



Benalla and District Inc.

## Newsletter – March 2018

U3A Benalla & District Inc

P O Box 674

Benalla 3672

Website: [u3abenalla.weebly.com](http://u3abenalla.weebly.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/u3abenalla](https://facebook.com/u3abenalla)

Newsletter: [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com)

President: Dorothy Webber

5762 2116

[president@u3abenalla.com](mailto:president@u3abenalla.com)

Secretary: Geraldine McCorkell

P: 5762 2134 M: 0408 522 662

[secretary@u3abenalla.com](mailto:secretary@u3abenalla.com)

Please send all newsletter items for the newsletter to [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com) by **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2018**

### President's Report

My first year has seen U3A move from The Benalla College to our home here at the Seniors' building. Our thanks go to the Flexible Learning Centre for our time with them and the coffee on moving day. The move in day was the easy part. As you all know we have had and continue to have many ups and downs.

Currently we have been asked by Benalla Council to provide a submission for the use of the Rest Room and former Red Cross area in the kitchen for our Office and storage. The Executive is in the process of doing this and it will be submitted by the due date April 13<sup>th</sup>.

The noise issue also requires a submission along with a proposed solution. A suggestion is that a wall be erected at the end of the corridor as a starting point. As it stands the building is not suitable for multiple uses at the same time.

In June we had a display at the Library in their display cabinet. The range of activities on show was very well received, with lots of comments as to the diverse range of courses on offer.



In the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2017 membership reached 250 for the 1<sup>st</sup> time this year. We now have 275 and are a growing and vibrant U3A.

I have been thrilled with the way the first semester was up and running in such a professional manner. All the new convenors have settled in well. I can't thank you enough. Without you and all our existing convenors, Benalla U3A could not be such a success.

I have been to a number of groups and interrupted them with an emergency evacuation procedure. I feel this is an important exercise and it has shown me that if we stack all the chairs along the wall next to the piano we then have full access to the doorways. When stacked correctly the chairs all fit in this space. This also will give the cleaners a clear access and allows us room to move freely around when members are seated at the tables.

Bev Lee and Judith Borthwick have both resigned from the Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their service to U3A.

Judith has been our publicity officer for many years and has been responsible for all the ads and articles seen in The Ensign. She has also been a very capable Newsletter editor for many years.

Bev's work in helping to establish our Tech Savvy Courses has seen her put in many hours of work and her work on Benalla U3A webpage has resulted in one of the best websites to be found. I thank you ladies for a job well done.

I would also like to thank the members of the Committee for their work during the last year. They have been a tremendous help to me. What they have achieved is truly amazing. I hope the

new Committee will go from strength to strength and make Benalla U3A one of the best, if not the best, in the state.

Over the past year we have lost a number of our long term members. I will not try to name them as I would hate to leave anyone out but I must acknowledge the passing of Life Member Su Hughes. Su was a past committee member and was tireless in her work for U3A Benalla.

Finally, I am very pleased to announce the awarding of a Life Membership to Louise Doddrell. Louise started the Wine Appreciation Group 21 years ago, ran it for many years, and has put together a wonderful album of photo memories. Louise is very happy that it has been such a success and finds it hard to believe that the group is still so popular.

On this happy note I will finish and wish all our members happy U3Aing.

Dorothy Webber: President

## Group Reports

### Armchair Traveller

Armchair travellers met for the first time in 2018 on March 20. After a planning session looking at possibilities for the remaining 4 sessions for 2018, Rupe and Gwen Cheetham showed us video of the first part of their 4WD journey through the centre of Australia but we did not quite make it far past Uluru to the Gunbarrel Highway section in Western Australia. We hope to resume that trip at our next session on May 15. Jan Andrews then completed her group walking tour through some of the lovely country tracks in the south of England, much of it in Dartmouth.

Next May we also plan to revisit Antarctica with Marg Law, and Jan will again take us walking, this time in New Zealand.

John Avery

### Art Appreciation

This month our group was surprised with a rare treat and we thank Bryony for her continued support.

Bryony began by explaining the concept underpinning the Gallery's Collection Lab, then gave us details of the paintings currently on display. These paintings can be declared historic and refer to the colonial period from both settler and indigenous perspectives. The Collection Lab

will be a more or less permanent exhibition and will be part of the gallery's recording and exhibiting of paintings normally kept in storage.

Bryony then brought out a storage box and showed us its contents. There are several such storage boxes in the gallery's collection, each containing paintings removed from their frames for more secure storage. The storage box selected by Bryony contained a series of watercolours and we were able to experience and share increasing enjoyment and surprise as each painting was uncovered. Included was an unusual Heyson landscape believed not to have been shown in public previously. Several other unknown watercolours followed. Each painting offered some interest and our group clearly enjoyed viewing them and listening to Bryony's explanations as to their importance.

Art Appreciation that was to be held on Easter Monday has been rescheduled to 9<sup>th</sup> April, when Bryony will speak about the Milk Bar Exhibition currently on at the Benalla Art Gallery.



Neville Gibb

### Bird Watching

Our group of 14 walked around the southern part of Lake Benalla on Thursday 8 March. It was a pleasant morning that became hot by lunchtime.

