



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – December 2022

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President's Report

What a fantastic morning we had at the November Meet and Mingle, with both the Recorder Group and the Singing for Fun Group participating in a concert for us. We also had the Patchwork Group showing a magnificent array of quilts and other articles they have expertly assembled during 2022. Well done and thank you to all three U3A Groups.

A few days later we had our Christmas lunch at the King River Café in Oxley. It was as though we had wound the clock back to 2019, with seventy-two members attending. The food was delicious and everyone really enjoyed themselves.

Last month we told you about the new courses that are being offered in 2023. These include "The Sky's the Limit" with Claire Rudolph, "The Wise Guy's Book Group" with David Palmer, "Ukes4Fun" with Heather Wallace, "The Jane Austen Book Club" with Meg Dillon, "Photography" with Rene Martens, and a Tech Savvy Help Group with Jenny Sawyer and Robyn Lukey.

This month we can confirm the offer of another two new groups for 2023. They are

"In the Lap of the Gods" with John Barry This course in Graeco Roman Religion and Mythology will explain Graeco Roman mythology in the context of religion as a whole and differentiate it clearly from modern religions. John is keen to "infuse those attending with the same sense of joy that I had when I read my first book on Graeco-Roman mythology at the age of ten."

"Enjoying the Internet" with Dawn Stephens A course for members keen to venture beyond the basics to find out more about what the internet can offer! Targeting PC and laptop users already comfortable with tasks such as online forms, emailing with attachments and managing files, there's an enormous range of possible content to explore. Members will be encouraged to contribute topics for the menu on offer and to practise the skills covered during the month. While not a 'hands on' course, devices may be brought to class to refer to.

My thanks to the Program Committee consisting of Geraldine McCorkell, Len Jeffers, Bev Lee, Dorothy Webber and myself who have spent four sessions putting together the timetable for 2023. We are really looking forward to all the new groups together with the continuing groups. Without Classroom 2 at the Benalla Senior's Centre, we would not have been able to fit all the activities into the timetable.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Convenors of two groups which are not continuing in 2023. Carolyn Sims has been Convenor of Meditation since 2019, Brian Harker who has been Convenor of The News: Fact or Fiction since 2020. I would also like to thank Heather Wallace, who initiated and has now handed over the reins of Cards '500' to Doug Smith, and Glen Chessells, who has co-convened Easy Walks for the past two years. Thank you also to members who stepped up during the year to co-convene groups, write newsletter reports, prepare presentations and take on other roles, including Lin Ryan, Joy Shirley, John Ellis, Janet Gourley, Jane Rushworth, Pat Treleaven, Shirley Swallow, Dorothy Webber, Heather Wallace, Bev Thornell and many others. I would like to thank you all for the effort you have made with your groups.

Margaret Jenkins, President

Group Reports

A Taste of Art

A visit to the Broken River Painters studio in the Barc Huts precinct this week found a number of artists absorbed in painting, including U3A member, Gary Edwards. Gary loved art at school and is finding time, after a busy engineering career, to paint. He's come up with an interesting concept for his first series of paintings, family homes from his early life. Using old photographs as a catalyst, he is being mentored by Broken River Painters Mike O'Connor and Carol Perry. What a wonderful way to reminisce!



Bev Lee

Art Appreciation

November – 'I Wish I'd Told You' – Claire Bridge and Chelle Destafano

At our most recent Art appreciation we experienced something different - a lecture in Auslan.

To comprehend a lecture in Auslan we needed an interpreter. So, we had an artist telling her story and we had an interpreter watching her symbolic hand and arm movements and explaining to us what she was saying.

What the artist was saying was interesting. She did not hold back in telling us the difficulties a young deaf person experiences and what we can do to alleviate it. There are many obstacles that a deaf person has to cope with that a hearing person never considers. Suffice to say there are real problems that are difficult to overcome. Our speaker explained that the invention of the Auslan language was a revelation to her and she had to fight to learn it and to get other deaf people to learn it. Apparently, it was not fashionable to learn Auslan in its early days.

The basic premise of her lecture was that Auslan should be learnt by everyone. It was interesting to experience listening to a lecture through an interpreter. There was one slightly humorous moment when the sound system mal-functioned and the hearing people were subjected to a loud dose of reverberation coming through the speakers. We had the experience of hearing a loud thudding electrical echo when of course our lecturer was not aware of the problem. This was a perfect example of irony.

Coming up at First Mondays on Monday 5 December 10-11am: Join Jacqui Stockdale for a talk on her exhibition, **'The Outlaws' Inn**. Jacqui will share her process, practice, and dive deeply into her interest in the story of Ned Kelly and other dominant narratives of Australian colonial folklore.

Neville Gibb

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

The coming of the Festive Season was celebrated in November, with reminiscing on 'Christmas past' and a spread of Christmassy fare, from cherries and other summer fruits to shortbread, mince tarts, ginger biscuits, chocolates, cakes, enjoyed during the break.

November's topic, **'Triggers'**, provided rich pickings, with 'Escape to the Country' evoking memories of Heather Hartland's childhood in Wales. The song 'I want to be Bobby's Girl' reminded Graeme of his childhood barber, 'Mac', while a recent direction to 'Duck' reminded him of his maternal grandfather exclaiming 'Duck' to his grandchildren when driving under a bridge in his Vanguard sedan. A visit to FCJ Convent reminded Ray of an incident involving Sister Brendan leading to "Poetic Justice (serve her right!)", while Cup Day reminded him of a serious car accident many years ago after spending a happy day at the

Cup with friends. Neville wrote of triggers which recall engaging memories of each of his sons, with 'The Simpsons' featuring more than one once.

