



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – February 2015

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Welcome to U3A 2015 and a special welcome to our new members. I have visited most new classes and have been to see the recruits who have taken over from retiring tutors. “Let’s Talk Books,” which meets in the Library, got off to a good start with some participants recommending it to others. Ian McLeod’s “Making the Most of the Internet” was over-subscribed, but Ian accepted a very large class for this, his first venture as a tutor!

Barry O’Connor, Terry Dillon and Beverley Lee have brought our web site up to date and Beverley is working with Barry to introduce a replacement web site, which will be easier for tutors and participants to post photos and reports to. We hope to have the replacement web site in place for second semester. We held two enrolment days this year, the second being held at Coinda. Both were judged a success and we will hold similar days next year.

The March Meet and Mingle will also include our AGM and elections for a number of positions. Can I ask for someone to stand for election as Publicity Officer? The position is not onerous and does not include the Newsletter production; however you would need to join our Executive Committee which meets once a month. We are a small committee and have a number of vacancies and we really need some more good organizers! If you are interested contact me or Judith for more information.

I want to thank Judith who is relinquishing her work as Publicity Officer and Corrie for her work as Treasurer. Bill Parris will take over the Treasurer’s

job after he and Jane return from Turkey, which they will visit soon on a Rotary Exchange.

Swanpool Cinema is hosting two fund raising events, the first to support Blaze Aid and the Uniting Church Fire Fencing Fund with two films being shown on Saturday 21st starting at 7.30pm. The second fundraiser is for Benalla & District ANZAC Commemorative Project with “Lighthorsemen” being screened at 1.30pm on the 19th April. Posters are on the U3A noticeboard in W4.

Terry Case
President

Attention Tutors and Convenors

W4 is available for photocopying/computer use or general course preparation on the 3rd Friday of the month 2.00-3.00 pm; (the same week as Meet and Mingle). This is also Chat n’ Chew Day.

We booked this time as we thought we would be photocopying the newsletter, however Bill Sykes’ old electoral office is being retained and they will continue to print the newsletter. This represents savings for us in costs and time for which we are very grateful.

The Centre is having to timetable W4 more intensively and you may have trouble accessing the room so we will keep the once a month Friday booking. Please let us know if you use the room at this time so we can decide whether to re book it in semester 2.

VALE Geoff Coats

One is mindful of examples of kindness, compassion and devotion as we honour the life and service of Geoff.

He, who for many years was an active participant in several U3A programs notably cycling and bush walking and contributed freely.

Geoff enjoyed a wide range of interests through membership of other organisations including Probus, car and vintage radio clubs.

He had many interests but three main hobbies—bikes, cars and radios.

Geoff was an “old school” style fixit man with the ability to excel in building and repairing many things while being a practical helper to many.

Above all Geoff was very devoted to his family. This is exemplified in his commendable caring for Betty including walking the wheel chair around town.

Geoff is remembered as an achiever who enjoyed company and was a friend to all.

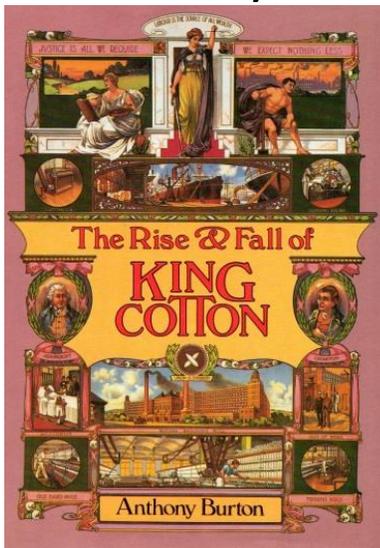
Noel Meagher

GROUP REPORTS

Armchair Traveller

We are meeting again on 17th March and going to a mystery location.

Armchair History: the Victorians



1837 was a momentous year for three important Victorians. Victoria became Queen, Benjamin Disraeli (a future Prime Minister) entered parliament and Charles Dickens became a celebrity when Pickwick Papers was published.