The water level in the lake was very low, as water authorities work to kill off the last of the aquatic weed Cabomba. Despite this, we had a very successful session of bird watching. Yellow Spoonbills were still nesting, and a total of 8 birds seen. We were close enough to admire the beautiful plumage of male and female Wood Ducks as they walked past our group. We also had close views of Australasian Swamphen and several Darters. It was interesting to watch a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo feeding a noisy begging youngster in a nearby tree. Robyn did well to find the White-throated Gerygone calling nearby, and

most people had a good view of this beautiful but tiny songster with its bright yellow breast. Another yellow breasted bird we were lucky to find is the Crested Shrike-tit, although it did not show well in the foliage. Other birds seen included Superb Fairy-wren, Grey Fantail, Striated Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Sacred Kingfisher and Kookaburra.

A total of 42 species was recorded. The eBird list can be viewed at

<https://ebird.org/australia/view/checklist/S43609753>

Kathy Costello

## Brain Games

We began by stretching the brain with some mirror- and non-preferred hand drawing and learnt that left handers are inconvenienced by not just scissors but chequebooks and bulky spiral spines on notebooks.

We did some tricky work on words, numbers and riddle-like lateral thinking and all took home a couple more neural links to enhance our brain power.

Those who forgot to attend will find it harder to catch up with us and might even overlook that our next session coincides with Easter so that we will meet again on May 7th!

Meanwhile I suggest you try a new puzzle, language or counting backwards in threes as you whistle a tune

Elsbeth Maconachie

## Bushwalks

### Wed Mar 14 Harrietville

Twelve Mid-Week walkers set off on the long drive to Harrietville for the first excursion of the year. It may be long, but the drive up the valley from Myrtleford is magnificent. The first walk was from Pioneer Park, crossing the Ovens river for a short walk to and round the Tronoh Dredge Hole. It is an attractive lake which must have been a hive of activity in the gold mining days.

We walked on to view the Ovens stream and a crossing which looked a bit "iffy" before retracing our steps for lunch beside the stream at the park. After lunch we walked the levy bank track upstream to meet the Bon Accord track and reached the fore mentioned "crossing" from the other side. There was some beautiful bush land along this stretch and it took some time to get the

walkers to leave the water washed stones beside the stream. We walked back to the cars and drove to the Recreation Reserve for a further walk beside the western Ovens stream that joins the eastern stream a bit north of the town. I must mention the many well constructed and informative sign posts throughout the township. Also welcome to Narelle Harvey.

Vaughan Cowan & Susie Buykx



### EASY WALK WED APRIL 4

**PLAIN CREEK, CARTERS TIMBER TRACK** Situated on the Mansfield – Mount Buller road just past Sawmill Settlement, I have started the walking year before with this walk. It is not difficult, through magnificent forest giving good shade, and the added interest in some remnants of the tramway. Some of the walk is beside Plain Creek. We will leave the Senior Citizens parking area at 9.30. Please ring 5762 1980 so we can arrange transport. On **Wednesday May 2** we will drive to Beechworth to walk around the lake and enjoy the trees in Autumn. Meet at 9.30 am.

### MIDWEEK WALK WED APR 11

#### **MYRTLEFORD – OVENS RIVER LOOP**

This easy 6 km loop will start from Rotary Park. It follows the Ovens River closely as it passes through native bushland and crosses the river twice before passing through central Myrtleford and then returning to Rotary Park via the Rail Trail. If there is time we may walk up to Tower Hill. We will leave Benalla from the tennis court car park Barkly Street at 9.30am. Ring the Leader Helen Spinks 5762 3223

Vaughan Cowan

## Chat n' Chew

On April 20 our lunch will be at 12 noon at Nicha. (Old Vic Hotel opposite the railway station). Please confirm your attendance by midday Tuesday April 17. Phone 5762 6768.

Shirley Kearney

## Collectors

Our March meeting was held on the Labour Day holiday and despite several apologies it was well attended. We had no theme set so we had many varied items. New member Betty brought along a framed photo of her late husband in his slouch hat meeting the Queen at a reception in Korea as well as commemorative coin set celebrating 50 years of marriage.

We saw family bibles, one from 1917, an early 1900's sewing box, Royal Doulton Dickens ware, a slide projector, wooden doll's shoes which were possibly 150 years old along with kerosene lamps, a silver cup and Jubilee silver teething ring and many very pretty and collectable coloured bottles and some Royal Winton ware. Also on display was a collection of amber depression glass.

Our next meeting will be held on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Our theme will be 'from the shed' or 'from the garden'. Garden gnomes welcome.



Judith Borthwick

## e-Book Group

### ***Daring to drive* by Manal al-Sharif**

Manal al-Sharif challenges the prohibition on Saudi Arabian women driving vehicles, aware that she is merely breaching custom, not the law. Nevertheless, she is arrested, treated like a criminal and gaoled for a few days in appalling conditions.

Her initial rebellion may be regarded as unwitting because, born in 1979 at the beginning of fundamentalism in Saudi Arabia, she becomes devoutly religious and fanatical about observance of all the rules, harassing her family to do likewise. However, al-Sharif breaks the rules herself when she feels stymied in her drawing, sport and academic endeavours and ultimately relaxes her extreme views.

One salient point that emerges from her account of growing up in a segregated, oppressive society is the power of education. The author's passion for learning combines with her Libyan mother's adamant insistence on schooling to ensure success. She is the first female Saudi to be employed in technological information security and, working in the Western enclave of the Saudi-Aramco Oil Company, she earns a good income, works alongside males and is free to drive.

Despite some apparent inconsistencies that group members attributed to the use of a ghost writer, the memoir is incisive and compelling. The violent beatings by parents, teachers and husbands and the emulation of this behaviour by the young, her disfiguring circumcision and the brutality of the religious police are related succinctly and dispassionately, resulting in a searing impact on the reader.