A comment when reading a review of two books on the Vietnam War reminded Graham of purchasing an 'au dai' for his future wife when he was on a peace keeping mission to Ho Chi Minh city in 1970. The article also triggered memories of the unanticipated impact of a visit to the Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island many years later.

Bev described how listening to a radio interview recently led her to reflect on the impact of the deaths of the Balibo 5 in East Timor in 1975 on people from her past. On a lighter note, Carmyl shared a delightful story full of memories triggered by a visit from 'Sharon nee Wilson', born two days before Carmyl's son Stephen in Merbein in 1968. "It was 52 years since I'd had the pleasure of again sharing lunch with Sharon nee Wilson." Heather Wallace shared an engaging story about the way in which 'hearing whistling' always reminds of her father, and 'smelling cigar smoke' of her maternal grandfather.

For the alternative topic, '[One Moment This Year](#)' - Marg wrote about finding the death certificate and whereabouts of the grave of her great grandfather, Percy Watkinson, who died in Paris in 1907; while Bev Morton wrote about 'A Chance Encounter' with a woman passing by and unexpected sharing of happy memories spent growing up in Black Rock near the Half Moon Bay in Melbourne.

In her catch up story, '[The Sky's the Limit](#)', 'Exploring the Universe' convenor Bev Morton expanded the notion of the sky to the universe, while Barry's catch up story 'This (Flexible) Life' provided a rich overview of the flexibility (and resilience) demonstrated as he negotiated his working life.

It will soon be 2023! The topic list for next year will be available on Enrolment Day, 11 January from 9.30-11.30 am, with the first class in our new timeslot (the Third Monday) on February 20th from 2 to 4pm. Enjoy a relaxing holiday break!

Beverley Lee

Bird Watching

Group outing to Nason Springs, Warby Ranges, Thursday 10 November 2022

We had an excellent birdwatching outing to Nason Springs, on Taminick Gap Road in the southern Warbys on 10 November. In the first 15 minutes we had views of four raptors: pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles, a Whistling Kite, a Little Eagle and a Brown Falcon. This is a great area to view raptors as they fly above the hills. When they had all disappeared from view, the woodland birds appeared along the track beside the gully. It was a day for black and white birds. In addition to Australian Magpies, Magpie-larks and Willie Wagtails, we had lovely views of 2 of our rarer black and white woodland birds: Restless Flycatcher and a male Hooded Robin. Then a beautiful small finch, the Diamond Firetail, landed nearby. We walked a little way up the hill for eye-level views of a tiny female Mistletoebird. Attached photo by Andie Stevenson.



Other birds of note included Rainbow Bee-eater, Brown Treecreeper, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and Red-rumped Parrot. All up we recorded 26 bird species for the morning.

Here is the link to the bird list on the eBird website: <https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S122324294>

We enjoyed a fine, sunny morning for our November outing to Nason Springs in the Warbys. At the outing, we discussed the option of an end of year lunch to finish the semester, and came up with the following arrangement.

Date: Thursday 1 December 2022

Location: Winton Wetlands visit, followed by lunch at Mokoan Hub Café

Meet: Car park behind the Seniors Building in Benalla at 10.30am (note later time)

We will drive to Winton Wetlands, for a late morning birding walk. The wetlands are full after heavy spring rainfall. I have booked lunch at the café at 12.30pm. I know the date does not suit everyone. Apologies especially to those in Singing for Fun who have a Christmas function that day.

Kathy Costello Mob 0447 625755

Brain Games

Words, sequence puzzles and memory training gave a range of challenges in October, but in November a smaller group concentrated on clue types common in cryptic crosswords. Thus, we tested our recall of such things as foreign phrases, homophones (due & dew), and Roman numerals (vivid). Cryptic are best approached with mental flexibility, so we warmed up by drawing mirror images of such objects as a curly cobra and a yacht.

Elspeth Maconachie

Bushwalking - Easy Walks



Despite an encouraging recce some days prior (pictured), the ongoing flooding and road closures meant that this walk had to be cancelled. This was only done after much thought and study of the rain radar, but we will return it to the calendar for 2023, and hope that the weather is kinder. The views across the flooded wetlands, and the amount of wildlife, have been amazing, and hopefully people have been able to enjoy them as the roads open up.

Wednesday 7th December: Christmas lunch

We will be leaving the Seniors' carpark at 12 noon, for a 12.30 lunch at the Tatong Tavern, where we can reminisce about our year of walking, and plan for 2023. Car sharing is available, and any latecomers who have not notified Glenys are asked to ring the Tavern direct.

Wednesday 1st March 2023: Corowa

Despite stepping back as convenor, Glen has offered to start our new year of walking with a trip to Corowa. This historic town, known for its role in the Federation conferences, has some beautiful trails along the Murray River, shared with its sister town of Wahgunyah. Further details in the February newsletter.

And finally, both the 'Victoria Walks' Facebook page, and the Mallacoota based 'Footmobiles' are recommended for anyone looking for walking inspiration over the summer. Like us, the Footmobiles meet regularly to explore their region, with the added bonus of beautiful beaches!

Glen Chessells, Julie McNeill

Coin Collectors

Coin Collectors met on 21st November with five members in attendance. Pre-Christmas engagements meant a number of our members were apologies.