We will also look at the lives of the workers. Above is the jacket of one of the books I read during the holidays. The cover design is based on an early trade union membership certificate for cotton spinners. During Victoria's reign the Industrial Revolution came to its peak in Britain and the cotton industry was the source of new fortunes for factory owners and a harsh new world for the workers. In his novel Hard Times, published in 1854. Dickens examined the harshness of education and industry.

Art Appreciation

At our first gathering for 2015 we had 32 members to hear Contemporary Local artist Tony Flint speak on his latest works in the exhibition "Helter Skelter". He spoke of his early childhood experiences in the Opal Mines of outback Australia and his present concerns regarding the impact of large mining on the Australian Landscape. Tony's talk made the colours and paintings come to life. Our next meeting is on Monday 2nd March 10:00 am when The Gallery Director Bryony Nainby will speak with us about paintings from the Ledger Collection which should be most interesting.

Astronomy – Learning about Planets, Stars and the Universe

U3A astronomy February 2015 report

Terry Case showed us how to use most of the equipment. Use and location of the 'new' scanner is elusive until Terry has a spare moment.

It's always interesting to find out updates to current events in the sky each session. The sun is busy ejecting filaments at the moment. Our sun is unusual being a solo. Most stars are 'binary' often the same approx. size, revolving around each other, attracted by gravity. A new binary pair of stars has just been discovered that have one huge star, one tiny star- the tiny one having phases like the moon. We've all heard of the famous 'black holes' that suck everything in with no way out it seems. Many however throw out their own 'jets of energy', and one black hole has jets destroying a star forming area in a galaxy named 'the teacup' 1.1 billion light years away. Watch out! -Black Holes are probably in every galaxy including The Milky Way).

All these observations and much more (by various means) are contributing to our understanding of how stars (and thus planets) are formed and destroyed. As we're all part of this same universe it pays to find out what's out there.

Planet Jupiter is bright in eastern sky at night right now. 'Astronomy Benalla' is holding a viewing night at Winton Wetlands Saturday 21 Feb.

Talks, discussions, U-tube presentations a brilliant 40 minute U-tube of 'First second after the Big Bang' downloaded by Bev); photos (stunning photo sent in by Margaret 'Moon over North Pole at Sunset'); a talk on a local astronomy event (Excellent talk by John on his part in NASA funded meteorological balloons being sent many kilometres up into the atmosphere to discover more information on the sun's ejections) have all made the astronomy sessions interesting.

John has offered to talk about 'The evolution of stars' which he did a thesis on at James Cook Uni, Townsville --but at 600 pages it is a bit too long, and cutting it back to two pages may be too difficult. Of interest Euroa U3A have started an Astronomy program this year. Judi called in on our U3A Enrolment Day to ask about our Astronomy program. They plan to run theirs on similar lines.

Bev Morton /Jan Andrews
Co ordinators U3A Astronomy

Chat n' Chew

Our next Meet and Mingle will be held on Friday 20th March at Villa Thai Restaurant, Cnr Bridge and Salisbury Streets, Benalla, at 11.45 am. For bookings or cancellations please contact Shirley on 5762 6768 before Tuesday 17th March. All welcome.

e-Book Group

Our first session of the year started with everyone keen to receive their kindles, and find out which surprises were in store for them. The 9 titles selected (and added to the readers by Steven Scheller), came from a list jointly chosen by class members last year, representing a mix of classic and contemporary literature. The first book for 2015 is The Rosie Project, by Graeme Simsion, a current bestseller, which should promote a lively discussion on the evergreen problem of finding a mate in today's society. There are still some kindles available, so don't miss the opportunity to be part of a vital and stimulating group.

Garden Appreciation

February 26th

Meet at Centre car park 10 am, then to Brookfield Garden and Maze, 1121 Benalla-Whitfield Road, Myrree 5729 7507. Summer flowers, shade trees, rare plants and shrubs. Eryl will open her private

garden for us too. Will also take any of us who want to go into Maze. \$40 per person which includes choice of two mains and two desserts to be served alternately with buffet style tea and brewed coffee.