Al-Sharif asserts that, 'The rain begins with a single drop' - and it does appear that rights for women in Saudi Arabia are advancing, albeit slowly.

Barbara Rogers

## Exercises for Fun

Exercising has hit the news headlines lately, claiming to cure all kind of ailments!

Our group of enthusiasts are becoming fitter and more mobile each week, as they enjoy the company of others, whilst exercising and marching. There is also a little boot-scooting' thrown in too!

All members are welcome to come along to "Exercise for Fun" with our group, then socialise after with a cuppa.

Helen Jeffree

## Exploring New Operas

Benjamin Britten's opera based on the novel "The Turn of the Screw" by Henry James, was our subject in March. First performed in 1954 in Venice, we viewed an Opera Australia production from 1992. This is another "chamber" opera which can be performed with minimum stage effects. However this DVD used lavish and contemporary effects to simulate the dark and mysterious recesses of an isolated country house in nineteenth century England. Two children and their governess are troubled by the ghostly appearances of the former governess and the estate manager both who died after having an illicit liaison and corrupting the two children.



Britten's bleak music and libretto create a troubling backdrop as the new governess tried to rescue the children from their nightmares and memories. We all needed quite a lot of cheering up after this viewing.

Meg Dillon

## Exploring the Universe

### The Light from the First Stars



Astronomers have discovered a signal from the first light of the first stars in the Universe. The discovery was made using a small, simple radio antenna not much bigger than a table, in the desert of Western Australia.

These stars are the oldest physical objects. They emerged 180 million years after the 'Big Bang,' from a time when the Universe was an empty darkness of cooling gas and radiation. They heralded the Cosmic Dawn of what we have now, of millions of galaxies, full of stars and planets, and to all the botany and biology on planet Earth. Yes, even you!

Nine years ago a small team from the U.S. started observations at the best place for this on the planet; the CSIRO's isolated Murchison Observatory in W.A. in an area protected by a 'quiet zone' of 260 kms. The weak signal they were searching for was coming from the early Universe 13.6 billion years ago. In this excellent site and with world class engineering they found it!

At E.T.U. we viewed a collection of U- tubes showing the progress that has been made in cosmic discovery in only 22 years, beginning with the film 'Hubble Ultra Deep Field in 3D' [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAVjF\\_7ensg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAVjF_7ensg)

In 1995 the Hubble Space Telescope was pointed at an area showing nothing for 10 days and found over 3,000 galaxies. We viewed further discoveries and technology through those years to the latest news.

"The birth of the first stars." Can be seen on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU6KXoO0N EE>

We finished the session with Rupe taking us through the basics of the Sun and then went out onto the lawn and viewed the Sun safely through a solar telescope. We were looking at 'our Sun' but we were also looking at a Star. A good way to end an interesting session. Why not join us?

Bev Morton

## Film and Literature

This month we watched *The Railway Children*.

**Genre:** Family Drama

**Plot:** After the enforced absence of their father, three children move with their mother to Yorkshire, where their adventures revolve around the Railway.

**Key Characters:** Mrs. Waterbury (**Dinah Sheridan**), Charles Waterbury (**Iain Cuthbertson**), Roberta 'Bobbie' Waterbury (**Jenny Agutter**), Phyllis Waterbury (**Sally Thomsett**), Peter Waterbury (**Gary Warren**), Albert Perks (**Bernard Cribbins**), Old Gentleman (**William Mervyn**).

**Review:** we rated as 3.5 out of 5.

Everyone enjoyed this movie. One described it as a sweet movie, others as engaging. The performances by the key players were good, with some overacting that was found to be charming rather than distracting. Lighting and colour was used to good effect. For example, when the family first arrives in Yorkshire, the house is dark and uninviting, but as they settled into their new life the house became lighter and friendlier. The colours of the grass and flowers also reflected the mood of the children as their life became lighter and happier, although still poor and missing their father. In many ways it was episodic. Each adventure experienced by the children was complete in itself. There was a TV series made in 1968, two years before the movie. Whether the adventures were what lent it to be made into the series, or whether the episodes in the TV series led to the episodic approach to the movie could be open to debate. It might be interesting to read the book on which it was based as part of investigating this question.

**Further:** Our April movie will be *Please Murder Me*, starring Raymond Burr and Angela Lansbury. We aim to start watching the movie promptly at 1:00pm so that we have time to discuss the movie.

With all the movies we watch, we look at them as literature – literature in a different medium, the medium of film. This helps to focus the discussion, covering ideas around genre, characters, plot, but also adding the aspects that relate to film, such as cinemascope, music and atmosphere.

Joy Shirley

## Garden Appreciation

Thursday 26 April – We have a full bus for our trip to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens & Lambley Nursery on 26<sup>th</sup> April. We will be leaving from the car park behind the Fire Brigade building at 7.15 am on the dot – so try to arrive earlier than this if you can. Lunch will be at Pipers by the Lake at own cost. Gwen is happy to put names on a waiting list in case a space becomes available. The cost of the coach is \$30 per person. Contact Gwen 5762 7017 or 0438 627 010.



Photograph taken at Garden Appreciation's March trip to Wangaratta Nurseries by Sandie Chrimes.

Gwen Turner

## Garden Team

Our Garden Team at Kathy's worked in superb autumn weather trimming and pruning shrubs around the garden, and along the driveway. A great result, especially when most of the prunings were then cut into manageable pieces for easy composting or disposal. We then enjoyed afternoon tea, particularly Val's deluxe sandwiches.