Excitement of the group centred around the release by RAM (The Royal Australian Mint) of a 2022 colored Remembrance Day \$2 poppy coin. The original 2012 \$2 coin had a very low mintage of around 0.5M coins. This made it very collectable due to its rarity with the current eBay price anywhere from \$400 to \$2,000 depending upon condition. The RAM has now minted a limited 2022 version which was to be available on line from 3rd November. The demand was that great that their website crashed. The coin will now be available via a RAM ballot closing on 26th November, at the original purchase price of \$15. If you were in the ballot and secured a coin, consider yourself having acquired a valuable investment.

At our meeting, a number of interesting coins were circulated for inspection. These included English coins of the 18/19th century including halfpennies and pennies. Of particular note were the coins covering four English monarchs: Victoria 1, Edward 7th, George 5th and George 6th.

Interesting to note that as the United Kingdom prepares to start issuing coins with His Majesty King Charles III, one might notice a key feature you think would be a staple: the monarch wearing a crown. This isn't the first time a monarch hasn't worn a crown on a coin. Previous British kings are known not to wear crowns on coins that feature their portraits.

One of our members visited the Royal Australian Mint Canberra in early November 2022. He purchased the latest \$2 colored coin depicting the 75th anniversary of Australian Peacekeepers. He also reported that on the 3rd November that people lined up to purchase the expected release of \$2 red poppy coin stretched more than 300 metres.

Our members at the meeting used the app [Coinoscope](#). The app is free and simply by taking a photo of the coin it can identify the coin's details, particularly useful for foreign coins and those without any legible writing. After identification, the details can be put into your web browser to see its selling price on eBay.

Doug Smith

Collectors

Jewellery was the theme for our November gathering and such a collection there was! There were many brooches in all shapes, sizes and themes – animals, birds, flowers, geometric, Christmas etc. There were matching sets of necklaces, brooches, rings and earrings. One beautiful set was a symmetrical setting of Burmese jade and pearls.

Watches also featured; some inherited and others as 21st birthday presents (long ago!). There were two Rolex watches from the 1930's and a 1920's pocket watch with the keys for winding still attached.

Necklaces included a locket with a picture of a loved one inside, a cross; and, a long and pretty carved jade-like one. There were also rings some featuring opals.



Subject to confirmation, our next gathering will be at 10.00am on 6th February 2023. The theme will be *recipe books* - old ones and favourites. Also, old individual inherited recipes that remain family favourites.

We would welcome more participants in our group. We are not serious antique collectors; just a happy group of people reminiscing on a theme

Janet Gourley

Community Singing

At the November Community Singing Brian Greed chose songs from our usual Song Book 2 for the first session, and then songs from the Tram Book for the second session. Everyone enjoyed the variety of songs which included "Click go the Shears" and "Waltzing Matilda".

As this was our last Community Singing for 2022, we had some Christmas cookies for morning tea. At the end of the morning everyone gave Brian a big round of applause as a thank you for his fantastic playing for us during the year. With best wishes for Christmas and hoping to see you all in 2023.

Margaret Jenkins

Creative Writing

I was disappointed to miss the October class and was pleased the class had gone ahead as usual. Actually I was not very disappointed as I was in Tasmania helping our son celebrate his 50th birthday!

Hints: 'This month we discussed some grammar traps. Firstly, we talked about when to use apostrophes, looking at some examples of correct and incorrect usage. One simple example was the difference between "its" and "it's". "Its" is around ownership and "it's" is what is known as a contraction of "it is". We also looked at some common spelling mistakes/confusions, for example "principal" and "principle". One thought for working out which to use is that the principal of a school is a pal, so use "PAL".

Our challenge: We had a very brief challenge, identifying words from a description, with the only clue being the number of letters in the word was the same as the Scrabble value of the first letter of the word. It was made more difficult as some of us had not played Scrabble for many years.

Our stories: For our written work to share with the class there were three prompts:

- **The lady with a troubled look on her face**
- **Daffodils danced in the breeze their tiny yellow trumpets exuding music to willing listeners**
- **The reflections on the still water of the lake, did not reveal what lay beneath**

A range of new stories were shared this month. Many covered issues that are common to lives today – family violence, bereavement, mental health. And as happens on occasion one of the contributions was a poem – about how inspiration had failed in finding the right story to write. The poem was brilliant.



The topics for our **12 December** class are:

- **She/he stood on the balcony**
- **She sat staring at the screen. The words of betrayal sliced into her like a blade. An intimate and intense email meant for her boyfriend but mistakenly sent to her.**
- **The rain was so heavy she/he could not see to make the right-hand turn, so she/he turned left**

We plan to continue writing over the Christmas break, with a challenge to write everyday part of the plan.

Joy Shirley

Exercises for Fun



After a brief exercise class at the last session for 2022, the Class of 2022 sat down to share a sumptuous morning tea and a chat. Lin took the opportunity to thank Helen for her dedication and enthusiasm over the past year, in spite of recent personal challenges.

So, on behalf of the whole class, Lin thanked Helen and presented her with a Gift Voucher.

Until 2023... Bev Thornell



Exploring the Universe

On The Shoulders of Giants.

