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| Benalla and District Inc. | | |
| Newsletter – August 2023 | | |
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| Please send reports for the newsletter to [newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com) by 25 Aug 2023 | | |
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# President’s Report

Congratulations to Doug Smith on having the first meeting of the Chess Group he is trialling on the third Thursday of the month from 10am to 12 noon. Doug is happy to hear from other people who would like to join the group. His phone number is 0417 527 171. It is great to see another U3A group in the trial stages.

Last Tuesday I was the guest speaker at the CWA Group Conference held at Swanpool. This group of ladies came from as far away as Corowa and were really interested to hear about U3A Benalla. There were a variety of questions after my talk which showed how interested they were. Two members of the audience were members of U3A Benalla which also helped with the impact of the talk.

On Wednesday 30 August I am presenting to Councillors at an Assembly of Council briefing regarding U3A Benalla and our need for another meeting room in the near future. Geraldine is also coming to the briefing. Our U3A Benalla membership continues to grow and is currently 394, which is an 18% increase on membership in 2022.

During the past week we have been notified that U3A Benalla has been awarded a Get Online Week grant. This will fund the free lunch we are providing members on Wednesday 18th October at 12 noon. Will Rusin will speak on Cyber Security. Jenny Sawyer and Robyn Lukey, who have run the Be Connected program this year and who run our popular Tech Advice program, will be in attendance. Please come along and enjoy lunch and hear a little about our Digital Technology programs.

Our guest speaker for Meet and Mingle on Wednesday 20th September is the President of the Men’s Shed, Lou Sigmund. Lou will speak about the Men’s Shed and how they will be able to help U3A members and the wider Benalla community. You may remember that Lou gave us a very entertaining Meet and Mingle in June when he spoke on Marketing Inventions.

Currently we are in negotiations with Age Friendly Benalla regarding them setting up their Information Spreadsheet on the computer in our Room 2 for two half days per month. This Information Spreadsheet has been put together by the Benalla Council Aging Well Officer, Chris Greentree, and provides a huge amount of information for older members of the community. It is envisaged that having it available in our building will provide another service not only to U3A members but also to members of the Senior Citizens and other members of the Benalla Community. More information regarding this project next month.

Margaret Jenkins

President

# Group Reports

## A Taste of Art

Report

Carol Perry

## Art Appreciation

At our last meeting we listened to local Benalla artists Victoria Cooper and Doug Spowart traverse themes, both personal and political, in the investigation and representation of “site” and “place” in the Australian landscape. Much of this work was created in response to the historical and contemporary changes to our place in the landscape and the philosophical concept of Solastalgia. From this they have created work through artists-in-residences and commissions in places across Eastern Australia including Arthur Boyd’s Bundanon, Muswellbrook, Myall Park Botanic Garden in central southern Queensland and Mildura.

Victoria and Doug take photographs using both conventional and Camera Obscura methods. They produce unusual and artistic books which give an impression of site. They have started to work on Winton Wetlands and we look forward to the results of their endeavours.

Coming up – On Monday September, 4 September, from 10 to 11 am - a presentation by Dr Suzie Fraser, Coordinator at the Centre of Visual Art, University of Melbourne, in conversation with exhibiting artist Jen Valender, about the ‘Art + Ecology’ residency program at Dookie Campus. The presentation coincides with the display of four works resulting from the residency program in the major exhibition Always and Altered.

Neville Gibb

## ‘As Time Goes By’ – Memoir Writing

Report

Bev Lee

## Be Connected

During Get Online Week during Seniors Month, we are holding a free lunch for members on Wednesday 18th October at 12 noon. Our speaker on Cyber Security is Will Roisin. Jenny Sawyer and Robyn Lukey, who have run the Be Connected program this year and who run our popular Tech Advice program, will be in attendance. Please come along and enjoy lunch, hear a little about our Digital Technology programs *and,* rumour has it, be entertained by the Ukes4Fun group in their very first public ‘jamming’ session!

Margaret Jenkins

## Bird Watching

**Next outing to Killawarra Forest Thursday 14th September**

Spring is nearly here and the wattles are looking wonderful. It’s a lovely time for birdwatching. We start our program for semester 2 on 14th September with a visit to Killawarra forest northwest of Wangaratta. Because of the travel involved, I would like us to meet at 9am, instead of 9.30am, at the carpark at the back of the Seniors Building. Please bring the usual things for outdoor activities – a hat, water, binoculars if you have them and wear sturdy footwear. You may want to bring a sandwich or snack in case we do not get back to Benalla by lunchtime. If you are a passenger, please bring a small amount of money to pay your driver.

Kathy Costello 0447 625 755

## Brain Games

Laughter, shared effort, imagination and lateral thinking all come into play when you're doing a neurobic workout.