March 26th Meet at Rose Gardens 7.30 am.

for the Melbourne International Flower Show, Exhibition Building, Carlton. Bus and entry will cost \$55. Will need money and names by 12th March. Money can be left at the Centre in an envelope marked Garden Appreciation Trip – Attention Gwen.

April 23rd

Meet at Gwen Turners, 2/69 Arundel Street South at 10 am. Park in front of old Court House. We will then visit a beautiful display of Bonsai plants at Anneli home, 139 Arundel Street South, Benalla, 5762 3816, then back to my home 2/69 Arundel Street for byo lunch in the garden.

Gwen 5762 7017, 0438 627010

Garden Team

We saved ourselves from the shock of the first of February's heat by postponing our start by a week. Even so we stopped a little earlier than usual but I think we left a good imprint on Val's front garden with a quick sprucing up and pruning back. Afternoon tea was up to the usual standard and we left with some herb cuttings and an apple slice recipe.

In early March we will do the same, gathering at Shirlie's on the third Monday to avoid interrupting long weekend plans. We have the chance to put in a fifth Monday session (March 30th) and will finalise details when we meet on the 16th.

Investment Group 1

At the time of printing our Group will have met for our first meeting in 2015 which will have been Tuesday 20th January. Our members will have had the opportunity to reflect and speculate on where our markets will take us in the coming year. The stock market has not given us many pointers over the holiday period owing to the usual torpor associated with the "Silly Season" apart from fluctuation within a moderate band! Fund managers and analysts are as always divided so no doubt our members will again enjoy the exercise of being involved in their own research and of sharing knowledge!

The year is off to a good start for Investment Group No 1 as we get back to our usual agenda.

Apart from our normal programme where we discuss the stocks submitted each month for analysis plus our competition to find the best performing Spec Stock our members value and enjoy the fellowship associated with each meeting.

Investment Group 2

At our first meeting for 2015 in early February we had a very informative talk by Mr Ray O'Shannessy on reading Balance Sheets. Ray explained a lot of the terminology found in financial statements and guided us through the important pieces of information that we need to look for. Thank you very much Ray for increasing our knowledge of the subject.

We were also pleased to welcome three new members to our group at that meeting. We hope they enjoy our discussions throughout the coming year. Several of our members commented on the rises in the stock market in the previous three weeks, and expressed the hope that the trend is maintained in 2015.

The next meeting of Investment Group 2 will be on Friday 6 March at 2pm in W4.

Making the Most of the Internet

An interested group keen to 'make the most of the internet' met with new U3A tutor Ian McLeod for the first of six sessions on 11 February. Terry Case introduced Ian, reinforcing to the group that Ian's course is for those keen to venture beyond basic use of the internet.

Ian engaged us in exploring the nature of the internet; web browsers, Wikipedia and YouTube to establish a shared understanding of these topics. He focused on what is available free of charge on the net, including links to international newspapers (www.newspaperindex.com), I-view (www.abc.net.au/iview), SBS on demand (www.sbs.com.au/ondemand) and 'apps' he uses which the group might think about using, such as Adblocker to filter ads. Lots of valued information was introduced along the way in response to questions and comments.

A quick survey of learning needs of members resulted in a list of topics including strategies to reduce the frustration of using the internet when living in outlying districts; WIFI (what it is and how to access it); the 'Cloud'; internet safety and security and social media. There was also some interest in how to supplement retirement income by making money using the internet! Such topics, together

with Ian's own plans for the course, will make for an interesting six sessions!

Meet and Mingle

Meet and Mingle and U3A Annual General Meeting will be held at The Centre on Wednesday 18th March at 10 am. Nomination forms are included with this newsletter. Please think about nominating yourself for a position.