Stepping back in time.... On February 5th. 1675 Isaac Newton wrote in a letter to fellow scientist Robert Hooke, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

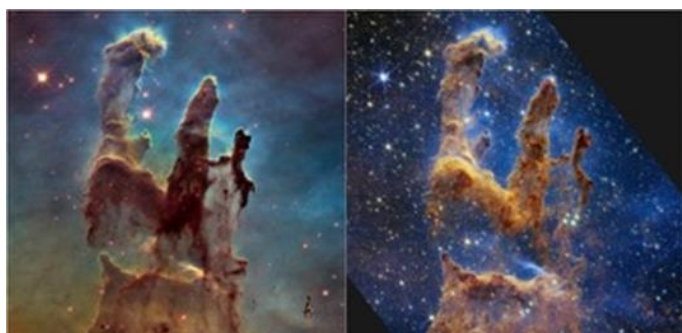
The giants we are referring to at 'Exploring the Universe' are the telescopes great and small that have paved the way for the mighty James Webb In-space Telescope.

We reviewed films of four; the 'Anglo-Australian Telescope' at Siding Springs, Coonabarabran. The unusual in a small table-like Radio Telescope at the designated radio silent zone of the Murchison Observatory in W.A. that found evidence of the first stars.

The 'Spitzer Space Telescope' that orbited Earth at an altitude of 586 km was the first general purpose infrared telescope and operated in cool mode for 5 years preceding the 'James Webb Telescope'. Also the 'Very large Telescope' in the dry atmosphere of the Atacama Desert of Chile where the "seeing" is excellent.

The greatest giant of them all is the Hubble Space Telescope. A selection of our topics:

The Pillars of Creation:



With new images from the James Webb telescope of The Pillars of Creation, we had a chance to compare them.

The Pillars of Creation are a small part of the Eagle Nebula about 6,500 light years from Earth.

This type of pillar arises when massive newly formed stars give off stellar winds and intense ultraviolet radiation, pushing material into

compressed dense pillar shapes of cold gas and dust, creating conditions for star formation.

Wolf Rayet Duo 140:

'The Webb Telescope captured the action between two elliptically orbiting stars.

It shows 17 concentric dust rings emanating from the stars, like a trail of age rings in a tree.

One Star is a massive giant known as a Wolf Rayet Star. When they pass closely every 8 years their stellar winds meet and like hands kneading dough, transform gas into dust.



(Having resisted the class's desire to go outside to protest against the 'Stupidimundos Homosapius' of election officialdom, we'd settled down to an enjoyable last day of Astronomy and Cosmology for the year!)

We wish everyone a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IZ8ujdxULU>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_KBHlo_xs

Bev Morton

Family Research

Everyone had such a great story to tell ... yet again! November's topic was 'Heroes and Villains'.

Sometimes finding a "hero" was straight forward. Bev's family boxer Tancy Lee, with his unusual name, was a physical talent with amazing 1920's celluloid records, a lifelong community commitment, and tragic early death as a result of an accident. Dawn's character was introduced to us in a sepia photo showing her uniformed grandfather sitting proudly and confidently upon his horse as he prepared to lead an Anzac Day March in Melbourne. A member of the light horseman of WW1, he was seriously wounded in battle, then given 6 weeks to heal before being sent back to the war zone. An incredible, sadly not uncommon experience, and one which he carried with him on his return to "normal" life with his family and friends. Some enigmatic characters earned both monikers of "hero" and "villain". David's relative earned his vast

wealth through some eyebrow raising means, while also becoming noted for his extremely generous distribution of his wealth as a philanthropist.

The joy of infinite possibilities emerged with both Graeme M and Graham J's stories of heroes in plain sight. Graham J's story was predicated on a reported conversation between Barack and Michele Obama at a restaurant owned by an ex-boyfriend of Michele's. Barack asked her "So if you had married him, you would now be the owner of this lovely restaurant," to which Michelle responded, "No. If I had married him, he would now be the President." This incited Graham to review an "ordinary" relative, and to re-discover her, not simply as a woman of her era, with all that went with that, but also as a woman with extensive, successful and influential business skills. Marg's hero, her great, great aunt Helene, established a successful wholesale clothing business in Flinders Lane in the mid 1880's, also evidence of extensive business skills. Not all heroes were long gone. In a very poignant and rich story-telling, Malcolm described a living tribute to his talented, respected, and much loved cousin who, in the 50's through to the 70's, had designed an amazing national transport legacy through central and eastern Australia.

Storytelling at any age can be a rich, insightful and inspiring experience. We love stories in our childhood and then we become family historians. Our "Hero or Villain" discussion was just so.

In our Pains and Gains segment, Graham reported listing his family research on a UK website and receiving feed-back from a distant relative, also the pleasure experienced on learning a grandson on drawn upon the knowledge of family history he'd shared with him during a school excursion in Sydney. Graeme, pleased with himself last month for completing the paternal family tree, now realises he still has the maternal family tree to complete! Andi used photographs to report on her discovery of the unmarked graves of relatives in the Coburg, Old Melbourne and Fawkner cemeteries. She is now considering the possible marking of some of these. David Hall received a link from My Heritage containing possible details of the location of a family grave in Kilmore, while Bev found the location and family sites of her Irish Lee family via a tiny, hand-written mention on her great grandfather's baptism certificate of 'Greaghmagloch', a townland confirmed later in a Griffith Valuation entry for Michael Lee. Location was also on Jane's mind, as she spoke of developments in the Family Research Group's quest for a new home.