Elspeth Maconachie

## Bushwalking – Easy Walks

**August Report: Winton Wetlands**

The rain cleared, the sun shone, and twelve enthusiastic walkers met for a hike along the dam wall at the Wetlands. Along a stretch of about 6km return, we noted the brimming Mokoan ponds on one side, and lush crops on the other. Our photographers were busy and we met some birdwatchers doing a count of all the bird life attracted to this beautiful area.  Moving on to Greens Hill, we had a picnic lunch and a shorter walk before adjourning to the Hub Cafe for coffee, finishing off an interesting day.

Photographs

**Wednesday 6th September: Kinnairds’ Wetlands, Numurkah**

With over 145 bird species recorded, this walk on the outskirts of Numurkah will take in several short trails through the mostly red gum forest which is fed by flows from the Muckatah catchment.   Stopping initially in Numurkah, we will then drive on to the Wetlands, returning to Numurkah Park for a BYO picnic or takeaway lunch.

Meet at the Seniors’ carpark at 9.30am, with confirmation to Julie by text, email or phone message on 0407823031 or [juliemcneill55@gmail.com](mailto:juliemcneill55@gmail.com). Remember drinks and a picnic lunch. Car sharing is usually available for a small contribution.

**Wednesday 4th October: Warby Ovens National Park: Friends Track and Wildflowers**

This much anticipated walk has been delayed both by bad weather and covid over the past three years, so we will cross fingers for some sunshine.  One for the wildflower enthusiasts, we will leave Benalla at 9.30 for Wenhams’ Camp, taking the Friends’ Track with a diversion to Kwat Kwat lookout with views over the Ovens Valley to the alps. The track passes a stand of iconic grass trees, through forested granite hills and spring wildflowers. Lunch will be a BYO picnic at Wenhams’ Camp, meeting details as above at the Seniors’ carpark.

Julie McNeill

## Cards ‘500’

Our Cards 500 sessions continue to attract U3a members due in part to the flexibility that two sessions per month allow.

We are proud to say that some of our regulars are aged 93 and 92. What an achievement to be able to play at that age.

Our sessions are sometimes noisy but with much laughter. A number of the games we play, particularly 5 handed, include calling a partner when finalizing the bid. This has brought into question what rules apply viz. do you have to call a partner and does the bidding have to start at 6 or can you bid at any level? I will clarify the answers to these queries and issue a clarification note.

I have purchased new packs of playing cards that have been well received and are a joy to shuffle and play with. The old cards do seem to get sticky quickly.

Keep shuffling.

Photographs

Doug Smith

## Chat n’ Chew

September’s **Chat and Chew** will be at the **North Eastern Hotel** commencing at 12 o’clock. Please ring Lorraine on [0427376991](tel:0427376991) if you will be attending. If I am unavailable to answer the phone, please leave your name and phone number and I will ring you back. Thank you.

Lorraine Knox

## Coin Collectors

Report

Doug Smith

## Collectors

It’s time to head out to the shed to find a collectable item or items from the past!

Collectors will be returning on Monday 4th September at 10 am revisiting a previous topic: “Something from The Shed”.  All welcome.

Janet Gourley

Community Singing

August 2023 has five Thursdays, and we were fortunate that Brian Greed offered to have Community Singing on both the fourth and fifth Thursdays of August. We really do appreciate having Singing available each Thursday Brian.

For the fourth Thursday Brian started with our regular Song Book 1, which contains a number of varied Community songs. After morning tea this was followed by Sammy’s Song Book Number 1 which has a different group of well-known songs including Waltzing Matilda and Loch Lomond.

Everyone had a great morning, and it was good to see members coming up to Brian at the end of the session and thanking him for an enjoyable morning.

Margaret Jenkins

## Creative Writing

More stories, more laughs and more hints as to how to improve our writing.

**Hints/Challenge**:

During the class last month there was a brief discussion about the use of ‘colon; vs ‘semi-colon. So, this month we had a session and challenge about the different uses of these two items of punctuation.

**Our stories:** The prompts for August were:

1. The swans bobbed up and down at the edge of the lake.
2. It was the summer when the chickens went on strike.
3. That part of the city always brought back memories.

**Prompts:** The prompts for our September class are:

* She waved cheerfully as the boat gathered speed and disappeared around the bend.
* The wavelets washed over the sand and, in retreating, uncovered a shiny object still half buried on the desolate beach.
* He was lurking behind the bins OR He was found slumped behind the bins.

