

## LEARN LIFESAVING SKILLS

### ST JOHN'S '3 STEPS FOR LIFE' AT SENIORNET

Friday 9th May at 10:00am

SeniorNet is pleased to host a free, hands-on training session by St John New Zealand called '3 Steps for Life', taking place at 10:00am on Friday 9th May 2025 presented by Jean & Maria from St John. This valuable session is designed to equip our members with the essential skills needed to respond confidently and effectively in the event of a cardiac emergency.

Every year, more than 2,000 New Zealanders experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital. Tragically, only around 10% survive. But with immediate action, that number can significantly improve—and that's where you come in.

This St John session teaches three critical steps:

1. Call 111 – Learn how to calmly and clearly communicate with emergency services.
2. Start CPR – Receive guided instruction and practice on how to perform chest compressions to help keep blood flowing to the brain and heart.
3. Use an AED – Discover how to safely operate an Automated External Defibrillator, a device that can restart the heart and greatly increase survival chances.

Whether you've done CPR training before or this will be your first time, this session is a fantastic refresher and confidence-builder. No prior experience is required—just a willingness to learn.

Don't miss this opportunity to gain potentially life-saving knowledge in a relaxed and supportive environment. Must book with Lois Kay - [lois.kay@xtra.co.nz](mailto:lois.kay@xtra.co.nz)

Join us at SeniorNet and learn how you can save a life.



## THIS MONTH'S SUNDAY SPECIAL

### WIN PRIZES AT OUR 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY QUIZ

Join us for our 2nd Sunday Quiz at SeniorNet North Shore at 10:00am on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May! Form a small team and enjoy the fun with Quizmaster Rex Oddy at the helm. Refreshments provided. Our first quiz was a blast—this one promises even more laughs, challenges, and excitement. Don't miss out!



## BRUSH UP YOUR SKILLS

### LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Join our vibrant SeniorNet painting group led by the talented Glen Plaistowe.

Whether you're a beginner or experienced artist, Glen's guidance creates a relaxed and inspiring environment. Explore your creativity, learn new techniques, and enjoy the companionship of fellow painters.



Let our membership secretary know if you have changed your email address and/or phone numbers so we can update our records

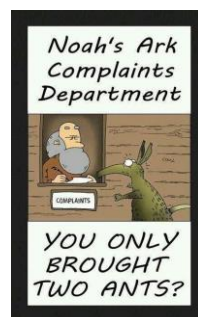
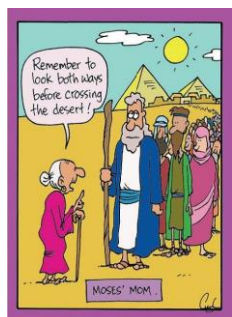


# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### CLUB DIRECTORY

WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.seniornetns.com">www.seniornetns.com</a>	FACEBOOK	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61562462001329">www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61562462001329</a>
EMAIL	<a href="mailto:snetns@xtra.co.nz">snetns@xtra.co.nz</a>		
TELEPHONE	486 2163		
CLASSES	Learning Centre, Suite 3, St John Ambulance Building, 2 Shea Terrace, Takapuna		
MEETINGS	2nd Sunday of each month, 10 am in the Hall, St John, 2 Shea Terrace, Takapuna		
CONTACT	The Secretary, SeniorNet NS Inc. <a href="mailto:snetns@xtra.co.nz">snetns@xtra.co.nz</a>		



### COMMITTEE & SUPPORT TEAMS

2024 – 25

CHAIRPERSON	Ruth Healy	<a href="mailto:ruthhealy54@gmail.com">ruthhealy54@gmail.com</a>	027 291 1489
VICE CHAIRPERSON	Jurgen Schubert	<a href="mailto:jschubert@outlook.co.nz">jschubert@outlook.co.nz</a>	021 257 8814
TREASURER	June McCullough	<a href="mailto:june.apollo@gmail.com">june.apollo@gmail.com</a>	021 885 117
SECRETARY	Marina Sanderson	<a href="mailto:marinasanderson@gmail.com">marinasanderson@gmail.com</a>	021 02789790
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WEBMASTER	Ian Handricks	<a href="mailto:ianhandricks@gmail.com">ianhandricks@gmail.com</a>	029 477 4491
TECHNICAL	Rex Oddy	<a href="mailto:rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz">rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz</a>	021 758 851
SPECIAL PROJECTS	Campbell Stanford	<a href="mailto:camstan69@gmail.com">camstan69@gmail.com</a>	021 717 008
COMMITTEE	Lois Kay	<a href="mailto:lois.kay@xtra.co.nz">lois.kay@xtra.co.nz</a>	027 2710154
COMMITTEE	Debbie Seekup	<a href="mailto:d.seekup@xtra.co.nz">d.seekup@xtra.co.nz</a>	021 429 039
AUDITOR	Glen Plaistowe		
PROOF READER	Patricia Lough	<a href="mailto:loughie@outlook.co.nz">loughie@outlook.co.nz</a>	413 6322
NEWSLETTER	Ian Handricks & Lois Kay	<a href="mailto:seniornet.newsletter@gmail.com">seniornet.newsletter@gmail.com</a>	029 477 4491
PROVIDORE	Jeanne-Anne Jacob	<a href="mailto:jacob-jeanneanne@xtra.co.nz">jacob-jeanneanne@xtra.co.nz</a>	027 279 2854
SUNDAY MEETING TEA			
SPEAKER ORGANISER	Jurgen Schubert	<a href="mailto:seniornet.newsletter@gmail.com">seniornet.newsletter@gmail.com</a>	021 257 8814





# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### CHAIR REPORT

#### APRIL 2025

Well once again the month has slipped by. 'Tis been a busy one with the weather not being able to decide if it was summer, or winter. Lots of sunshine and lots of rain and a huge amount of wind. I do hope none of you were affected by the wind with trees falling over.