'In Search Of...' is the first topic for 2023 - 'Have you found yourself needing to search extensively for someone who holds a fairly central place in your family tree? Begin by describing the details you had at the beginning of your search. How did you apply yourself to get a better sense of their lives and their relationship with other people? What did you find out? Choose someone you haven't written about.'

'Time Travelling!' is the alternative - 'Have you ever felt that you have been time travelling into the lives or your ancestors, or that you have grown very close to a particular person or family in your family tree?'

Our end of year celebration? 'Coffee and Cake' at the Northo on Wednesday 14th December at 10.30 am.

Jane Rushworth, Barry O'Connor and Bev Lee

Family Research – Beginners

With three sessions this month, discoveries through ancestry and Trove and additions and edits to family trees abounded. Julie brought along a tiny leather covered notebook in which her grandmother, then later her mother, kept notes and newspaper cuttings, enabling her to find out more about a great aunt, while Helen brought along her father's weathered leather wallet containing old pay slips and other documents.



The writing and sharing of stories related to current research began in November, with Val revisiting her story about 'Irish Jack' Hernan, incorporating humorous asides which made it very engaging to listen to. Julie's story contained whimsical elements, such as the place of songs in the handing down of family culture

over time, which we could all relate to. Helen drew on recent research in a story which made a complex, overwhelming family structure clear and easy to follow. Robyn's idea for her 'Hero or Villains' story, led to an on-line Trove search and discussion of a court case involving a tragic murder which also revealed detailed, previously unknown, information about Robyn's forebears' early life in Australia.

Guest speaker Elizabeth Kearns' session on working with free Irish Records was inspirational. Elizabeth had requested 'cues' from class members beforehand and threw light and possible directions to follow up for Julie, Val, Bev and Dawn. Elizabeth's presentation, supported by explanatory notes tracking records relating to her forebear, John Dolan, provided a wealth of ideas to support us in working with Irish records. Elizabeth's talk also inspired Robyn to look into the Irish DeLargy line in her largely Scottish family tree. Thank you so much, Elizabeth.

Also, this month, we welcomed Asha, who came along as a 'taster'; discussed Bev's case studies and Jane Rushworth's slide presentation on ethical issues in family research, and reviewed the Family Research – Beginners course description, agreeing that having two sessions at the beginning of the month works well, with the second session as a hands-on session.

Our final session for 2022 was celebrated with shortbreads, slices, Christmas cake and a presentation by guest speaker Maggie Hollins. Maggie shared the engaging story of her ancestor Betsy Trim, who came to Australia as a 16-year old via a bounty scheme in the early 1830's, when men outnumbered women in the colony. Maggie also brought along two collage-based art works she has created to recognise Betsy's life. Thank you for a delightful presentation, Maggie.

Beverley Lee

Film Discussion Group

It was good to be back together to discuss the film for this month – **"Ticket to Paradise"**.

David and Georgia, two divorced parents who can't stand each other, head to Bali after their daughter, Lily, announces her plans to marry a local islander she just met while on holiday. They decide to put aside their differences and work together to stop the wedding, believing that doing so will keep Lily from making a dreadful mistake similar to their own.

The main characters are David Cotton (George Clooney), Georgia Cotton (Julia Roberts), his ex-wife and Lily Cotton (Kaitlyn Dever), their daughter. Maxime Bouttier played Lily's fiancé, Gede. Lily meets Gede on her holiday between finishing her legal studies and starting her first job. She decides her life belongs on the island with him rather than in a big city but is suspicious her parents would try to prevent the wedding. Her parents' plan to stop the wedding fall apart. They eventually realise they cannot live their daughter's life and so support her marriage. When leaving the island after the wedding, they realise their mistake had not been getting married, but divorcing and jump off the boat taking them to the mainland to catch their flight home, heading back to the island. This was a scene some of the class thought did not make sense.

The film was nice light-hearted entertainment. There was no need for concentration. The interaction between the main characters worked well. The setting (mostly filmed in Queensland) was perfect for the storyline. Our conversation went on to the current concept of "helicopter parenting" where parents try to control the lives of their children.

It was rated as 3-4/5. A fun film, with nothing too deep.

Our next film class is on **14 December**. We will be discussing the film "Mrs Harris Goes to Paris". A widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress and decides that she must have one of her own.

Joy Shirley

Garden Appreciation

Thank you all for your company this year

We visited many beautiful gardens, large and small, met lovely people and had great time. Our last outing was to Winton Wetlands café. The presentation, given by Rine Cooper, was very interesting. The presentation was followed by lunch and lots of chatting.



We miss Ruth & Alan Marquand and Marilyn Fry who are now unable to attend through illness. To all who are unwell or are caring for ones they love in recovery, you are in our thoughts. We look forward to seeing you all next year. Merry Christmas and a happy New Year! Stay safe 🧤🧴🎄🌲

Gwen Turner

Garden Team

Great work done by a keen team. Started in drizzle but ended in sunshine at Bill's in late October. At Rupe's in November there were some rainspots to dodge, but again the team worked well.

It's always a pleasure to have cheery company and lovely next day to survey the progress on tasks which had been starting to look daunting.