Joy Shirley

## Demystifying Psychology - Course

In August Session 2 we completed our focus on key psychological concepts, highlighting the role of codes of conduct and the disciplinary requirements that underpin sound psychological activities. We then discussed:

1. Pre and post measurement results (slide 19) show how well a goal has been achieved. In this case the Convenor looked for evidence that individuals gained a basic understanding of common psychological concepts.
2. The video of history of (un)ethical psychological research (slide 27) describes the three most important elements of sound psychological research - (1) informed consent, (2) "do no Harm", and (3) making sure subjects are not exploited, ie. justice. Unfortunately, these elements were not always followed when Psychology was emerging as a concept. The video describes some interesting research examples that do not reflect today's ethical standards.
3. Understanding your own and others' Preferred Coping Styles (slide 34) can be a huge help in managing relationships and focusing on individual and group strengths. We discussed how a personal quality could be both a help and a hindrance in relationships. For example, standing in front of 300 conference attendees to report on a team's project outcomes requires particular coping styles, including confidence. However, at a team meeting those skills might not be appreciated if that person continues to command attention in a different setting, that is, a meeting room. Likewise, when the same team is working to a deadline to submit the conference paper, the preferred coping style most likely to achieve this is a task specific and focused attention to completing the paper. That same focus in a relaxed social setting may well be viewed differently.

In session 3 we will consider that perennial USA leader, Donald Trump - his childhood influencers, leadership style, expressed values, and, because a leader needs followers, "Trump follower" profiles (USA data).

Next meeting: 19 September 10-12 noon @ U3A Room 1 Seniors Building in Fawckner Street.

Jane Rushworth

## Demystifying Psychology - Discussion Group

Benalla's winter migration and trend means a smaller group and additional time for individual input. While we miss our traveller friends and look forward to their safe return, we happily declare ourselves "Old, Bold ... and surviving the cold!".

We meet at Ruby Blue (thank you RB Team!!) 2-4pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. The content is unplanned (\* see below) and a topic grows out of the initial 15 minutes of chat. This month's topic was "leadership" including:

* Leadership/Management styles - generally.
* Experiences working in effective and ineffective management environments.
* Preferred coping styles.
* Public characteristics of some high-profile leaders.
* Effective community leadership.
* Types of leadership, for example, situational and elected.

 \* There is always a "starter" sitting in the wings as a discussion prompt. This was the (unrequired) conversation starter for August …enjoy.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201304/top-10-list-psychology-s-big-questions-and-the-answers>

Next Meeting: Thursday 21 September 2-3:45 pm @ Ruby Blue Cafe, Nunn Street, Benalla

Jane Rushworth

## Exercises for Fun

Exercises for Fun returns after a short break on Monday 4th September at 9.30 am in the Auditorium.

Helen Jeffree

## Exploring the Universe

**The Search for Dark Matter in the Universe. August 2023**

Amazingly, everything scientists know and have observed about the Universe is calculated to be only around 5% of the Cosmos! How can this be? The rest is comprised of mysterious transparent Dark Matter and Dark Energy. As important features of the cosmic web, they control and dictate the evolution of the Universe. Yet, dark matter interacts with nothing we can see or understand, its gravity deflects light and warps time and space, and passes though light and matter like ghostly particles.

Franz Zwicky was a brilliant astronomer. In 1933 he challenged the general assumption that the mass of the Universe consists mostly of stars. In observing the Coma Cluster of galaxies, he calculated that the mass of the cluster far exceeded the calculated mass of its luminous stars. He found that the cluster contained an enormous quantity of unseen matter with enough gravity to keep the rotating galaxies from flying apart. It had no interaction with the electromagnetic spectrum. It does not visibly reflect, radiate or absorb light. He called it ‘Dark Matter,’ matter that cannot be seen.

These scientific observations were continued by astronomer Vera Reuben in the 1960’s. Now we know that nearly all galaxies seem to contain a small amount of compact visible matter located in the centre of a large halo of transparent dark matter. This halo has an immense mass to hold the stars in their orbits.

We watched videos from the New Scientist Academy with Professors Dan Hooper of Arizona University and Chamkaur Ghag of University College London. We learnt of the many ways that the mass of dark matter has been detected, the theories that have been investigated, the sensitive tests that have as yet not produced results. Perhaps we will never know what it actually is but we owe the stability of the Universe and therefore our own lives to it.

The Euclid Space Telescope will examine 10 billion years of cosmic history. It will map the sky in 3D to discover the “Dark Universe”.

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

We finished the session with some more wondrous images and their scientific descriptions from the James Webb Space Telescope. These included Herbig Haro 46/47

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNh2vbL9Z50>

El Gordo Cluster. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSNRXoHxg7Q>

References: New Scientist Academy, Harvard Smithsonian, American Museum of Natural History, NASA, European Space Agency.

Bev Morton

Family Research

Report

Bev Lee, Barry McDonald,

## Family Research – Beginners

## Report

Bev Lee, Judy Barry

## Film Discussion Group

Our film for discussion in August was **“Sweet As”.** This is the story of four teenagers, two indigenous, two non-indigenous, all with problems, on a road trip. They are encouraged to take photos as part of seeing the world around them. They were given old style cameras (non-digital) to do this. Murra is indigenous with an alcoholic mother; Sean has attempted to take his own life; Elvis was attacked on his way home and has had problems leaving his community; and Kylie is under the influence of an older man. During the road trip they all find themselves and learn the value of friendship.