Our monthly meeting was again super interesting. Had a little trouble with the Tech side of things but all was sorted in the end. Personally, I have been trying to remember where I put things by using a different hand.

Many of us will attend Anzac Day. A day to remember those that lost their lives and to reprint in our minds how very lucky we all are to be here with the freedoms we have – all due to those gone too soon.

I am writing this before Anzac Day so it gets in the newsletter but found it interesting to know that I will be in Hanmer Springs this Anzac Day when the Hanmer Springs Soldiers Block will be reopened. It has been empty for 20 years and is to be reopened this year. The Soldier's Block was originally built in 1916 to rehabilitate returning soldiers from WW1. Then it used as a drug and alcohol treatment centre. It closed in 2003 so will be grand to see it open again. Its history is amazing. A story well worth the read.

Hanmer Springs is just up the road from where I went to High School in Culverden, North Canterbury. Memories for me going back to this area. (I lived on a High-Country Farm a few miles out of Rotherham) so me and my family will be there to see it opened.

The month of May has many sessions once again. The photography for beginners proving very popular. We are also adding in a session called "3 Steps for Life" - This is a Demo on using the AED Equipment. Something we should all get to know and understand. Especially as we are getting older many of our friends and family will have had this or have had to use it. The machines are located all over the place so it would be grand to know how to actually use them - just in case.

And in May is Mothes Day and as usual that will be the same Date as our Monthly Meeting. Time to come along as Jurgen has organised a Quiz. This was super popular the last time so looking forward to that one. Surprising what one finds out they know - or don't know - or know but just cannot remember. A fun morning to be had by all.

Have a look at the Event Calendar and if you can print it out and highlight the sessions you want to go to - so you don't forget. And will see you at one of them, I am sure.

And Remember ... We want to help you learn what you want/need to know and would like you to let us know.

*Ruth Healy*

Chairperson SeniorNet North Shore



# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### CALENDAR

#### MAY 2025

Select a class, discussion group or tutorial that appeals from the tutors notes on pages 6 to 9. This calendar details date, time and venue for activities, including type, cost and whether it is necessary to book (if booking is required please contact the tutor). Pay at door. All welcome.

Monthly meetings are held in the hall 10am – 12:00 noon on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Come along and listen to some interesting speakers. Gold coin donation appreciated. Everyone welcome. Please wear your name tag to all sessions to put name to a face. Free refreshments are provided at all Discussion Groups, Tutorials, and Monthly Sunday Meetings.





# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

TUTORIALS

D = DISCUSSION GROUPS

TIMES: AM = 10.00 to 12.00

PM = 1.00 to 3.00

Schedule - May 2025								
Day	Date	Time	Session	Tutor	Phone	Email	D/T	Cost
Thu	1	am	Cryptic Crosswords and Sudoku	Bridget Taylerson	09 410 8309	taylersonb@gmail.com	D	\$3
Thu	1	pm						
Fri	2	am	First Friday Genealogy	Ian Handricks	029 477 4491	ianhandricks@gmail.com	D	\$3
Fri	2	pm						
Sat	3	am	Tips N Tricks incl iPad and iPhone	Ian Handricks	029 477 4491	ianhandricks@gmail.com	D	\$3
Sat	3	pm						
Sun	4	am						
Sun	4	pm						
Mon	5	am	Painting Group	Glen Plaistowe	027 541 2241	glenp19925@gmail.com	D	\$3
Mon	5	pm	<b>Committee Meeting</b>					
Tue	6	am	Photography for Beginners	Rex Oddy	021 758 851	rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz	D	\$3
Tue	6	pm	Android Phones	Paul van Beusekom			D	\$3
Wed	7	am						
Wed	7	pm	Film Appreciation (1:30)	Marina Sanderson	021 02789790	marinasanderson@gmail.com	D	\$3
Thu	8	am	Handcrafts	June McCullough	021 885 117	june.apollo@gmail.com	D	\$3
Thu	8	pm	Card Playing Group (12:30)	Campbell Stanford	021 717 008	camstan69@gmail.com	D	\$3
Fri	9	am	"3 Steps for Life" AED Equipment & CPR Demo	St Johns				\$3
Fri	9	pm						
Sat	10	am						
Sat	10	pm						
Sun	11	am	<b>Monthly Meeting</b>	<b>10am in hall</b>		<b>All Members Welcome</b>		
Sun	11	pm	<b>Mother's Day</b>					
Mon	12	am						
Mon	12	pm						
Tue	13	am	Photography	Rex Oddy	021 758 851	rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz	D	\$3
Tue	13	pm						
Wed	14	am	AI (Chat GPT etc)	Ian Handricks	029 477 4491	ianhandricks@gmail.com	D	\$3
Wed	14	pm						
Thu	15	am	Cryptic Crosswords and Sudoku	Bridget Taylerson	09 410 8309	taylersonb@gmail.com	D	\$3
Thu	15	pm						
Fri	16	am	Genealogy Workshop	Lois Kay	027 27 101 54	lois.kay@xtra.co.nz	D	\$3
Fri	16	pm						
Mon	19	am	Painting Group	Glen Plaistowe	027 541 2241	glenp19925@gmail.com	D	\$3
Mon	19	pm	Nostalgia	Host varies			D	\$3
Tue	20	am	Computer Chat Group	Melson Lee			D	\$3
Tue	20	pm						
Wed	21	am						
Wed	21	pm	Cooking Chat	Marina Sanderson	021 02789790	marinasanderson@gmail.com	D	\$3
Thu	22	am	Our World	Glen Plaistowe	027 541 2241	glenp19925@gmail.com	D	\$3
Thu	22	pm	Card Playing Group (12:30)	Campbell Stanford	021 717 008	camstan69@gmail.com	D	\$3
Fri	23	am	Book Ends	Patricia Lough	021 268 8677	loughie@outlook.co.nz	D	\$3
Fri	23	pm						
Mon	26	am						
Mon	26	pm						
Tue	27	am	Photoshoot - email Rex for location details	Rex Oddy	021 758 851	rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz		
Tue	27	pm						
Wed	28	am						
Wed	28	pm						
Thu	29	am						
Thu	29	pm						
Fri	30	am						
Fri	30	pm						



# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### TUTOR NOTES

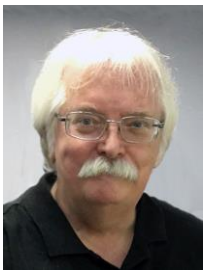
MAY 2025



#### GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Tutor: Lois Kay

Please continue to bring any treasures to our Genealogy Workshop – we have had many items in the past that have had wonderful stories attached to them and they add colour and significance to our life stories. We will continue with worthy websites and although many of our group are already skilled at researching we always run into the odd “brick wall” scenario which is where others can assist.

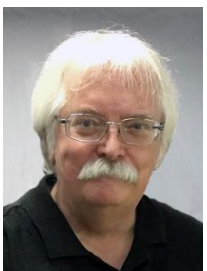


#### TIPS'N'TRICKS including iPHONE & iPAD

Tutor: Ian Handricks

ideas, tips and tricks to explore and use.

A tutorial and discussion forum where you can ask questions and get answers and also learn tips and tricks for a wide range of computer/ipad/iphone/laptop situations. We will endeavour to provide solutions for your questions and will introduce you to a bevy of useful tips, shortcuts, hidden features, useful tools, actions and ways to achieve results on your computer and technology devices. Each session, we will provide you with a hot list of new



#### 1<sup>ST</sup> FRIDAY GENEALOGY

Tutor: Ian Handricks

Ian will talk about new research sites, search techniques, AI solutions for genealogy and a collection of tips and tricks. Maybe you have solved some brick walls or found new information over the break, or found a new site, if so, bring it along. It will be good to see you all again. We will enjoy helping you.



#### PHOTOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS

Tutor: Rex Oddy

Most years we run a beginners course in photography. We cover getting the best from your mobile phone, or that old camera you have in the cupboard or that new camera you bought that turned out to be a bit more complicated than you thought it would be. We cover still photos, video and whatever you need to know, give or take a bit. To make whatever you need to know happen please register with Rex Oddy.

Email [rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz)





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## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER



### CARD PLAYING GROUP

Tutor: Campbell Stanford

What a fun time playing cards can be! For raw beginners and cardsharps alike. Beginners are appreciating the comfortable pace at which they can learn and hone their skills. Great camaraderie in a very friendly group that is much more than just card playing. Learning and developing strategies combined with luck and great humour alleviates stress and keeps your mind sharp and active. Currently our most popular game is "Oh Hell" which goes down well with all players with winners switching around from session to session. Depending on the number of participants, we also play 500 and Euchre and have dabbled with cribbage, one of the best games for as little as 2 players. We have sessions twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays between 12:30 and 2:30pm. Please come and try it. You are also most welcome to bring a guest with you for a free session.



### OUR WORLD

Tutor: Glen Plaistowe

Our World is a mix of current affairs, a sharing of places we have visited, events that have been part of our lives or what we have explored - people and places that are of interest. You do not have to have skills in PowerPoint. You just need to have an interest in our world and world events and are happy to share any insights or experiences you have.



### NOSTALGIA

Host: Ian Robinson

This session will allow us to remember the good, crazy and unusual. Join us for thought-provoking conversations, fun memories, and interesting insights. You'll have the opportunity to share your own experiences and hear from others in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.



### BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS

Tutor: Patricia Lough

This is not a 'Book Club'. We will discuss all sorts of things to do with books, complete with trips down memory lane with short cuts and detours. Give some thought to books you've read and enjoyed and those which you read and thought "Well that was a waste of time" but couldn't quite stop reading in case it improved. It isn't necessary to book (excuse the pun). Those who know me, will know what to expect and those who don't – well take a chance.



# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER



### FILM APPRECIATION

Host: Marina Sanderson

Experience the magic of cinema at SeniorNet North Shore's newest session, "Film Appreciation." Join us in the cosy clubrooms as we transport you through time with a curated selection of timeless classics and contemporary masterpieces. Dive into the world of storytelling, cinematography, and emotion as we explore the art of filmmaking together. Discover the rich history of cinema and share your thoughts and insights with fellow film enthusiasts. Whether you're a cinephile or just looking for a delightful movie, this session promises to be a "reel" treat for all.



### COMPUTER CHAT GROUP

Tutor: Melson Lee

Melson will be available to have your computer questions answered and discussed – and with luck – resolved! What a great opportunity for us all! We have great attendance at these sessions (up to 20 people) and benefit from Melson's extensive knowledge.



### CRYPTIC CROSS WORDS & SUDOKU

Tutor: Bridget Taylerson

Bridget will be hosting another session on cryptic crosswords & sudoku. The last session enabled participants to develop skills and techniques to solve these mysteries.