Elsbeth Maconachie

German – Advanced

Now at the end of the year, I believe the German group has been a wonderful experience for all concerned, including me. Every member has gathered an advanced knowledge of the basic German language in vocabulary and pronunciation. It is now time to overcome the natural inhibition to speak freely using the accumulated wealth of vocabulary and not be afraid to ask questions if unsure of a word. My hope is that we make big advances next year in that respect. For those members or new interested persons who wish to start afresh, we will give you a new beginners course next year. I thank every member for giving me the opportunity to freshen up my own German knowledge and Beverley Lee for helping me to make the weekly sessions easy to present. I wish everybody connected to U3A a Merry Christmas time and a Happy New Year. *Frohe Weinacht und ein glückliches Neujahr.*

Horst Gunther

Investment

At the November meeting of Investment, we looked at which sectors of the share market had made the most gains over the last year, and also for the period from the beginning of this financial year to mid

October 2022. The sectors looked at included the energy, information technology, resources and financial sectors as well as the materials, communication services, health care and industrials sectors.

We also studied the possible effects of the recent Federal Budget on the share market.

Another segment we had was on the best shares that we had all come across during the month.

Malcolm Sanders showed us a comparison on the takeover offer of Pandal by Perpetual, and posed the question is it worth it? The figures he showed were very interesting.

I am pleased to announce that Malcolm Sanders and John Hanlon will be taking over as joint Convenors of Investment in 2023. I have enjoyed my years as Convenor since 2013, but feel that it is time for a new approach. My thanks to everyone who has contributed to our discussions during the last nine years.

The final meeting of Investment for 2022 will be held on Monday 5 December at 1.30pm in our U3A room.

Margaret Jenkins

Let's Talk Books

Our November meeting gave an insight into some different reads.

Anne introduced us to *The Paper Trail* by Alexander Monro, the history of paper, first made in China 2000 years ago, a wonderful invention. Anne also enjoyed *The Lies of the Shiek* by Tim Crawford. Lyn had something different for us this month *The Art of Love* by Kate Bryan, the stories behind the romances and lives of some of the most fascinating couples of the art world. The only criticism of this book was that there were no photos, only sketches of the people written about. As usual Noelle gave us some different reads *I'm not Scared* by Niccolo Ammaniti set in Southern Italy, a nine year old boy discovers a secret so terrible and momentous that he dare not tell anyone about it.... *The promise* by Damon Galgut gives us a glimpse into the decline and fall of a white South African farming family, a Booker prize winner this provides food for thought. Moira bought an article from the paper about the just published autobiography of Ash Barty, a story that will be sure to please, in Ash's words 'her biggest opponent was inside her head'.

Great Cat Tales provided a laugh when the White House Cat – Slippers – rolled over and wanted a tummy scratch from world leaders as they left a meeting. *Perfect Murder Perfect Town* JonBenet the six-year old murdered beauty queen, written by Lawrence Schiller, doesn't answer any questions whilst *Cause of Death* by Cyril Wecht, a forensic pathologist, probes the evidence in the controversial deaths of the Kennedy's, Elvis Presley and many others. He studies autopsy reports and the conclusions are very good.

Claire had some fascinating reading in the *Code Breakers* by James Phelps, during World War 2 an Australian and his mostly female team cracked one of Germany's most complex codes, an excellent book. The wonderful *Marie Cure* by Robert Read gives a glimpse of her childhood in Poland and marriage to a French physicist, good story. We all love a romance - *Still Life* by Sarah Winman is the unlikely friendship between a British soldier and an alleged spy in wartime Tuscany.

A couple of books enjoyed by Lorraine were *Girl Forgotten* by Karyn Slaughter and also *Murders at Fleat House* by Lucinda Riley. Whilst on murders Corrie enjoyed *Murder and Mayhem*. Dorothy prefers listening to books and her favourites this time were *The Younger Wife* by Sally Hepworth, *Before She Disappeared* by Lisa Gardner and *100 Years of Dirt* by Rick Morton. Last but not least, *All Our Shimmering Skies* by Trent Dalton, set in Darwin in 1942 was sometimes brutal, sometimes magical.

We will meet for our last Let's Talk Books on the 5th December and celebrate a great year of reading some wonderful and interesting books.

Geraldine McCorkell

Lifeball

Sadly, the ongoing rain and flooding of parts of Benalla meant that we have been unable to return to the Indoor Recreation Centre, and will need to wait for the all-clear from Council in the New Year. This has affected all groups using the Centre. We did, however, enjoy a lively morning tea to celebrate making it through 2022, and thank Marlene for organising, and for much laughter as we shared some "secrets" about ourselves.

Lifeball is a team sport based on basketball, suited to any fitness level, and played weekly on Mondays. The newsletter will be updated about our return date, and Marlene can also be contacted on 0428210944.

Julie McNeill

Meditation

I would like to thank the U3A members who have been part of the Meditation group over the past few years. I hope you enjoyed the group and achieved the relaxation and calm that we all strive for. I am taking a break for a while and this group will not be continuing in 2023. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Caroline Sims

Meet and Mingle

The November Meet and Mingle held in the Auditorium of the Benalla Senior's Centre on Wednesday 16th November attracted the largest audience at Meet and Mingle we have seen in 2022. Anne Nelson, Vice President of U3A Benalla acted as MC for the morning.



Anne introduced Janet Douglas, Convenor of the Recorder group. Janet and the Recorder group played nine songs including a selection of folk songs and a Christmas carol. The Recorder group, which started in 2018, included descant, treble and tenor recorders in the performance. Everyone was impressed by the harmony provided by the group.

Following the recorder group, Anne introduced Margaret Jenkins, Convenor of the Singing for Fun group who introduced the three Leaders of Singing for Fun to the audience: Kieran Smith, Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman. There was a round of applause for Gwen Barnes who has been pianist for the Singing for Fun group for approximately 15 years.

