

## January 2025 Newsletter

### From the President

By the time this newsletter arrives, you will have hopefully recovered from the pressure and hype of the festive season, and have enjoyed a relaxing holiday break. I have used some of my spare time to do some holiday reading. It has also been an opportunity to catch up with family and friends. We will wait until everyone is back at work or school before embarking on a trip away.

I have received very favourable comments about our November meeting and lunch. Nic Low proved to be a very engaging speaker, and the arrangements for the scaled-down lunch in the Baylis Lounge seemed to work well. The Lincoln Envirotown Community Garden received a donation because of the help provided by their volunteers at the lunch.

#### A reminder:

Payment of the 2025 subscription (\$35 for current members, \$40 for new members) is due prior to the AGM on 26th of March. Please make your internet banking payment to :

- U3A Ellesmere Westpac Account **03-0767-0001025-000**.
- For "Details on their statement" Please enter **Family Name** in the "Particulars" box and **Given Name** in the "Code" Box. Enter **U3A sub25** in the "Reference" box.  
(If your names are more than the available characters, enter just those that fit. This will be enough for the Treasurer to identify your payment.)

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2025,  
Errol

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### Our November speaker

**Nic Low** (Ngai Tahu), author and historian. His topic was *"Exploring the Maori history of the Southern Alps on foot"*

Amongst the many facts that Nic shared, we learnt that in 1848 a civil servant, Walter Mantell was instructed under the so-called "Kemp Deed" to arrange reserves in the Canterbury Block for the Ngai Tahu tribe. Mantell pressured around 600 Ngai Tahu to accept 4 hectares per head from a block of 8 million hectares. He then completed the purchase of another block of 2.8 million hectares in the south-west of the South Island, and parts of Banks Peninsula under similarly miserly terms. While schools and hospitals were promised in the "Kemp Deed", this did not happen.

Although the Ngai Tahu people frequently used inland valleys and mountain passes of the South Island on journeys between the east and west coasts, they became effectively shut out from their lands which had now become sheep stations. So, when Nic made his expeditions through the Southern Alps, as an act of rebellion, his practice was to NOT seek permission to pass through the land occupied by these

high-country stations. Legally, he was prevented from visiting the series of mahika kai (food stations) which his ancestors once used to replenish supplies on their journeys.

Nic brought a box of copies of his book “Uprising – Walking the Southern Alps of New Zealand”, and almost all of these were sold at the meeting.

More information about Nic’s interests and achievements may be found at <https://www.dislocated.org>

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## Upcoming speakers

### Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January

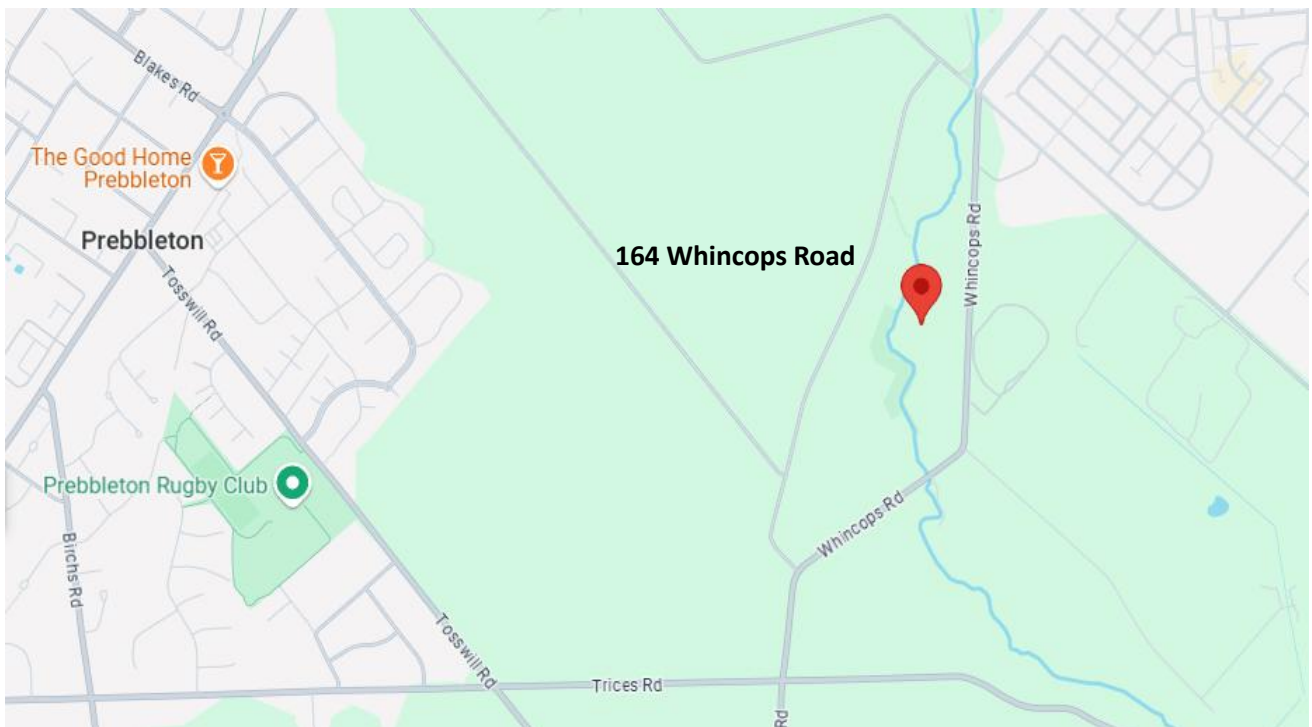
To start 2025, we will gather at 10am at **164 Whincops Road**, the property of Ray and Nancy Drury. (See the map below)