Next month will be at Lois's.

Kathy Costello/Elspeth Maconachie

## Investment

At the March meeting of Investment we looked at the Midcap stocks both for 2017 and also for the

first two months of this year. The Mid caps had increased overall last year by 15%, but only a few of them had shown good increases so far in 2018.

John Hanlon provided us with an overview of successful managed funds especially those with interests in the overseas markets.

The month of February was the midyear reporting season for ASX companies. We looked at twenty of the companies and considered their net profit after tax, their dividend and whether any share price increase was sustained after they reported to the market. For a few of these companies other factors which had been announced at the same time as the report were influential on their resulting share price.

The next meeting of Investment will be on Friday 6 April 2018 at 1.30pm in the U3A room at the Seniors Community Centre.

Margaret Jenkins

## Let's Talk Books

The highlight of our gathering on the 6<sup>th</sup> March was a great tale from one of our members who met Bryce Courtenay in person, it gave another aspect to this author and provided a lot of laughs in the telling, we are hoping for another instalment next month.

As usual a wide variety of books were read among them Poet by Michael Connelly, this book kept the reader engrossed to the last page. The Keeper of Lost Things was well written by Lyn Hogan.

Time of God of Gold by Wilbur Smith was praised for the excellent descriptions. The regular authors David Balducci, JD Robb (Nora Robb) are still read with enthusiasm.

Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantell and the sequel Bring Up the Bodies were discussed along with Stateless by Anna Coslove. Alice enjoyed Everything is Teeth by Joseph Summer. An old favourite Alexander McCall Smith was mentioned and Minette Walters story The Last Hours set in England in 1348 about the Black Plague provoked comparison with Geraldine Brooks. Laurie told us about Vision Australia who have a Radio Station that quote articles from the daily newspapers, unless you need it you don't know about these interesting things are happening all around us. Stephen Carrol a Melbourne author has written a book on The Spirit of Progress. Quite a few of us remembered the train going between Melbourne

and Sydney. Good reading everyone, see you on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Lifeball

Lifeball continues along its merry way, despite clashing with Monday's exercise group, which has seen us lose 2 players, and we are sad about that.

Nevertheless we have gained another 3 players, which is some compensation.

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, we are having our annual Fun and Friendship Day at the Indoor Recreation Centre. Because this is a game where running is NOT permitted, only walking, there are so many benefits from a good health point of view, but I think one of the most important benefits is from a social point of view. Some of us find it difficult to meet others socially, but when we finish playing on Mondays, we sit around the table for a cuppa, and chat and laugh, as much as we do on the court, so it satisfies our need for exercise and our need for friendship.

Teams participating on the day will come from Deniliquin, Albury, Rutherglen, Myrtleford, Wangaratta, Eildon, Mansfield, and of course, us.

All our new players are so glad to be able to play with like-minded people, and they have been made very welcome. We are always on the lookout for anyone else who would like to give us a try.

So come along any Monday morning to the Indoor Recreation Centre at 9.30am, and even have a go, to see what you think.

You don't have to be mad, but it IS an asset!

Marg Merriman, Secretary,

## Meet and Mingle

Frank Reeves, guest speaker at our March meeting, presented a most informative session on the history and current status of the Electric car.



The next Meet and Mingle will be held in the U3a Rooms on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, when Diana Johnston from the RACV will speak on the topic 'Road Safety for Seniors. Then on May 16th, John Lloyd, President of Benalla Sustainable Future Group will speak on the topic of 'An Update on Renewable Energy in the Benalla Area'.

Judith Borthwick and Bill Parris

## Moments in Australian History

Our two sessions in March looked firstly at the settlement of the Western District of Victoria, predominantly by free Scottish settlers in the 1840s. We were helped by viewing the wonderful watercolours in the Chalicum Sketchbook by Cooper, a partner in the Chalicum Run south west of Avoca. These watercolours documented the first ten years of the run as it was developed from tents to a whole range of timber buildings. This settlement pattern was quite different from that seen much earlier in NSW and Van Diemen's Land.

Our second session took up again the concept of "revolution" in the colonies. We revised the Vinegar Hill Convict revolt in 1804 in NSW and the Rum Rebellion when officers of the NSW Corps deposed Governor Bligh in 1808. Both were quite different types of revolts and both were put down by the Colonial administrators.

What of Eureka in Victoria in 1854? We were helped by two useful film productions: an account of the actual Stockade incident in which S.T. Gill watercolours gave us a good impression of conditions on the Ballarat goldfields; and more importantly a film produced by the ABC of the trial for treason of 13 prisoners taken by the soldiers. This explained the little known strategies of the defence lawyers to win the case and have all declared not guilty. Within two years several of these men were elected to the Victorian parliament and helped introduce full voting rights for all men in the colony including Aborigines. The predominance of Irish settlers was noted in these events and will be continued with an examination of the Kelly outbreak in Victoria in the 1870s.

Meg Dillon

## Music Appreciation

In late February our lesser known composer was **Jean-Marie Leclair**. An obviously talented man, he was born into a lace making family and this was his first profession. By some miracle in his twenties he became a ballet dancer and from there he

progressed to music where he was both musician and composer. He was able to present music that was clear, harmonic, balanced and rational - all things that sum up the enlightenment. He was also influential in developing techniques for playing the violin.

All in all a very impressive man and we greatly enjoyed the presentation John brought to us.