Each Leader had chosen a set of five or six songs which included Danny Boy by Kieran Smith, the Changing of the Guard by Brian Greed and the Holy City by Margaret Merriman. The audience had a wide range of songs to enjoy.

Anne also introduced Dorothy Webber, Convenor of the Patchwork Group. Many of the Patch workers had brought along quilts and other items which had been made during 2022. These were on display on tables along the eastern end of the auditorium.

Morning tea and a chat completed what was a diverse and very entertaining morning. Our thanks to all who participated.



Margaret Jenkins

Music Appreciation

"Every task, goal, race and year comes to an end...therefore, make it a habit to FINISH STRONG" (Motivational guru Gary Ryan Blair) which is exactly how our year of music has wound up.

You may say that November has been full of "endings". Berloiz' Symphony Fantastique a saw a strong and happy end of his pursuit of the hand of Harriet Smithson; Schumman's 3rd Symphony marked the end of his compositional life (although not a happy ending); Gustav Holst gave up on astrology after composing "the

Planets”; while Beethoven’s 5th Symphony came about when his deafness saw him give up on being a concert pianist and turn to composing full time.

These are some of the works that saw us finish this year “STRONG”. And, of course, no music year is ever complete without some reference to Handel’s “Messiah” which is exactly how our year ended up. Recordings and programme notes are all there on our U3A website.



Meanwhile, as TS Eliot observed: “to make an end is to make a beginning”. 2023 will see Music Appreciation widen its source of recordings and music selections with a little bit of innovation. A fascinating year awaits.

Finally, did you know that the original meaning (in English) for “merry” is “strong”? Have a “strong” Christmas.

Bill Squire

Page Turners

The Great Circle, Maggie Shipstead

A blockbuster of a book that follows the aviation career of Marion, a determined Montana girl who overcomes all obstacles to learn to fly. She flies booze in the prohibition era, delivers aircraft to air bases in England during World War 2 and finally plans a dangerous trip round the world flying over both poles. Shipstead also makes this a dip into American history during the twentieth century as Marion’s story progresses. She also provides fabulous research into dangerous flying conditions and the lives of many of the great early aviators, quite a few of whom died in crashes due to the primitive plane instrumentation of the times. A book you will either love or reject but a great holiday read for many.

Coming up in December: **‘The Return’**

Meg Dillon

Play Reading

We had eight eager members at our recent Play Reading group. We read the play **‘The Garden of Granddaughters’**, a comedy written by Australian Playwright Stephen Sewell in 1993.

“Max, a world-renowned Australian conductor, returns unexpectedly to Melbourne with his wife Moriley, for a family reunion. Their three daughters Michelle, Fay and Lisa, are in various stages of decline, success and reproduction. Their granddaughters are full of hope, promise and childhood dreams. Most of life’s questions are avoided and ignored in this loving comedy by one of Australia’s most important playwrights.”

There were lots of laughs as we read through the play.

It was also great to welcome back Jenny McKenna.

If you would like to join us in enjoying reading plays on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 9.30am to 12noon in the U3A meeting room at the Seniors’ Community Centre, you would be most welcome.



John Ellis

Politics and Current Affairs

A number of areas in Politics were discussed this month. The State Election and whether it was being conducted on the personalities of the respective party leaders, on their policies or their past performances. There were a lot of promises made by both parties, and at one stage it appeared that one was trying to outdo the other. Also, some of the promises are to be achieved a few years down the track, not in the next term of parliament, no matter who wins on the day.

There was more controversy in the United States, with the Republicans holding the congress and the Democrats winning, even though by a narrow margin, the Upper House. This result surprised many voters. Donald Trump announced that he would again be running for President in 2024, though he appeared to be out of favour with many voters. Only time will tell.

The discussion also considered the proposed Voice to Parliament, the demolition by Russia of Ukraine and its energy systems, the UK parliament, as well as NATO.

Heather Wallace

Saturday Cards – 500

What a wonderful way to finish up the year. An 8 of Hearts win: an open Mesere: and lots of laughter.

I would like to thank all those members who have participated in playing 500 over the past few years.

In 2023, Cards '500' will be held on the Third and Fifth Wednesdays from 2.00 to 4.00pm. The new Convenor will be Doug Smith. It is hoped this change of time format will attract more members to this fun game.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

Heather Wallace

Singing for Fun

The concert for all members of U3A Benalla by the Singing for Fun group took place at Meet and Mingle on Wednesday 16th November 2022. We had three segments presented by Kieran Smith, Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman which were enjoyed by the audience of U3A members and also members of the public. Gwen Barnes did a great job providing accompaniment on the electronic piano for the singers.



In the lead up to the concert we had sessions where we practiced the songs being presented, and also segments by Carmyl Winkler and Brian Colman. Two of the enjoyable songs Carmyl organised one week were the round "Kookaburra sits on the old gum tree" and the song "You'll never walk alone".

We are also presenting two more concerts. These will be at Coinda on Thursday 1st December at 10.30am, and at Royal Freemasons on Thursday 8th December at 10.30am. Both Coinda and Freemasons are looking forward to us coming as we have not been able to give a concert at either place since 2019 due to COVID.

As we are approaching the end of 2022, I would like to thank quite a few people. First of all, the Singing for Fun group would not function if it was not for the songs selected by Kieran Smith, Brian Greed, Margaret Merriman, Carmyl Winkler and Brian Colman. So, thank you all very much for the effort you each put in to organising your sessions each week.

