/26	Fri	1:30	Opera

U3A MANAWATŪ LEARNING GROUPS 2026

July 2026			
29/6/26	Mon	1:30	Classical Music
30/6/26	Tue	1:30	Comedy
1/7/26	Wed	1:30	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
3/7/26	Fri	1:30	Opera - Mozart
August 2026			
3/8/26	Mon	1:30	Classical Music
4/8/26	Tue	1:30	Comedy
5/8/26	Wed	1:30	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
7/8/26	Fri	1:30	Opera
September 2026			
31/8/26	Mon	1:30	Classical Music
1/9/26	Tue	1:30	Comedy
2/9/26	Wed	1:30	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
4/5/26	Fri	1:30	Opera
October 2026 (Daylight Saving Time)			
5/10/26	Mon	2:00	Classical Music
6/10/26	Tue	2:00	Comedy
7/10/26	Wed	2:00	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
9/10/26	Fri	1:30	Opera
November 2026			
2/11/26	Mon	2:00	Classical Music
3/11/26	Tue	2:00	Comedy
4/11/26	Wed	2:00	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
6/11/26	Fri	1:30	Opera
December 2026			
30/11/26	Mon	2:00	Classical Music
1/12/26	Tue	2:00	Comedy
2/12/26	Wed	2:00	Great British Rail Journeys Great Continental Rail Journeys
4/12/26	Fri	1:30	Opera