We also heard selections from the Czech composer **Dvorák**. Dvorák is generally considered to be the great composer of Eastern Europe and the selections we heard certainly had an Eastern European sound to it. He was able to bring a folk music influence and a peasant dance sound into his works and the selections we heard were examples of this.

We finished up listening to all 3 movements of **Beethoven's** Piano Concerto No 4. This is an example of Beethoven's early work and who could not be thrilled by it.

On Mar 9<sup>th</sup> we began by listening to two pieces of violin music by **Karol Lipinski** (1790-1861 both titled Three Capricious. Op 10 and Op 27.

The talented child of a Polish Court musician both Lipinski and his fathers' careers were cut short by the partition of Poland in 1795 when the court was virtually disbanded. In adolescence Lipinski took up the violin and became a virtuoso to the point where Paganini became an admirer and played his music. Paganini remained an admirer so much so that when he died he left Lipinski one of his violins.

We then listened to all 4 parts of **Sibelius** Symphony No 2 in D Major. Op 43

**Sibelius** is considered to be the classic Finish Composer although he became popular in Europe and especially in England. His music has a softly feel to it and it is felt promotes Finnish myths and legends and excites Finnish patriotism. The music is melodic with seemingly unresolved chordal structures and incorporates elements of Mahler and Wagner.

At the end of the meeting it was resolved to approach the executive with a request for more equipment

Neville Gibb

## Over There

This month in response to photographs brought in by a member of the group, John reviewed how grave markers had changed once the Great War

was over. After the War, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission exhumed thousands of bodies from their graves on the battlefields with their homemade markers. Instead, the bodies were interred in purpose built military cemeteries, each grave with a similar gravestone.

The family of the fallen Australian soldier could choose the emblem to be used - from a choice of three and the personal inscription to be used - provided it did not exceed a specified number of characters. Families of Methodist soldiers who had fallen often requested the Star of David, rather than a cross, on the gravestone. John would be very interested if anyone could provide a reason for this.

This month John also reviewed the ten gambles that Germany took in the Great War. This gambles was all lost by Germany. Each loss rendered Germany's task of winning the Great War more and more impossible.

It is said that war was the national sport of Germany, so John also compared these gambles with the equivalent gamble taken by Germany in the Second World War. In eight of ten gambles, where there was an equivalent in the Second World War, Germany lost all these too.

John then showed the first episode of a French-Canadian documentary about the Great War. The class commented on its power and impact. This is because the documentary is in colour with people moving at normal speed.

John Barry

## Patchwork

Janet Gourley has spoken to the Benalla Show Committee and they have added a Table Runner section. That gives us a good reason to get busy and produce some beautiful table runners to enter. Thanks Janet.

Dorothy Webber

## Play Reading

At our March meeting we completed Act 2 of *Alive and Kicking*. While providing quite a lot of humour, there was a sadness underlying the play relating to ageing. Spirited discussion followed and many agreed the characters in the play had the right approach. Boycott "going into care" and share a house with like minded people! A line which amused many of us "I don't want to die until I've finished up all my bits of wool..."!

The *Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is 'the story of an



eccentric Edinburgh teacher who inspires cult-like reverence in her young female student-followers, referred to as “the crème de la crème.” The Brodie Set is at first dazzled by Miss Brodie’s unconventional ways and her distaste for conventional education. She instills in them her own passion for art, music, men, and all things Italian. However Miss Brodie’s excessive self-confidence also exposes the girls to a new world of adult games and boundary crossing’. Her passion for teaching and extraordinary capacity to use the English language is clearly illustrated with the following outburst at the school Principal. “You will not use the excuse of that pathetic, that humorous document to blackmail me! Mr. Lowther, you are a witness to this. Miss Mackay has made totally unsupported accusations against my name and yours. If she has one authentic shred of evidence, just one, let her bring it forth! Otherwise, if one more word of this outrageous calumny reaches my ears, I shall sue! I shall take Miss Mackay to the public courts and I shall sue the trustees of Marcia Blaine, if they support her. I will not stand quietly by and allow myself to be crucified by a woman whose fetid frustration has overcome her judgment! If scandal is to your taste, Miss Mackay, I shall give you a feast!”

The play met with great controversy when first performed in the late 60’s and provides an interesting comparison with the social norms of today.

Jenny McKenna and Keith Rogers

## Politics and Current Affairs

Now election fever is past the Politics group wait for Kim & Trump to make a deal! Meanwhile the Trump crew try to unravel the US/Iran nuclear deal made by Obama, stranger than fiction? There must be plenty of vacancies & spare offices in the White House. Anyone game to apply must realise the work is on a "casual" basis, that is the Deal!



Terry Case

## Recorder Group

We’re getting through some music,’ Janet was heard to say and that’s what we did! The Beginners and Those Who are a Little Further Along the Recorder Track tackled “La Mourisque” with the added bonus of learning some fine Latin terms.

We were there with “London’s Burning” played as a round while “Horseshoe” saw some good sight reading, not an easy skill when one is still learning the notes and how to play them. “We went out” sounded great and introduced us to dotted notes. “Minni Amor” was played in three parts, and didn’t the tenor and alto recorders sound great with the descant?

The round, “Turn the Glasses Over” had us counting beats and giving us a crash course in fractions. Who knew that Music and Maths were so closely related? We’ll be practising “Winds through the olive tree” for homework, along with our growing song pile.

It is rumoured that someone in the waiting class said, “They’re sounding good, aren’t they?”

I think we are.