To our pianist Gwen Barnes. Gwen, we have been so lucky to have had you play for us for the last 15 years. Each week you lug all those music books into Singing, and happily play whatever the Leaders have selected. So, a big thank you to Gwen.

Then we come to the "quiet achievers" who also play a role each week. Thank you to Deidre for making morning tea happen each week, to Wendy for sorting the books at the end of each session and putting

them away, and to the guys who rearrange the seats at the end of each session. We have a wonderful group of people at singing who are all so helpful.

Best wishes to everyone for Christmas and the New Year. Hope to see you all in 2023.

Margaret Jenkins

Stock and Land

The speaker for 10am on Tuesday 6 December is Nina Meiers of Bimbimbi Farm, Barjarg, about 45km south of Benalla, close to Lake Nillhacootie. Nina and her partner Andrew, moved there from Melbourne seven years ago, to grow organic fruit and vegetables using regenerative methods. They are currently picking strawberries and group participants will probably have the opportunity to taste the fruits of their efforts.

David Palmer

Sustainability

Over several sessions during the year, we had discussed alternative systems of measuring 'progress' beyond the dollar focussed gross domestic product (GDP). We looked at examples of measuring 'progress' across all sustainability sectors, environment, society and economics - often referred to as 'community well-being'. In our first session in November, we briefly returned to the community well-being issue as the federal Treasurer had promised community well-being measures in his budget. There wasn't much except a budget statement discussing the concept and a promise that government would release a community well-being framework in 2023.

We spent most of this session looking at projected impacts of climate change with regard to coastal hazards and what some councils have been doing to prepare their communities for the possible long-term impacts. In doing so, we looked at what constitute coastal hazards and how warming sea temperatures and sea level rise will increase these hazards.

At our second November session, we took a look at the use of biogas/bioenergy, the processes to produce it (methane) and why, unlike fossil fuel sourced gas (also methane), it is considered a renewable source of energy. The Federal govt released a 'roadmap' in late 2021 to ramp up this industry. While biogas is still methane and therefore produces CO₂ and water when burnt, its recognition as renewable energy means it is considered a good transition fuel, compared to fossil fuel gas, and possibly has a long-term future in areas where it is difficult to replace gas/liquid fuel, such as in aviation.

John Lane

Tech Savvy Beginners – Android

Topics covered in November included – 'Using 'Snip it'. The Windows Snipping Tool captures all or part of your PC screen'; 'Remotely finding your lost phone/tablet' and 'Blocking unwanted calls'.

Classes, which are held on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Thursdays from 10.00-12.00, resume on February 2nd, 2023.

Robyn Lukey

Tech Talks

At our most recent Tech talks we ranged over a number of subjects. The CSIRO have released some statistics that question some of the more extreme global warming figures. The figures that the CSIRO have released give some cause for optimism.

We also discussed the intriguing proposition where noise can extinguish flame. This exists - fire can be extinguished by pointing noise at it. Unfortunately, this application cannot be directed at fire over a wide area, however we all know things change in the future. We can hope it might have some impact in Australia.

We then watched an extremely interesting video on the Noble metals - Rhodium Iridium Platinum and Gold. These are all extremely rare metals. Our lecturer had several bars as examples and explained that in his hands were several million dollars worth. These metals are used as catalysts in all sorts of applications. It was extremely interesting seeing these metals and having their uses explained.

There are Noble Metals and Noble Gases. This simply means that they do not react easily with oxygen.

Neville Gibb

Wine Appreciation/U3A Benalla End of Year Luncheon

Some photos from our U3A Christmas Break Up at King River Cafe in Oxley.



'The owners of the cafe did an amazing job feeding and watering our group of 72. We celebrated Claire's Birthday during the lunch. We all enjoyed the lunch and the opportunity to be bussed there by Benalla Bus Lines. Thanks Nicole and Corrie for organising this function to end a successful U3A year.' Bev Thornell

(For more photos, go to the [Wine Appreciation](#) page on the website)

What's On?

Thursday, 1 December

- 10:30 Singing for Fun - Concert at Coinda
- 13:00 Family Research - Beginners
- 13:00 Patchwork

Friday, 2 December

- 10:00 Sustainability

Monday, 5 December

- 10:00 Art Appreciation - 'The Outlaws' Inn'
- 13:30 Investment
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books

Tuesday, 6 December

- 10:00 Page Turners - 'The Return'
- 10:00 Stock and Land - Bimbimbi Organic Farm

Wednesday, 7 December

- 09:30 Play Reading
- 12:00 Easy Walks - Lunch at the Tatong Tavern

Thursday, 8 December

- 10:30 Singing for Fun-- Royal Freemasons Concert
- 13:30 Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, 12 December

- 14:00 Creative Writing
- 14:00 Garden Team @ Marcus and Kirsten's

Tuesday, 13 December

- 10:00 Politics and Current Affairs

Wednesday, 14 December

- 10:30 Family Research - Coffee at the Northo
- 14:00 Film Discussion Group - 'Mrs Harris Goes to Paris'

Thursday, 15 December

- 13:00 Patchwork - Christmas Lunch!

Wednesday, 11 January 2023

- 09:30 Enrolment Day - Seniors Auditorium

Wednesday, 25 January 2023

- 17:00 Newsletter reports due today