### PHOTOGRAPHY

Tutor: Rex Oddy

Each month photography group members are invited to bring along digital images or videos that are either based on the theme for the month or are of a personal interest. We have a theme each month, because having a theme can create a challenge and meeting that challenge helps us to improve our photography. Above all, photography like all hobbies and art forms is a personal activity. We take photos for ourselves, it doesn't matter if other people don't quite get the point, it's whether we like them or not that matters most and being part of a group helps us to learn and improve. Most months in addition to our workshop there is a photoshoot, a photographic fieldtrip. Everyone is welcome to join the photoshoot but the location is not decided until just before the date of the outing. The date of the photoshoot is on the monthly schedule but for time and location details email [rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rex.oddy@xtra.co.nz).





# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### APRIL SUNDAY MEETING STEFAN SAGEMAN

#### UNLOCKING THE POWER OF THE MIND

In April, SeniorNet North Shore welcomed the dynamic Stefan Sageman—professional hypnotherapist, magician, and hypnotist—for a spellbinding talk on the power of the subconscious mind. With a background as unique as his delivery—Stefan was adopted from Romania, learned magic before hypnosis, and has overcome immense early-life challenges—his presentation was both deeply personal and widely practical, leaving attendees reflective, intrigued, and inspired.

The session began with a simple but striking statement: “All of us have already been hypnotised seven times today.” This playful opening pulled everyone in. Stefan explained that hypnosis is not some mysterious or mystical process, but rather a natural mental state we all experience—like when we forget a stretch of road while driving or become completely absorbed in a newspaper. These moments, he said, are trances, and understanding them is key to unlocking the potential of our own minds.



#### The Physiology of Emotion

One of the talk’s most powerful segments explored how posture and body language influence our mental state. Stefan asked the audience to try something practical: sit tall, put your feet flat on the floor, pull your shoulders back, and raise your chin. In that posture, he said, try to think of something sad. It became noticeably harder. Through this simple exercise, Stefan demonstrated that our physiology can dramatically affect our mood and mindset.

This example emphasized a core idea in his talk: the body and mind are intertwined. Changing one can influence the other. It’s not just about thinking positively—although he supported that too—but about acting positively, creating change from the outside in as well as the inside out.

#### Hypnotherapy as a Healing Tool

Stefan’s clinical work focuses on helping clients overcome irrational pain, emotional blockages, addiction, and self-limiting beliefs. He described pain that lingers even after the injury has healed as often being a product of the subconscious mind trying to protect us. By accessing this protective part of the brain through hypnotherapy, Stefan said, he helps people ‘have a conversation’ with their own minds and reprogramme harmful patterns.



He shared stories of clients, like a 92-year-old woman with short-term memory loss who regained a sense of identity through recorded affirmations, and a woman with a lifelong needle phobia who overcame her fear by changing the emotional association from pain to something neutral or even amusing.



## Challenging Self-Beliefs and Emotional Programming

Stefan tackled one of the most universal topics of all—self-belief. Many of us, he explained, carry around negative internal messages that aren't even ours. Messages from childhood, from teachers, parents, or peers, can embed themselves in our subconscious and become part of our identity. He stressed the importance of recognizing these false beliefs for what they are: not ours, and not useful.

This led into a larger conversation about how we often sabotage ourselves—not out of laziness or lack of willpower, but because our minds are more concerned with avoiding pain than seeking pleasure. A powerful metaphor he used compared health care to disease care: too often, we act only when something goes wrong, not to pursue wellness proactively. Hypnotherapy, he argued, is a tool that allows people to reconnect with their positive potential and let go of protective but outdated mental patterns.





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### Everyday Memory Hacks and Practical Tips

With his characteristic humour and flair, Stefan offered one of the most surprising and well-received tips of the day: how not to lose your keys. The trick? Place them in your non-dominant hand and cross your body to put them down on the opposite side. Why? This unusual action forces both eyes and brain hemispheres to engage, imprinting the memory more deeply. The same technique, he suggested, can help with remembering where you put your hearing aids, glasses, or even your teeth!

He emphasized the value of habit-formation and repetition, particularly for older adults looking to improve memory or build routines. As with his 92-year-old client, repetition helped form new neural pathways, which in turn restored confidence and connection.

### A Life Story That Inspires

Throughout the talk, Stefan weaved in his own remarkable life journey. Born in Romania and adopted under complex circumstances, he struggled in childhood with basic skills and education. It wasn't until he discovered magic—initially a toy, then a passion—that his path toward hypnosis, therapy, and public speaking began.

That personal story lent authenticity and power to his message. Stefan's success is living proof that limitations, even deeply ingrained ones, can be overcome. It also underscored his belief that the mind is a supercomputer, and most people are only using a fraction of its capabilities.



### Final Thoughts

Stefan left the audience with a compelling takeaway: "One third of you will remember and use something from today. The rest of you, life will get in the way, and you'll delete it." He wasn't being cynical—he was being accurate about how the brain works. It saves the valuable, emotional, or repeated, and forgets the rest.

He encouraged everyone to take what they found meaningful and act on it—not tomorrow, not next week, but today. Whether that's going for a walk with affirmations, confronting an old fear, or changing posture to improve mood, the smallest action could begin the biggest shift.

### In Review

Stefan Sageman's talk was funny, moving, and profoundly informative. His passion for the human mind, his mastery of performance, and his sincere desire to help others made this one of SeniorNet's most memorable events. He reminded us all that we are not at the mercy of our thoughts—we are the programmers of our minds.