Music Appreciation

The first session for 2015 commenced with John presenting Symphony No 5 En Saga Belshazzar's Feast by Finnish composer, Sibelius (1865-1957), played by the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra. For the second part of the session John introduced us to an American composer who is not well known, William Henry Fry (1813-1864), although he is accredited as being the first native born American to write for large symphonic forces. His music presented was the Niagra Symphony and the Santa Claus Symphony, played by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Politics and Current Affairs

Our first politics class for the year was held the day after the leadership spill: we had plenty to discuss! Forthcoming topics include the supermarket duopoly and its impact on suppliers and consumers.

Singing for Fun

We have had a great roll up to start the year with attendances reaching 37. Our total number is now 40. We are looking forward to our old songs and to many new ones that are now in the pipeline.



Towards a Sustainable Future



There was much to discuss at our first meeting for the year, including Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre's external display board monitoring results of its solar program (see photo); the hydrogen powered Hyundai becoming available in Australia; the electronic highway likely to involve battery swap instead of recharging; the increase in hybrid systems in both cars (petrol/battery) and homes (solar and grid); the carbon positive cube sealed home on display at the City Square in Melbourne in the second week of February; the on line retail energy challenger Powershop, which allows consumers to choose renewable energy sources for their electricity—and more!

An article "Australia bucks global trend - Investment in renewable dives sharply as a government review of clean energy has spooked investments" stimulated discussion as did news that the ACT has set the aim of 70% renewable energy and may purchase wind towers from Portland, where a factory producing them is 'in mothballs'. We read that research is suggesting fuel reduction burning prior to wildfire decreases both the intensity of wildfire and the amount of carbon and greenhouse gases emitted to the atmosphere. An article on research that treed city streets stay cooler over summer than those devoid of trees led on to an interesting discussion on the role of grasses in cooling temperatures.

Coming up – Euroa's Environmental Seminar Series begins with 'Conversations, Climate Change and the Strathbogie Region' with Professor David Karoly and in Shepparton, a lecture by George Marshall explaining why our brains are hard wired not to accept climate change. More food for thought!

Walks

Report on Howqua River February 11

Five walkers set off upstream from Eight Mile Flat, on the "High Track" above the Howqua River. The temperature was about 30°, but a light breeze and occasional cloud made for pleasant walking. We reached our destination, Ritchies Hut, for lunch and enjoyed the informative notice boards, a pack of playing cards and the visitors book (which is now complete to overflowing). One of the comments we read said "the track is too long, it took six beers to make it"!!! It is a delightful area in a fairly remote location. We returned on the "low track" with twelve river crossings. Each crossing took longer as we enjoyed the cooling water, and one walker yielded to the temptation of a swim at the final crossing. The total distance was about 12km and the threatened storm waited till we were home. Thanks to our leader Trevor, and driver Neville. Vaughan Cowan.



Ritchies Hut and walkers

Next month's walk - Wednesday March 11

MOUNT BUFFALO – EAGLE POINT S-3-3

A very interesting circuit starting at the Reservoir, with great views from Eagle Point. Includes visits to the Devil's Couch and Og, Gog and Magog, with the return along Rocky Creek track.

Leader Sue Pendergast 5768 2403

Meet at Centre 8.00 am; depart 8.15

Wine Appreciation

Welcome to all and some points to note for the new comers in 2015. The group meets each month at the "Centre" car park—old tennis court—and we share transport.

To facilitate planning, especially for lunches, bookings are needed to either:

Noel Meagher 5762 3149 or Keith / Heather Rogers 5762 4086 preferably by the 3rd Wednesday ie Meet and Mingle day. Suggestions for venues are always welcome.

Wednesday 25 February

Meet at 10.30 am for travel to Silent Range Estate at Wangandary. Lunch at the Pinsent Hotel, Reid Street, Wangaratta.

Wednesday 25 March

Meet at 10.00 am for travel to Eagle Range Estate near Ovens. Lunch at Myrtleford.

Noel Meagher 5762 3149

Writing Workshop (Previously Benalla Writers)

This group is currently recruiting new members keen to write about their lives, to tell the stories which perhaps their families may not get around to asking about before it is too late.