Pat Treleaven

*Note – The Recorder Group will not be held Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April (Anzac Day Holiday).*

## Singing for Fun

March has seen a few more new members join the Singing for Fun group. We are regularly getting more than 35 members at each of our meetings, which is great. The increased numbers have seen both an increase in the number of male voices as well as some new sopranos. It is good that our U3A room is being filled with this number of regular participants.

Our three leaders are encouraging with their choice of songs. Faith Hicks has had a very good response to some of the rounds she has chosen, whilst Margaret Merriman commenced one of her sessions with the “Birth of the Blues” which is always a favourite. Brian Greed has started the entire group on the “Rhythm of Life” which the Harmony group practised last year. Our pianist Gwen Barnes continues to provide the tunes for us on the piano.

Don't forget that all members of Singing for Fun are welcome at the Harmony session which is the second Thursday of the month.

Margaret Jenkins

## Stock and Land

### **Bureaucratic bumbling closed local food shop**

Sandy Leatham, who successfully ran Benalla's Hook and Spoon butcher shop for about eight years, closed her business near the end of 2015 when she found out Prime Safe was introducing new handling guidelines for dry-aged beef.

She told the March Stock and Land U3A group that was the final straw. "I'd found them [the statutory authority designed to regulate the safety of meat, poultry and seafood across Victoria] very difficult to deal with and when I heard about the new guidelines I decided to close the shop.

"Prime Safe allowed restaurants to dry age but not me and introduced new guidelines without consultation". The hanging process tenderises and intensifies the flavour; "the meat is more juicy and the flavour is stronger."

Sandy said some regulations were necessary but not the often extreme "Mafia like" measures resorted to by Prime Safe. At one time it was clear two large suited heavies were sent from Prime Safe to intimidate her. "A customer was so alarmed she stood between them and me," Sandy said.

The beginning of her interest in direct selling farm produce, started in the late 1960s from a farm at Kingston, south of Hobart where she ran about 30 dairy cows. She packaged milk from the herd into half pint bottles which she delivered around Hobart.

Another business and four babies intervened until Sandy and her husband acquired a beautiful but quite rough 250ha farm at Warrenbayne. They bred Devon, Santa Gertrudis and Angus in a three way cross which produced small calves with hybrid vigour. The Leathams killed cattle at about 20 months yielding beef with desirable three to five scores for marbling.

"My interest was in producing healthy grass fed cattle and sheep, without resorting to supplemental grain, because grain alters the otherwise beneficial omega three fatty acids in meat," she said.

Sandy and her husband initially had two cattle and six sheep killed each week. But the sheep dropped by the wayside because the Leathams reckoned to

produce the best possible mutton, they would have had to irrigate.



*Sandy is pictured here with Stock and Land convenors Kathy Murphy and David Palmer.*

For the first seven or so years of Hook and Spoon, Prime Safe assured Sandy that if she abided by local government regulations for meat preparation and sale their products would meet all health requirements.

"But then Prime Safe said it had to regulate Hook and Spoon, despite most of our meat being cooked.

Then started a raft of nonsensical requirements like checking the temperature of hams halfway.

Our guest speakers for April – Libby Price and Lach Lidgerwood; followed in early May by a visit to a local sheep property.

David Palmer

## Tech Savvy

### **iPad for Beginners**

In March we worked at sending emails. We used the camera app and took photos. We then found the photos in the photos app to attach to emails and send to our new contact 'Jenny Uthreeta'.



Finally we looked at the Calendar app and entered some events, one being the cancellation of our next Tech Savvy Beginners session on Wednesday 4th April. Our next session will be on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April.

Jenny Sawyer

### Tech Savvy Projects

Tech Savvy Projects is now operating in its new format, with 'Family History' preceding 'Other Projects' on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, and an 'E-Shed' group on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday for members who also go to the 'Tech Savvy Talks' café discussion group. The focus in the 'Family History' session is on using information technology and programs such as ancestry.com for family history projects. At our last session, U3A member and experienced family historian, Heather Sloan, spoke about her family history journey. Heather shared many ideas for using the computer for family history, and stressed the importance of always double checking evidence before adding to family trees. The projects in the 'Other Projects' group are quite diverse, including developing an animation; producing a 'perpetual' calendar with birthdays listed on it; producing travel blogs, examples of which are already being published to the web and checked out in class, and more. The 'E-Shed' group before Tech Savvy Talks each month is also likely to result in a diversity of projects. At the first session Bill began to develop a slide show presentation which required organising a huge collection of photos while Neville began work on fine tuning his blog, which is now three year old. Les bought along his Arduino board and idea for a project, but he will need to tell us about this next time as he was kept quite busy as a mentor in the group.

Beverley Lee

### Tech Savvy Talks

This month we had the second part of a two part series about Artificial Intelligence.

Firstly we listened to a Ted Talk by Zeynep Tufekci about the impact of the use of AI by the big software houses Facebook, Google and Amazon. The strategy of these businesses is to keep internet users glued to their respective sites to sell advertising and products. These organizations collect and process enormous amounts of personal data and use AI to greatly increase this data and categorise people into various groups which can be individually targeted by users and unscrupulous users, including political and government.

This was followed by two short videos from the *Wall Street Journal* about the revolution in robotics leading to the unemployment of large numbers of people worldwide, even including China. This is likely to have a society altering impact which must be addressed by governments over the next ten years. "The next ten years will be either the best or the worst in human history" according to an MIT professor.