And perhaps the best magic trick of all? Helping people believe in themselves again.



# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### APRIL SUNDAY MEETING

ROD BELL

#### UPLIFTING OUR YOUTH – ONE LIFE AT A TIME

Rod Bell, long-time leader of Blue Light New Zealand, delivered a heartfelt and eye-opening talk at SeniorNet North Shore in April, bringing the audience face to face with the incredible work being done to support and uplift young people across the country. His message was clear: contrary to popular media portrayals, the vast majority of youth are doing remarkable things – and Blue Light is there to support them when they stumble and to elevate them when they shine.

Bell opened by addressing a common misconception: that today's youth are largely troubled. "We hear about ram raids and youth crime, but in reality, fewer than 40 young people across the country are responsible for the bulk of that behaviour," he stated. "Meanwhile, 95% of kids are just getting on with it, achieving incredible things quietly." Bell pointed out that today's youth, for example, are far less likely to drink and drive than older generations—a sign of shifting attitudes and a testament to successful public education.

Blue Light, now in its 40th year in New Zealand, has expanded well beyond its early days of hosting community discos. It now delivers a wide array of life-changing programmes. These include leadership camps, driving license support, school mentorships, and sailing adventures. One highlight is Blue Light's innovative approach to the Duke of Edinburgh Award, particularly supporting rural and underserved youth who might never otherwise access such an opportunity. By partnering with the Police Search and Rescue team, they reduce costs and offer unique, challenging outdoor experiences.

Driving, often taken for granted by older generations, has become a financial and logistical barrier for many young Kiwis. Bell shared sobering statistics on the escalating cost and difficulty of obtaining a licence today. "We help around 2,500 young people each year get their driver's licence," he noted, recalling one young woman who was the first of her nine siblings to do so. This milestone didn't just transform her life—it created a ripple effect in her family, helping her siblings and even her mother, who had never had a licence.

Bell also touched on how seemingly minor breaches of driver licence conditions can start a young person on a downward spiral. "Thirty percent of youth in prison started their journey by breaching licence conditions," he warned. Blue Light's approach is preventative, aiming to equip youth with the tools and resilience to avoid such paths.





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One particularly moving section of the talk was the presentation of a video showcasing Blue Light programmes. From sailing voyages to military-style life-skills camps, the video depicted the profound personal growth many of the participants undergo. “For some, it’s the first time they’ve had structure, three meals a day, or anyone believing in them,” Bell explained. The transformation of these young people—some coming from deeply traumatic backgrounds—was deeply moving.



Bell made it clear that Blue Light is not just for ‘at-risk’ youth. “Good kids deserve opportunities too,” he emphasized, underlining the organisation’s commitment to leadership development and inclusive programmes. Whether it’s taking part in national competitions, overseas trips (including one to Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Police), or leadership training with the Defence Force, the aim is to give youth across all backgrounds the tools to thrive.

Funding and sustainability were also discussed. Bell was candid about the challenges of securing consistent funding and praised the organisation’s own social enterprise initiatives, which help fund operational costs so that more donations can go directly into programming.

In closing, Rod Bell’s message was as hopeful as it was urgent: “We can’t do this alone. The community must stand behind our youth—believing in them, investing in them, and celebrating them.” His passion, humour, and decades of experience captivated the audience, leaving SeniorNet members with a renewed sense of optimism about New Zealand’s next generation.

The standing ovation he received was a testament to the power of his message—and to the profound impact Blue Light continues to have on the lives of tens of thousands of young Kiwis every year.



# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### LOOKING FOR A BUILDER?

#### MEET JEFF BELL

Jeff Bell, a licensed builder with over 30 years of experience, leads Urban & Lifestyle Homes, a trusted Auckland-based company offering design, construction, landscaping, and home styling services. Holding a Site S1 Certification, Jeff ensures top-quality craftsmanship in every project. His team includes a qualified horticulturalist and home stylist, allowing them to provide a comprehensive "one-stop shop" for clients.

Urban & Lifestyle Homes specializes in new builds, renovations, project management, and alternative energy solutions. They also design small, relocatable buildings up to 30 square meters that don't require consent, perfect for home offices, leisure spaces, or retail units, all built to NZ Building Code 3604 standards.

Jeff's dedication to quality and customer satisfaction shines through glowing testimonials, highlighting his integrity, adherence to timelines, and excellent workmanship. Thanks to our chairperson, Ruth Healy, for introducing Jeff to our SeniorNet club—his expertise is an asset to our community.



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**JEFF BELL**

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# ESSENCE

## SENIORNET NORTH SHORE NEWSLETTER

### VISIT TO HIGHWIC HOUSE FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2025

It was a glorious summer day when 10 members of SeniorNet visited Highwic House. We were greeted by a guide giving us an insight into the life of colonial early Auckland, the Buckland family and the style and development of their house to meet the growing need.



Highwic is a well-preserved Carpenter Gothic mansion, located on the fringes of colonial Auckland. Built for one of the wealthiest landowners in the region, it was erected in an elevated position looking out over the small nineteenth-century township of Newmarket. In 1862, the land was purchased by the Buckland family, who immediately built a dwelling that was added to substantially over the years.





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Alfred Buckland (1825-1903) was an auctioneer with extensive connections in the wool trade, having arrived from Devon, England in 1850. In 1858 he held the first ever public auction of wool in New Zealand and by the 1880s was considered to be the largest private landholder in Auckland Province. As well as his substantial fortune, Alfred was also known for his large family. Twice married, he had seven daughters and three sons with his first wife, Eliza Wallen (1825-1866), before having a further seven daughters and four sons with Matilda Frodsham (1847-1932).