We will have a unique opportunity to inspect a large collection of classic and antique cars (approximately 70), miscellaneous antiques, and a host of musical treasures including a fully-functional 1926 Wurlitzer Theatre Organ dating back to the “silent movies” era. One of our members, Eric Apperley, was heavily involved in the restoration of the organ, committing over 700 hours voluntarily to the project.

Other intriguing instruments and musical clocks in the Drury’s collection will be on display. There is also a working traditional merry-go-round to try out!

Eric is engaging a well-known Christchurch organist, Richard Hore to entertain us on the Wurlitzer Organ. While the Drury’s are not charging for us to visit, we have decided to give a koha to Richard for his services. Donations for this will be gratefully accepted on the day. The Drury’s will provide tea and coffee, at no charge.

The venue can hold over 120 people, which is close to the usual number attending our meetings. On this occasion, we will travel there independently. There is ample room for parking on-site.



## Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February

Dr Tim Williams – “*Conflict in the Middle East: why are they always fighting? What happens next?*”

Tim is a Christchurch-based clinical psychologist, with an interest in working internationally, especially in Israel and Palestine from 2006 to 2016. He has worked with Doctors Without Borders, the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs, and the UN agency responsible for Palestinian refugees.

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## The Last Word

### It's never too old to learn

We are never too old to learn new things or to be inquisitive. The ethos of U3A is lifelong learning, and being a member of U3A Ellesmere indicates that you have bought in to this.

It's probably that because I had a curiosity about how things work, I chose a career in science. A friend regularly passes on to me their issues of New Scientist and Scientific American so I like to think that I can still keep in touch with developments in contemporary science and technology. This is even though I struggle to understand the latest findings in advanced physics.

My grandchildren are encouraged to be inquisitive by their parents, and when we visit them, they invariably show us the latest general knowledge books they have borrowed from their local library. Recently, they showed me a book with the title “5000 Amazing Facts”. I started reading it and soon discovered that there were many facts that I was unaware of. Here is a small sample of these hard-to-believe facts in the book:

- The astronomical objects we know – planets, stars, galaxies, black holes – make up just 4% of the universe! The rest is “dark matter” (23%) and “dark energy” (73%). (While scientists have postulated that these entities exist, they have yet to find them.)
- The Amazon carries more than eight times the combined water volume of the next longest rivers
- Your brain works harder when you are asleep than when you are awake (hard to believe?)
- When a hummingbird is flying, its heart beats up to 1260 beats per second. (incredible)
- Goats and sheep have rectangular pupils to help them see sideways (for spotting prey)
- Because you blink 15 times a minute, you actually spend 2 years of your waking life with your eyes closed
- The yo-yo is the second oldest toy in the world. What is the oldest? (the doll)
- In the UK it is an act of treason to place a postage stamp of a monarch's head upside down
- The Ganges Delta covers an area the size of Scotland and Wales combined

So, books (as well as U3A gatherings) provide great opportunities for us to continue learning stuff.

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## Your committee for 2023/24 is:

**President** – Errol Wood, **Vice-President** – John Prendergast, **Secretary** – Nancy Borrie,

**Treasurer** – Neal Borrie, **Interest Groups Coordinator** - Lyn Minchington

**Tea Team Coordinator** – Warren Greenwood, **Membership Coordinator** – Dorothy Jordan

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