Finally we looked at a couple of short segments from Stanley Kubrick's 1968 movie *2001-A Space Odyssey*, showing what a super intelligent computer could do if it had no moral or ethical alignment with human values. This was followed by Ted Talks opposed to and in favour of the idea of an Existential Threat to humanity from Artificial Super Intelligence.

Videos used:

Zeynep Tufekci, Ted Talk

Wall St Journal *Moving Up* series

*2001- A Space Odyssey* video clips

Garry Booch Ted Talk

Nick Bostrom Ted Talk

Post script: Change of venue: Next month's 'Tech Savvy Talkers' discussion group will be at 'the Northo' (North Eastern Hotel), 3 to 4pm on Thursday April 26th.

Les Rodgers

### Towards a Sustainable Future

This month an article headed 'Shipping First as Commercial Tanker Crosses the Arctic Sea Route in Winter' was among climate change topics discussed in our group. Warmer waters in the Arctic Sea were accompanied by severe freezing in Europe. We continued to discuss topics such as water policy; the reality check resulting from the decision by China to slash imports of recyclable rubbish; the need for the introduction of meaningful reuse programs; and more. There has been much to debate, much to be concerned about. There has also been much to celebrate, with good news stories regarding the success of the TESLA battery in South Australia; the potential for Australian wind power turbines to play a role as active participants in the National Electricity Market; developments in proton batteries, and more. Frank Dunin reported on a development in energy retailing by 'DC Power' which is aiming to become a crowd funded, dedicated solar



company. To find out more, check out <https://www.dcpowerco.com.au> Good news on the local front - Benalla Renewable Energy and Mondo Power are running information sessions on their battery ready solar bulk buy offer for Benalla residents and businesses - BPACC Tuesday 10 April at 7 pm & Sunday 22nd April at 2 pm.

Bev Lee

## Travel Group



### Leaving Home

Our first trip away to Kangaroo Island, via the cruise ship *Eden*, has about 23 people still laughing. On board the ship was a fantastic experience, entertainment and food was great and the company of so many Benallians made the cruise all the more hilarious. Our fancy dress nights on the ship were a sight to behold, and true to form, Benalla really got into the swing of things. There are photos circulating via Geraldine if anyone wants to copy some.



Payment for the Eildon Social Barbeque on May 31st is due now. Contact Cath O' Connor for details or you could leave the payment at the RedB4 bookshop clearly marked with your name. Cath's number is 0428286556. Any changes to the itinerary or price will be announced at the April

Travel Group meeting. This day out in a relaxing setting is a chance for you to get to know people you may be traveling with in the future.

Judy Perry

## Wine Appreciation



A very surprised Louise Doddrell received a life membership presented by Noel!

U3A Benalla Wine Appreciation group celebrating 21st Birthday at Gracebrook Winery on 28th March. Louise Doddrell, convenor until 2013, is pictured with current convenors, Keith & Heather Rogers & Noel Meagher.

### Wednesday 25 April Anzac Day.

Meet at the tennis court car park behind Aldi in Barkly Street at 10.00 am to travel to Pfeiffers winery at Rutherglen where our last visit was eight years ago. Lunch is at the Pickled Sisters café.

Keith & Heather 5762 4086

## Writing Workshop

'A Friendship Tested', our 500 words topic for March, proved to be challenging. It followed February's (not always) warm and fuzzy topic 'Grandparents' and comes before April's lighter topic 'What I was wearing...' (though one of our members suggested this could be 'What I was wearing .... was covered in blood'...!)

As always when we share stories on challenging topics, we are left reflecting on both the diversity of presentations and the common themes within them. Stories were shared about tests to friendships which had been resolved and tests to



friendships which didn't survive the testing, perhaps because deeper values were challenged and 'righteous indignation' remains; some for which there are still remnants of deep disappointment and ongoing grief.

The session also included the sharing of some wonderful writing on past topics including 'Grandparents', 'Working Dog' and more. Members who attend the Creative Writing subgroup will meet next on Monday April 9 from 1 to 2.15 pm to share '*children's stories set in the North East*' (well, largely in the North East); followed by a catch up with others at 'The Northo' at 2.30 pm.

The topic for our next regular meeting on Monday April 23 at 1.30 pm is '*What I Was Wearing*' - 'Some items of clothing are linked to memories, emotions and experiences; The 'lucky job interview' undies, the jacket you wore on your first date, or a bikini that didn't fare well in water. Tell us how an outfit played a part during a significant moment'. New members are always welcome – a list of topics for the year is now available on the web site

Bev Lee

## Newsletter Report

At the AGM held in March, I offered to edit the Newsletter for U3a. I have been a member of U3a for 3 years and am very impressed with the variety of areas that members can enjoy, learn and discuss.

I love to receive my Newsletter and I know I have a hard 'act to follow' from how Judith Borthwick and more recently Freida Andrews and Terry Dillon have produced it in the past.

As with many things, a change of Editor can also be a time for changes to be made in the production of the Newsletter. The basic format of the Newsletter will not change.

Previously Convenors reports were due in the day after Meet and Mingle activity, which could be the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month. This was ideal when the reports were handwritten and were required to be typed up. However, in these days of computers that is not necessary.

I would like to receive the **Convenors' Reports on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the month**, which means that Convenors can give a full month's report.

This will enable me to look at the reports and place them into the Newsletter in similar format, ready for forwarding to members in the first week of the month.

The Calendar for the upcoming month will also include the first week of the following month's activities so that you will have up to date information.

We will give this change a try over the next two months and, if it works, look at adopting in the future.