This was an extremely good film. The characters are all different, and the performances of the teenagers were excellent. Murra (played by Shantae Barnes-Cowan) was able to show her thoughts and emotions by facial and body language without any words. All four developed during the film, with language change and reduced swearing underpinning this. There were a couple of lighter and humorous moments which helped lift the film from becoming depressing and too sad.

The cinematography was outstanding, providing various views of the Pilbara region of North-western Australia.

Overall, a beautiful film, which may be sad in parts but is full of hope. We provided a rating of 4/5.

Other films watched during the month were:

**“Red, White and Brass”** is loosely based on a true event. Young people in the Tongan community in New Zealand form a marching band so they can get seats for a world cup rugby match. This was a bit of run with lots of good music and lots of bright colours. There were some silly scenes, but generally entertaining and worth watching. Rated as 3.5/5.

**“The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry”** had been watched by some before our July class, with others watching it after the class. Again this was enjoyed by members of the class, with good characterisation. It had a good message about the importance of communication after a family tragedy, and the problems and misunderstandings that can occur if this does not happen. Those who watched this month gave it a rating of 3.5/5.

**“The Last Daughter”** is a documentary about Brenda Matthews. She had been fostered with a white family before being returned to her indigenous family. As an adult she searches for her foster parents to whom she still felt connected. It was eye-opening and emotional, but left Brenda and the audience with unanswered questions. Rated as 4/5

**“No Hard Feelings”** is a predictable and silly film about a late twenty’s employed by his parents to seduce a 19-year-old before he went to university. Rated as 3/5

**“Maybe I Do”** is about a young couple who are at a crossroads in their relationship – she believes the relationship will grow if they marry; he is fearful the relationship will fail if anything changes. It is fun and predictable with some good performances by Susan Sarandon and William H. Macy. And it looks like it was based on a play with the director keeping the scenes close to this. Rated as 3/5

**“Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny”** is the final of the Indiana Jones films. It included the traditional amazing chases, although not as much action as in previous films in the series. It is also thought that there was either use of AI or clips from earlier films for the start of the film set at the end of WWII. Rated as 3.5/5

Our film for discussion at our next class on 13 September is a choice between **“Chevalier”** and **“Barbie”** (or both).  And as usual, we will discuss any other films watched by members of the class.

Reminder: The film class has moved from the Library to U3A meeting room 1.

(628)

Joy Shirley

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Other films watched during the month along with suggested ratings include **“Red, White and Brass”** 3.5/5; **“The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry”** 3.5/5; **“The Last Daughter”** 4/5; **“No Hard Feelings”** 3/5; **“Maybe I Do”** 3/5; **“Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny”** 3.5/5. The full report for our group on the website contains brief reviews of these films, along with the trailers of next month’s features.

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Reminder: The film class has moved from the Library to U3A meeting room 1.

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Joy Shirley

## Garden Appreciation

On September 28th we will be visiting Sophie Arendt’s beautiful garden in Hagenauer Lane, Benalla (off Witt Street). Sophie has offered to supply morning tea, then we travel to Sandra’s Nursery which is located in Witt St, Benalla. Lunch will be at the Benalla Golf Club. Please let me if you are attending. We will be meeting at the U3A car park 9.30am.

I am writing this notice of our next activity from Caloundra, at the Sunshine Coast 🌞

The street tree in the photo is called *Bauhinid*. Cheers to you all.

Gwen 0438 627 010

## Garden Team

 In late July the team was at James' place, where unwanted plants were replaced and the section certainly looked spruce after treatment.



In August it was Marcus and Kirsten's garden.

What a lovely afternoon  -  lots achieved, beautiful weather, a sumptuous repast and conversation with lovely people.

Elspeth Maconachie

## German

Report

Horst Gunther

## Jane Austen Book Club

Report

Meg Dillon

## In the Lap of the Gods

Report

John Barry

## Investment

Both Malcolm and John were away on holidays, so Margaret and Les ran the August session of Investment.

We started with the Monthly and Long-Term selections and talked about the sideways movement in the market which has been happening for the past three months.

We then moved on to discuss the ASX Indexes for the End of Financial year 2022-2023 and noted that the ASX Midcap index had performed slightly better than several of the other indexes.

Looking at the ASX Sectors for the End of Financial year 2022-2023 there was a much wider range of performance. The Information Technology sector returned a gain of over 30% whereas the Materials and Resources Sectors showed a gain of 17%. At the other end of the scale the Health Care and Consumer Staples Sectors had returned less than 5%.

To complete this we looked at the charts of a few Information Technology and Materials shares.