The Bucklands' Highwic probably began as a six- or seven-roomed timber villa, with outbuildings for the use of servants and other employees. The style was copied from an American pattern book design published in 1850 by A.J. Downing, adopting a highly ornamental Carpenter Gothic style. This marked it out from most other dwellings of the period. Highwic is considered to be one of New Zealand's finest Carpenter Gothic houses, and is significant as a rare example of an architectural style more commonly found on the east coast of America. Carpenter Gothic was characterised by its steep gables, pronounced bargeboards and extensive use of timber for structural and decorative elements. Surrounded by extensive gardens, the house was successively enlarged in the 1870s and 1880s as the Bucklands' fortunes grew and family expanded. At its grandest, the building included a large room capable of holding balls, a service yard, seven bedrooms and a boys' dormitory, with outside stables, a coach-house, a billiard room and several other garden structures. A few minor alterations were made by family descendants, who lived in the house until 1978, after which the property was jointly purchased by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust/Pouhere Taonga and Auckland City Council.

The buildings and site have connections to people and activities of local and national importance, and are closely linked with the development of the Newmarket area. Highwic is held in high public esteem, having been visited by large numbers of people since it opened as a house museum in 1981.

Following our visit, most of us went to Coffee Lab in Northcote for a light lunch and social gathering to finish a beautiful day.





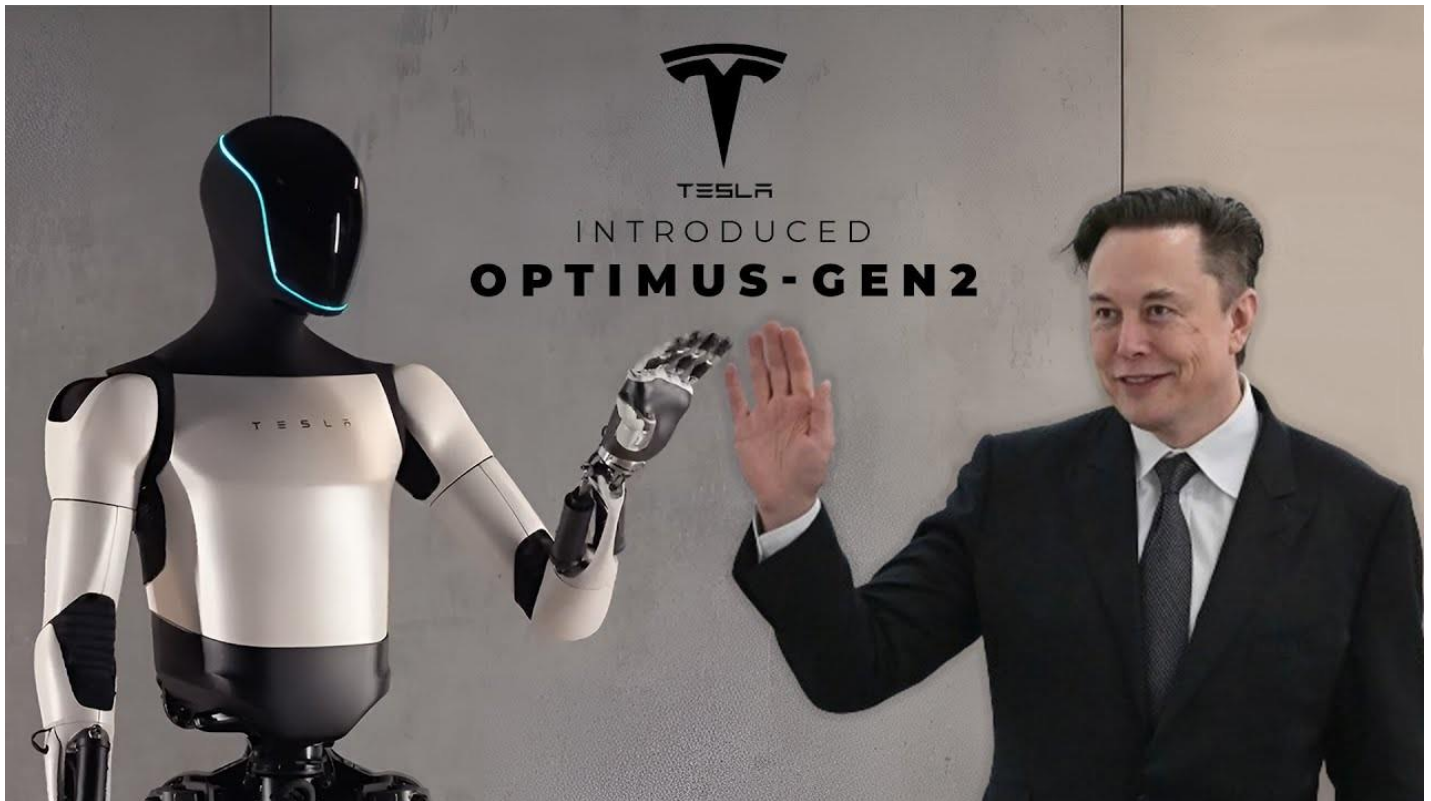
# ESSENCE

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### ADVANCED COMPUTERS THE RISE OF OPTIMUS

Promise, Peril, and a Warning for Humanity

In the ever-evolving world of artificial intelligence and robotics, few names carry as much global intrigue as Elon Musk. Tesla, best known for revolutionizing the electric vehicle industry, is now throwing its considerable weight into the creation of humanoid robots. Their latest brainchild, Optimus—named after the heroic robot from the Transformers series—is a sleek, 5’8” general-purpose humanoid that Musk boldly claims “could be more significant than [Tesla’s] vehicle business over time.”