Heather Wallace, Newsletter Editor

## 2018 AGM

The Annual General Meeting of U3A Benalla Inc. was held on Wednesday 21st March 2018 prior to Meet and Mingle. Extensions of the terms of eligible office bearers and the positions of Treasurer (Neville Gibb), Publicity Officer (Cheryl Turner) and a general member (Heather Wallace, also new Newsletter Editor) were decided upon.

## Program News

There have been some 'tweaks' to the timetable:.

**Tech Savvy Projects** - now in three subgroups *2nd and 4th Tuesdays* - 'Family History Projects' 1.30 to 3 pm; 'Other Projects' 3 pm to 4.30 pm. *4th Thursday* 1 to 2.30 pm 'E-Shed; projects (before Tech Savvy Talks' cafe discussion group).

**Recorder Group** - change of time to 12 to 1 pm on 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday (from 12.15-1.15 pm)

**Playreading Group** change of time to 9.30 am to 12 midday on 1st Wednesday

**Travel Club:** change of name to Travel Group.

**Tech Savvy Talks** café discussion group –venue change from Rustik to 'The Northo' 3 pm 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs. Please note that Wednesday 25 April is Anzac Day. Wine Appreciation is being held on Anzac Day, but Recorder Group is not being held. Check What's On below or keep an eye of the calendar on our website for last minute updates.

### Thank You

**Steph Ryan and her office staff**  
for the printing of hard copies of our  
newsletter for mailing out and distribution.

# What's On

## Thursday April 5

10am – 12pm **Singing for Fun**  
1 – 4pm **Patchwork**

## Friday April 6

9:30 – 11:30am **Towards a Sustainable Future**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Investment**

## Monday April 9

9:30 – 11:30am **Exercises for Fun**  
9:30 – 11am **Lifeball**  
10 – 11am **Art Appreciation** - 'The Milk Bar Exhibition' (rescheduled from Easter Monday)  
10am – 12pm **Collectors** - 'From the Shed' or 'From the Garden'  
1 – 2:15pm **Creative Writing** – 'Childrens' stories'  
2 – 4pm **Garden Team** - 'Lois's garden'  
2:30 – 3:30pm **Writing Workshop** @ 'The Northo'

## Tuesday April 10

10am – 12pm **Politics & Current Affairs**  
1:30 – 4:30 pm **Tech Savvy Projects**

## Wednesday April 11

9:30am – 3:30pm **Mid Week Walk** - Myrtleford-Ovens River Loop  
10am – 12pm **Tech Savvy Talks**  
1 – 3:30pm **Film & Literature** - 'Please Murder Me'  
7 – 10pm **Exploring New Operas** 2018

## Thursday April 12

9:30am – 12:30pm **Birdwatching**  
10am – 12pm **Singing for Fun** - Harmony Group  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Executive Meeting**

## Friday April 13

10am – 12pm **Music Appreciation**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Moments in Australian History**

## Monday April 16

9am – 5pm **Lifeball** - Fun and Friendship Day  
9:30 – 11:30am **Exercises for Fun**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Program Services**

## Tuesday April 17

1:30 – 3:30pm **Exploring the Universe**

## Wednesday April 18

10–12 **Meet & Mingle** - 'Road Safety for Seniors'  
12:15 – 1:15pm **Travel Club** - Speaker - Samantha Riddell, Local Travel Consultant  
1:30 – 3:30pm **iPad for Beginners**

## Thursday April 19

10am – 12pm **Singing for Fun**  
1 – 4pm **Patchwork**

## Friday April 20

9:30 – 11:30am **Towards a Sustainable Future**  
12 – 2pm **Chat n' Chew Lunch Group** - 'Nicha at the Old Vic Hotel'  
1:30 – 3:30pm **'Over There'**

## Monday April 23

9:30 – 11:30am **Exercises for Fun**  
9:30 – 11am **Lifeball**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Writing Workshop** - 'What I Was Wearing'

## Tuesday April 24

10am – 12pm **Politics & Current Affairs**  
1:30 – 4:30pm **Tech Savvy Projects**

## Wednesday April 25 - Anzac Day

10am – 3:30pm **Wine Appreciation** - Pfeiffers Winery, Rutherglen

## Thursday Apr 26

7:15am – 5:15pm **Garden Appreciation** - Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Lambley Nursery  
9:30 – 11:30am **Program Services**  
1 – 2:30pm **Tech Savvy Projects** - 'E-Shed'  
3 – 4pm **Tech Savvy Talks** @ 'The Northo'

## Friday Apr 27

10am – 12pm **Music Appreciation**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Moments in Australian History**

## Saturday Apr 28 12 – 1pm Newsletter Deadline

## Monday April 30

9:30 – 11:30am **Exercises for Fun**  
9:30 – 11am **Lifeball**  
2 – 4pm **Garden Team**

## Tuesday May 1

10am – 12pm **E-Book Group**  
10am – 12pm **Stock and Land** – Excursion to local sheep property  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Membership Services Group**  
2 – 4pm **Let's Talk Books**

## Wednesday May 2

9:30am – 3:30pm **Easy Walks** –Autumn in Beechworth  
9:30am – 12pm **Play Reading**  
12 – 1pm **Recorder Group**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **iPad for Beginners**

## Thursday May 3

10am – 12pm **Singing for Fun**  
1 – 4pm **Patchwork**

## Friday May 4

9:30 – 11:30am **Towards a Sustainable Future**  
1:30 – 3:30pm **Investment**