On a slightly lighter note, we looked at what happens from 4pm to 4.11pm on the ASX. This informative piece came from Market Index on 23 July 2023, and included information about the Closing Single Price Auction which serves several key functions in the market.

After afternoon tea, Les spoke about Investment Opportunities with Net Zero in 2050. This presentation included charts showing where Uranium is mined and used in energy production around the world. The rising world price for uranium causing reopening of mines in Australia was shown. We saw charts showing the surprising decline in prices for critical metals used by renewables last financial year and this financial year. This implied lack of demand and increased supply by new entrants to the market, as forecast by The World Bank.

Margaret Jenkins & Les Rodgers

## Let’s Talk Books

We were delighted to have Patsy recite a poem to us about Jim who was eaten by a lion, you could hear a pin drop during her recitation and a round of applause followed, thankyou Patsy you add another dimension to our group.

Books read this month were *The Dry by Jane Harper*, enjoyed the book not the movie. *The Goldminers Sister by Alison Stuart*, Alison recently appeared at the Benalla Library for an author’s talk. *Twilight of a Goddess by Christopher Nicole,* the romantic adventures of a notorious woman in 1835!! One of our readers has had a busy time with crime novels, her reads were *A Time for Mercy by John Grisham, River Sing Me Home by Eleanor Shearer, Catching Air by Sarah Pekkenan, Deadly Cross by James Patterson, I Will Find You by Harlan Cobden,* and last but not least *The Dolls House by M. Arlidge.* Shirley enjoyed *Anzac Girls by Peter Rees* the heroic nurses who served in the Great War, *A Pocket Full of Happiness by Richard E Grant,*  lovely read but sad. Recommended are books by John Douglas, a criminal profiler with the FBI, who maintains people are not born murderers they choose to be. *Troy by Stephen Fry* was disappointing and not finished. *Montsalvat* the story of the artistic colony set up by Edmund Jorgensen was a look at history of this beautiful area. *Wilding by Isabella Tree,* is the story of the `Knebb’ experiment, rewilding a farm in West Sussex, this book is very popular. *The Whole Day Through by Patrick Gale* a beautifully written novel and thoroughly recommended. *Rough Justice by Robin Bowles* unanswered questions from the Australian Courts, raises questions and doubts along the way. *The Australian Lighthorse by Roland Perry* recounts the bravery of this group in Arabia during World War 1, worth reading. *Isabelle Allende wrote Of Light and Shadows*, her usual good work and *The Unbelievable by Vikki Pentrastis,* a well written first novel. *The Grandest Bookshop in the World by Amelia Mellor*, 1893 in Coles Book Arcade in Melbourne mysterious adventures happen, well worth reading. *Cautionary Tales for Young Children by Hilaire Belloc* written nearly a century ago, contain 7 stories in this work that are very entertaining. So read on during August and we will meet again in September.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Lifeball

We’ll be back on court after our winter recess, on Monday 4th September at 10am. We play weekly at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre, in a game of modified basketball-lots of laughs and no experience needed, and we always conclude with coffee and a chat. New players are always welcome, and convenor Marlene can be contacted on 0428210944 for more information.

Julie McNeill

## Meet and Mingle

**Alex McKenna, CEO of Cooinda in Benalla**, was the Guest Speaker at our August Meet and Mingle. Alex spoke about the new buildings which are being constructed at Cooinda in 2023-2024.

The first stage is a new kitchen and staff room which is due for completion at the end of October 2023. This will be followed by the construction of several new larger units which will provide more up to date accommodation than what is currently available This part of the redevelopment will also have a “main street” which will include a hairdresser, coffee shop and an open-air area.

There are also several areas which will be landscaped. A feature of some of the paved road surfaces is that their surface will be permeable to water. There will also be several more parking bays in the new plans than what is currently available.

Cooinda is an important part of the Benalla community. Alex illustrated his talk with suitable slides. This is a substantial redevelopment, with the total cost of the redevelopment being about $8 million dollars. Thank you, Alex for a great talk.

Our Guest Speaker for September Meet and Mingle on Wednesday 20th September at 10am is **Lou Sigmund,** **President of the Benalla Men’s Shed**. Lou will speak about the Men’s Shed and how their members could assist U3A members in the future. Hope to see you all there.

Margaret Jenkins

## Music Appreciation

Self-portraits come in a variety of forms. Some are with a paintbrush, some with a camera, others with a pen. It would seem only right - and natural, even - that a musician would choose music. Which is what Camille Saint-Saens is said to have done in his 3rd Symphony. Within its walls are aspects of the composer – his talents, his doubts, his belief, his fears and his hopes. All his instruments are there – a pipe organ (has was a church organist at one time), the piano (which he had played since childhood), his passion for sacred music, the love of logic and balance (there are two movements each with two sections), the forces of darkness (the Deus Irae haunts the work) and finally there is the element of hope as the symphony gradually progresses from darkness to light. Some say it is expressive of his hope of resurrection, although it is well documented that Saint-Saens was not at all religious. Perhaps his aim was to demonstrate the spiritual power of music. Whatever, it was the standout work we looked at in our August sessions.