While this claim might sound like typical Silicon Valley bravado, the development of Optimus, also referred to as the Tesla Bot, deserves serious attention—and not just from tech enthusiasts. It’s a story of technological ambition, media spectacle, legitimate innovation, and potentially, a cautionary tale for the future of humanity.

#### A Brief History of the Tesla Bot

Optimus was first announced during Tesla’s AI Day in August 2021. At the time, many believed the idea was little more than science fiction theatrics. A man in a robot suit danced onstage, and the crowd chuckled. But Musk was serious—and, as it turns out, so was Tesla.



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By 2022, functional prototypes were being shown, including a basic walker and a version with articulating arms. In 2023, footage emerged of Optimus performing yoga, sorting coloured blocks, and identifying its own limbs in space—a considerable leap. And by late 2024, Generation 2 was released: slimmer, faster, and able to perform delicate tasks like poaching an egg.



Most recently, in March 2025, Musk announced plans to send an Optimus unit to Mars in 2026, aboard a SpaceX Starship rocket. The robot's first extraterrestrial deployment may be more symbolic than functional, but the gesture underlines how seriously Tesla views this technology.

### What Can Optimus Actually Do?

Optimus is designed to perform repetitive, dangerous, or undesirable tasks—essentially anything humans don't want to do. It stands at 173 cm, weighs 57 kg, and can carry around 20 kg. It uses the same AI system Tesla developed for its autonomous driving software and is currently being tested for manufacturing roles within Tesla factories.

There's even talk of mass-producing these robots for home use by 2026, with an expected price of around USD \$30,000—about the cost of a new car.

But here's the rub: many of Optimus's public demonstrations have relied on teleoperation. In other words, a human operator guides the robot remotely. While this isn't unusual in robotics, Tesla has been criticized for not being transparent about it. Several competitors, including Boston Dynamics, have released videos of their robots performing similar feats autonomously.





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### A Mixed Bag of Opinions

Reactions from experts and the public alike have ranged from awestruck to alarmed. Some praise Tesla for pushing robotics into the mainstream, calling it a pivotal step toward useful home and workplace automation. Others are more sceptical.

Carl Berry, a robotics engineer, called Tesla's 2021 demo "the usual overblown hype."

Gary Marcus, a cognitive scientist, bet that no robot would perform all human tasks "by the end of 2023."

And Robert Silverberg, referencing the classic sci-fi tale *With Folded Hands...*, warned that Optimus echoes the fictional "humanoids" that perform all human tasks—eventually stripping humans of purpose and autonomy.

These concerns are not misplaced. If Optimus (or similar robots) becomes widespread, the implications for the labour market, personal freedom, and social dynamics could be profound.



### Opinion: Caution in the Face of Marvel

There is value in the role technology can play in improving life for older adults—whether through AI tools, accessibility apps, or medical devices. There's great potential in robots like Optimus helping with elder care, lifting heavy objects, or performing domestic chores. But we also urge caution.



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The Tesla Bot is still far from autonomous. And even when it becomes more capable, we must ask ourselves some hard questions:

- What rights and protections will humans have when working alongside humanoid robots?
- Will jobs for caregivers, factory workers, or even drivers vanish overnight?
- Who is accountable when a robot makes a mistake—say, dropping a child or malfunctioning during surgery?
- What ethical frameworks exist to guide how robots interact with us?

We must not let awe override scrutiny.

### A Warning for the Future

Robots like Optimus are no longer confined to the realm of sci-fi. They are arriving—gradually, then suddenly.

While Musk envisions Optimus dancing in kitchens and strolling on Mars, we must remain vigilant. With every technological leap, there is both promise and peril. If thousands of Optimus bots begin replacing humans in everyday roles, society will have to reckon with what it means to be useful, fulfilled, and needed.


More critically, when robots begin to outnumber human workers, we risk losing not just jobs, but the very human experience of challenge, purpose, and growth.

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### TEKZONE TIPS

#### NOTEBOOKLM

Your Smart Research Assistant in the Cloud

In an age of overwhelming information, wouldn't it be nice to have a personal assistant who reads everything for you, remembers the key facts, and can answer your questions instantly? That's exactly what Google's NotebookLM promises to do—an AI-powered research tool designed to help people gather, understand, and use information more effectively. And yes, it's a tool that seniors can benefit from too.



#### What is NotebookLM?

NotebookLM stands for "Notebook Language Model." It's a new experiment from Google that combines traditional note-taking with the power of artificial intelligence. You upload documents (like PDFs, Word files, Google Docs, or pasted text), and the system turns them into a smart, interactive notebook.

But here's where it gets clever: NotebookLM doesn't just store your notes—it understands them. You can ask it questions about the content you've uploaded, request summaries, or have it explain difficult terms or concepts. It's like having a personal librarian, tutor, and research assistant all rolled into one.



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### How Does It Work?