In the first half of the workshop group members will be encouraged to present up to 500 words in narrative, first person memoir friendly prose (or other medium) on the topic chosen for ABC Open's upcoming '500 Words' project. The '500 words' topic for our next meeting on Monday 16th March between 2 and 4 pm will therefore be 'Lost in Music'.

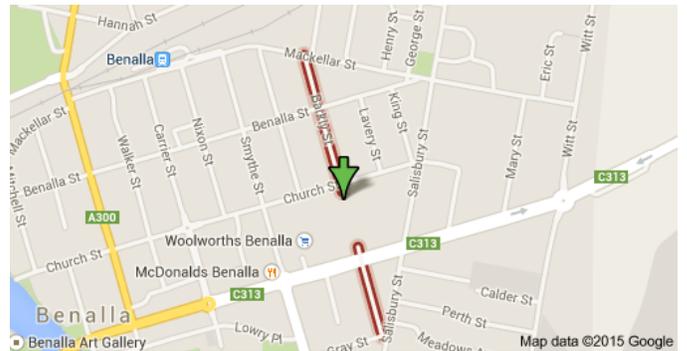
"Music can have a powerful effect on our emotions and create a lasting impact on our memory. Describe an experience when you got lost in a single piece of music, and what made it so unforgettable".

For more information and some examples of what others have written, go to ABC Open on <https://open.abc.net.au> and scroll down to the link to '500 Words – Lost in Music'

Following the sharing of these memoir pieces, the group will act as a sounding board for members keen to share individual projects relating to their life story. These could be ideas still in germination/early development; early drafts of memoir related short stories; non-fiction books; novels; poetry; storyboards for short movies and plays. At our February meeting, Laurie described with great affection an almost complete manuscript, 'A Life

with Roses' he would like to revisit and complete. Bev talked about beginning to piece together a timeline from fragments recorded in diaries, notebooks, letters and other ephemera found while sorting through boxes of papers in her shed.

Please think about joining in, or tell someone else you think might be interested in joining. The group meets on the third Monday of the month from 2 to 4 pm in W4 at the Centre.



Map showing Barkly Street Benalla.

The Centre is located almost where the green arrow is, behind Woolworths, but in Barkly Street. The easiest way to enter is from Bridge Street. Turn at the Aldi corner (not shown on map) into Barkly Street and park in the car park on the left, next to The Centre.

Once at The Centre. Walk up front steps through the foyer (mind the step) turn sharp right and room W4 is at the end of the walkway.



The Centre entrance

Community Events

Swanpool Events

Sunday 19th April at 1.30 pm.

A very special screening of 'The Light Horsemen'.

This is a community fundraiser with funds being donated to the Benalla & District ANZAC Commemorative Partnership Project.

Tickets \$20 per person which includes afternoon tea. Tickets available from the Swanpool; Cinema during normal opening times and for your convenience, you will be able to purchase them from the Benalla West Post Office.

Now for the really good news. Swanpool will again host the Bald Archy Exhibition this year. The exhibition will be on display at the Swanpool @ District Memorial Hall from the 4th to 19th July from 10 am to 4 pm every day.

Many of you visited the exhibition last year, so we are giving you advance notice, even before details have been released to the broader media! General admission is still only \$5, Concession \$4 and students \$2. Group bookings are welcome and we will again offer groups of between 30 and 60 the option of an evening 'Christmas in July' dining experience. Bookings for either daytime, or evening exhibition and/or dining packages can be made by email to Barry and Pamela O'Connor bjconnor@activ8.net.au or by telephoning 5768 2400.

Sincere thanks to Stephanie Ryan MP and the staff at her Carrier Street office, who have agreed to print the U3A newsletter each month.

President, Executive and members of U3A Benalla and District Inc.



Nomination Form for 2015 Executive Positions U3A Benalla and District Inc.

Return to the Secretary, Benalla and District U3A Inc.

P O Box 583, Benalla, 3672 by Wednesday 11th March, 2015

I nominate..... (print name) for the position of

Proposer
(print name)

Seconder
(print name)

Signature

Signature

I..... accept the nomination Signature

Date