Beethoven’s 4th piano concerto, which we also heard, deserves more acclaim than it gets. It tends to be overlooked - coming as it does between the monumental 3rd and 5th concertos - so two totally different recordings were viewed. Love is often in the air when music is being composed and Brahms’ love for Clara Schumann may have inspired his 1st violin sonata, while Mahler’s Adagietto from his 5th symphony was instrumental in the wooing of Anna, his wife to be. These and the ubiquitous overture - every good music programme should start with one – made for happy watching and listening. The video recordings together with the explanatory notes for each performance can be accessed via the Music Appreciation page on the website.

Photograph

Bill Squire

## Page Turners Book Group

Recently published in 2022, this novel was well received, especially in America. It details the life stories of two generations of the family of a Caribbean matriarch, her Chinese husband, and their children Benny and Boyd. The idyllic Caribbean lifestyle of the mother is destroyed when she is a young girl who runs away when her dissolute father forces her to marry a local criminal. She changes her name and flees to London, fearing retribution from her husband’s family as he had been poisoned at their wedding. Here she studies nursing and assumes the name of her best friend who was killed in a road accident, still fearing her former husband’s family. Eventually she meets by accident the young man she had wanted to marry and eventually they forge a life together in America.

The novel moves between this narrative and the lives of her two children, her son successful and her daughter, a confused and wayward girl who has lost contact with her mother. The frequent name changes of some characters and the short chapters jumping from the earlier to the later generation creates some confusion. The novel is held together by the trope of the ‘black cake”, a rich fruit cake made with loads of rum. This very cake remained a family favourite, even though a version of it was used to poison the husband at the first wedding.

One of our number followed the recipe in the book and made a delicious version of it with loads of Captain Morgan’s Old Jamaican Rum which we all enjoyed with a coffee. It will be my favourite recipe for Christmas Cake from now on!

A lightish read with some interesting insights into Caribbean culture.

Next session - Tuesday 5 September:  *'Lessons in Chemistry',* byBonnie Garmus. California, 1960s. A scientist and single mum becomes a TV star.

Photograph

Meg Dillon

## Patchwork and Craft

On Thursday 7th Elaine will be giving us a lesson on *Paper Quilling*. If you have a Quilling tool please bring it along, paper will be available from Elaine at a cost.

We continue to have lovely work displayed at Show’n’Tell. Keep bringing it along.

Dorothy Webber

## Photography

Report

Rene Martens

## Play Reading

Our play for August was ***The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie***.

This play is based on a novel by Muriel Spark. The script was written by Jay Presson Allen. Jean Brodie is a teacher at an all-girls school in Edinburgh, Scotland, in the 1930s. Brodie is known for her tendency to stray from the school's curriculum, to romanticize fascist leaders like Benito Mussolini and Francisco Franco, and to believe herself to be in the prime of life. Brodie devotes her energy and attention to girls she sees as special or mouldable, who are referred to as the "Brodie Set". At the start of the play, the Brodie Set is composed of four 12-year-old junior schoolgirls: Sandy, Monica, Jenny, and Mary. The play follows them through to their final year. Act 1 covers from 1931 to 1933, Act 2 from 1933 to 1936, and Act 3 in the girls’ final year two and a half years later.

Each act is introduced in the current day with a reporter from the USA has flown to Edinburgh to interview Sister Helena who has had a book published that became a best seller. Then we go to the various scenes involving the schoolgirls and Miss Brodie. We found this an interesting way to set the picture.

After reading the play we discussed some comparison with our June play, ***Monday Sacrifice***. Both plays were set in an all-girls school. ***The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*** focussed on a group of students, but ***Monday Sacrifice*** focussed on a group of teachers. They both covered a teacher who recognised the value of the humanities, a culture that still has problems today. There perhaps the similarities ended, with the relationship between Miss Brodie and the schoolgirls the focus of the plot. Miss Brodie had an interesting mind and approach to her students. Whether this was a healthy relationship or not is open to debate.

We enjoyed the play which left us with things to think about.

Joy Shirley

## Recorder Group

The group has been working hard this month in preparation for taking part in a concert on September 10th at Benalla Town Hall. The Benalla Concert Band very kindly offered us a place in their concert, which was terrific of them. Sadly, I have a concert at the same time, but the group has taken it on board and is very keen to go ahead with it. Good on them!

Photograph

Janet Douglas

## Singing for Fun

During August we have had Carmyl involved in two of the mornings due to Margaret being away on holidays. Carmyl chose a group of gospel songs for one of her sessions which was a bit unusual for the group, but they performed the songs very well.