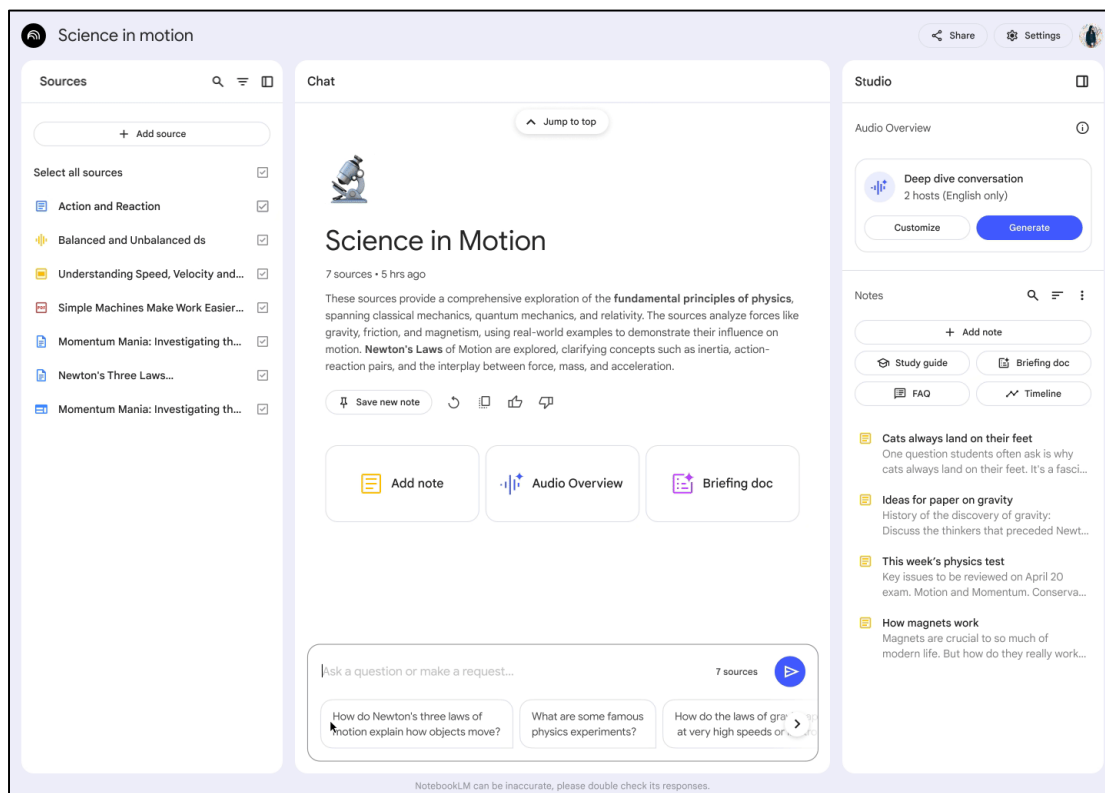
Once you sign into the NotebookLM website with a Google account, you can create a notebook and add your sources. These sources might be:

- Articles you've written
- Family history documents
- Research for a presentation
- Notes from a club meeting
- Or even scanned letters and emails

After uploading, you can interact with NotebookLM by typing questions like:

- "Summarise this document."
- "Who is the author referring to in this section?"
- "Explain this paragraph in simple terms."

It's like having a conversation with the content itself.





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### Why is This Useful for Seniors?

Many SeniorNet members are working on personal projects—whether it's writing a memoir, researching genealogy, keeping track of medical information, or organizing documents for a committee or club. NotebookLM can help you cut through the clutter and save hours of time.

For example:

- Genealogy: Upload historical documents and let NotebookLM help connect the dots.
- Family Archives: Summarise lengthy letters or diaries.
- Research: Preparing a talk? Let NotebookLM organise the facts and quotes for you.
- Learning: Upload articles or course materials and get explanations at your level.

Best of all, it's designed to be private and secure. Your data stays within your notebook and is not used to train future AI models. That's a win for privacy.

### A Word of Caution

NotebookLM is still experimental. It's powerful, but not perfect. Sometimes the AI might guess or give an incorrect answer. It's important to cross-check any crucial information, especially if you're using it for important decisions or public presentations.

### Final Thoughts

NotebookLM represents a new generation of AI tools designed to work for you, not replace you. For seniors who enjoy learning and exploring new technology, it's a brilliant companion. As always, if you need help getting started, reach out to a SeniorNet tutor—we're here to make technology simple and fun.

Try it at: <https://notebooklm.google.com>

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### TECH TIPS

#### BLOCKING GMAIL SENDERS

Blocking specific email senders in Gmail is easy. Here's how you can do it:

On Desktop:

1. Open Gmail in your browser.
2. Open an email from the sender you want to block.
3. Click the three-dot menu (:) in the top right corner of the email.
4. Select "Block [Sender's Name]".
5. Confirm by clicking "Block" in the pop-up.

On iPhone (Gmail App):

1. Open the Gmail app.
2. Open an email from the sender you want to block.
3. Tap the three-dot menu (:) in the top right.
4. Tap "Block [Sender's Name]".
5. Confirm your choice.

Once blocked, their emails will go directly to Spam instead of your inbox.

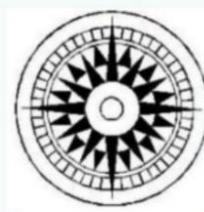
If you want to unblock someone:

- Find an email from them in Spam, follow the same steps, and tap "Unblock [Sender's Name]".
- Alternatively, go to Gmail Settings → Filters and Blocked Addresses, then unblock them there.



### Tech Home Help

- Independent pre-purchase technical advice
- Installing and configuring your new PC, printer or device
- Transferring data over to your new PC & clearing out your old one
- Help getting photos/scans off your camera, scanner or phone
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- PC 'housekeeping' to reduce program-clog and unwanted pop-up messages
- Checking your security against Viruses Spyware is current & working correctly
- Sorting files and photos, and organising an appropriate backup procedure to protect your data files



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