Kieran has this great knack of getting us going each morning, choosing some rousing songs in the process. One morning Kieran included *the Battle Hymn of the Republic* and everyone sang it with great gusto.

Brian has been revisiting some songs such as *Right Said Fred* as well as *The Black Hills of Dakota* which have been enjoyed.

Thank you to Gwen for accompanying all the different songs, with no notice. You do a wonderful job for the group.

Our numbers are remaining close to 30 each morning which is great to see.

The next Singing for Fun meeting will be on Thursday 7th September at 10am at the Hub in Cooinda.

Margaret Jenkins

## Sky’s the Limit

Report

Photograph

Claire Rudolph/David Palmer

## Stock and Land

Photograph

**Luke Marple**, a local farmer and manager of stock and station agent Nutrien Harcourts in Benalla, spoke of the current good season, high and low livestock and land prices and the difficulty and ease of doing business during Covid. Selling lifestyle farms during Covid, he would film properties on his phone and forward the result to interested people, mostly city dwellers. They would often respond immediately with a contract request and then almost straightaway send back the completed contract and 10 per cent deposit. His best sale was a 35-acre block of rock which quickly sold for $10,000 an acre. Luke said the October 2022 flood on his 500-acre Broken River frontage farm, was worse than 1993. But he said one of the major benefits for a sheep producer, was the death by drowning of hundreds of foxes. Unfortunately, all platypuses seemed to drown too.

Our next speaker on Tuesday September 4 will be **Dennis O'Connor**, principal of Mistletoe Limousin, Greta South. This year marks Dennis's 30th anniversary of breeding Limousin cattle. A highlight of that period has been moving from a predominantly horned stud to one that is predominantly polled.

David Palmer

## Sustainability

At our first session in July the Sustainability Group revisited Treasury's new take on measuring how Australia is going; called the Wellbeing budget. This approach is the same as addressing sustainability. The wellbeing budget, as with indicators measuring progress across environmental, social and economic sectors. Only when we achieve sustainability in all three sectors is true sustainability/wellbeing achieved. The wellbeing budget is a first attempt at moving budget measures away from purely the economic elements (usually measured by Gross Domestic product per capita) to establishing measures, targets and policies across the three primary elements mentioned above. This approach still has some way to go in its development but starting down the community wellbeing path is an achievement in itself.

At our second session we had free flowing discussions based on a number of recent articles including one debunking extremist comments that the north Atlantic Gulf Stream (which keeps western Europe warm) will collapse in 2025. Another concerned threats to wildlife which occupy niche habitats in alpine Australia and have nowhere to migrate to in a warming climate and another reporting on a local scheme in the Goulburn Valley to establish a community based solar energy farm and battery.

John Lane

## Tech Advice

Report

Robyn Lukey/Jenny Sawyer

## Tech Savvy Beginners – Android

Report

Robyn Lukey

## Tech Talks

The Jet engine is something we all take for granted. We discussed a potential disaster from several years ago when an engine on a Qantas plane blew up and the plane had to land under difficult circumstances in Singapore. This led to Graeme explaining how a jet engine works. Surprisingly a jet engine is a simpler machine than an internal combustion engine. The jet engine was not immediately accepted and indeed the inventor - Frank Whittle - had to let the patent lapse for lack of interest and lack of finance.

We watched a video of a very large plane used by the American Military. This plane is so large it can carry a battalion size of both equipment and service personnel. It is approximately the same size as the Spruce Goose but much more efficient. It can be refuelled in the air and can fly all over the world.

We reviewed a book called Precision Engineering Saved the World. This book is recommended reading.

Neville Gibb

Ukes4Fun

Report

Heather Wallace

## Wine Appreciation

In August we headed south to the Strathbogie region and **Maygar Hills Winery** with its spectacular vistas punctuated by rocky granitic outcrops. Our host, Jenny, was so welcoming and gave us a short history of Lt. Maygar, the name behind the winery. **Lt. Maygar was born on 26 May 1872 at Kilmore.** He enlisted in the Victorian Mounted Rifles to fight in the Boer War. He arrived in South Africa in March 1901 and was immediately involved in several heavy actions. In August his column transferred to Natal and was constantly in action against strong Boer commando forces. It was during one of these intense actions that Maygar was awarded his Victoria Cross.

Maygar Hills produces red wines and has won multiple trophies. We tasted the 2018 and 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon and 2019 Reserve Shiraz. Sadly, the vineyard has been sold and so there are limited stocks now available. Lunch was at *Seven Creeks Hotel* with its good food, friendly atmosphere and open fires.

Next month we are off to **Gracebrook Winery**, 4446 Wangaratta-Whitfield Rd, King Valley followed by lunch at *Mountain View Hotel*, 4 King Valley Road, Whitfield.

Meeting in the **Senior’s Car Park at 1015** and RSVP to me at [nicnakmac90@gmail.com](mailto:nicnakmac90@gmail.com) or phone/text 0428 696 408 by Sunday 10th September.

Nicole McFarlane

## Wise Guys Book Group

At our August session, Neville talked about *The Kennedy Curse,* “six generationsof adultery, addiction and tragedy*”* by James Patterson.

Graham is continuing *The Palestine Laboratory*.

David outlined *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks, a compelling novel set mostly in the 1850s in Kentucky. Also, *Infidelity and Other Affairs* by Kate Legge where she traced infidelity in her husband's and her own families through four generations.

New members welcome! Our next session is on Wednesday 27 September from 2 to 4pm in Room 1.

David Palmer

# Program News

Report

# Community News

Report

# Some dates for your diary:

# What’s On

**Friday, 1 September**

10:00 Sustainability

14:00 'In the Lap of the Gods'

**Monday, 4 September**

09:30 Exercises for Fun

10:00 Collectors - 'Something from the Shed'

10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0407 240 943

10:00 Art Appreciation

12:45 Ukes4Fun

14:00 Investment

14:00 Let's Talk Books

**Tuesday, 5 September**

10:00 Page Turners - 'Lessons in Chemistry', Bonnie Garmus

10:00 Stock and Land - **Dennis O'Connor,** **Mistletoe Limousin**, Greta South

12:15 German

14:00 Sky's the Limit

**Wednesday, 6 September**

09:30 Bushwalking - Easywalks - Kinnairds Wetlands, Numurkah

09:30 Play Reading

13:30 A Taste of Art

14:00 Cards '500'

**Thursday, 7 September**

10:00 Singing for Fun

10:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Android

13:00 Family Research - Beginners

13:00 Patchwork and Craft - Paper Quilling Workshop with Elaine Murphy

**Friday, 8 September**

10:00 Music Appreciation

12:00 Chat 'n Chew – The North Eastern Hotel

14:00 Armchair History

**Monday, 11 September**

09:30 Exercises for Fun

10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0407 240 943

12:45 Ukes4Fun

14:00 Creative Writing

14:00 Garden Team

**Tuesday, 12 September**

10:00 Politics and Current Affairs

12:15 German

14:00 Jane Austen Book Club- 'Northanger Abbey' (F)

14:00 Tech Talks

**Wednesday, 13 September**

10:00 Recorder Group

14:00 Film Discussion Group – ‘Chevalier’/’Barbie’

**Thursday, 14 September**

09:00 Birdwatching – Killawarra Forrest

10:00 Singing for Fun

10:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Android

13:00 Family Research - Beginners

13:30 Executive Committee Meeting

**Friday, 15 September**

10:00 Wine Appreciation

10:00 Sustainability

**Monday, 18 September**

09:30 Exercises for Fun

10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0407 240 943

12:45 Ukes4Fun

14:00 As Time Goes By - Memoir Writing

**Tuesday, 19 September**

10:00 Demystifying Psychology Course - #3 of five

12:15 German

14:00 Exploring the Universe

**Wednesday, 20 September**

10:00 Meet and Mingle - Benalla Men's Shed - Lou Sigmund

13:30 A Taste of Art

14:00 Cards '500'

**Thursday, 21 September**

10:00 Singing for Fun

10:00 Social Chess

13:00 Family Research - Intermediate

13:00 Patchwork and Craft

14:00 Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group

**Friday, 22 September**

14:00 Armchair History

**Monday, 25 September**

09:30 Exercises for Fun

10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0407 240 943

12:45 Ukes4Fun

13:30 Coin Collectors

17:00 Newsletter reports due today

**Tuesday, 26 September**

10:00 Politics & Current Affairs

12:15 German

14:00 Brain Games

**Wednesday, 27 September**

10:00 Recorder Group

14:00 Wise Guys Book Group

**Thursday, 28 September**

09:30 Garden Appreciation - Sophie Arendt's garden/ Sandra's Nursery, Witt Street

10:00 Photography

10:00 Community Singing

14:00 Family Research - Advanced

**Friday, 29 September**

10:00 Music Appreciation

**Monday, 2 October**

09:30 Exercises for Fun

10:00 Collectors

10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0407 240 943

10:00 Art Appreciation

12:45 Ukes4Fun

14:00 Investment

14:00 Let's Talk Books

**Tuesday, 3 October**

10:00 Page Turners - 'Camille's Bread', Andrea Lohrey

10:00 Stock and Land

12:15 German

14:00 Sky's the Limit

**Wednesday, 4 October**

09:30 Bushwalking - Easywalks - Friend's Track - Wildflowers!

09:30 Play Reading

13:30 A Taste of Art

14:00 Cards '500'