



Benalla and District Inc. Newsletter – July 2016

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PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Our recent Convenors’ meeting provided the opportunity to discuss future plans; to distribute the U3A Tutors’ Handbook and our Convenors’ A-Z; to share stories about the strengths of our groups and to discuss problems faced when numbers fall. Nearly all convenors spoke with great warmth about their groups, however two groups have experienced falling numbers and a third appears to be re-building.

It is hard on tutors who put in effort preparing material if class members don’t turn up. It is better to let us know if you are going to be absent for a while or that you are going to drop out of a class. Please don’t leave us guessing as to your well-being or whereabouts.

I want to thank Mike Larkin who has run Comparative Religion for the past year and a half for his efforts. Unfortunately the course will soon cease. Elspeth Maconachie’s Brain Games is under similar pressure.

Most of our courses are, however, doing well despite the winter weather and the failure of one of our heaters/air conditioner. Both units are to be serviced and make W4 more hospitable. Enjoy the rest of your winter courses!

GROUP REPORTS

Armchair History

We are approaching the end of our study of Roman Britain and will soon transfer our attention to the Saxons, who brought with them the English language.

The Saxon invaders were tamed by the Roman Christian religion, and this will give us the opportunity to study the spread of Christianity in this period.

Vale

Jan Casey 2-11-1937 – 18-7-2016

A large contingent recently gathered at the Moorngag Cemetery to farewell Jan and support her family. Jan was a pharmacist, initially one of the few women qualified for such work. An ex colleague spoke of her professionalism and how pleasant it was to work with her. Jan enjoyed volunteering in a number of organizations and will be missed by her many friends.

James certainly has our sympathy and support.

Denzil Mortimer 11-10-1929 – 14-4-2016

I was recently informed that Denzil Mortimer had died. Denzil was mentioned at the July Meet & Mingle when a 50s news reel featured his onetime doubles partner. He was a talented player, known to many of you as a Science Teacher at the High School and more recently as our Music Appreciation tutor.

Terry Case, President

Armchair Traveller

We met on July 19 and were taken on a journey through Myanmar (Burma) made by Terry in 2015. Apart from some spectacular scenery, particularly the world's second longest rail viaduct (it was huge and high!), we also learnt much about Burmese culture.

Please note that we meet again in two months on **Tuesday 20th September** as the timetable has left this date off by mistake. The program is to be decided when possible presenters return from their travels and winter sun retreats.

Art Appreciation

The Benalla Gallery currently has on exhibition the [30 finalists in the 2015 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize competition](#).

Benalla U3A's Art Appreciation group held its July meeting in the Gallery and were privileged to listen to a short lecture by Catherine Bennetts-Cash discussing some of the portraits. Catherine's lecture concentrated on a small number of the portraits with which she had some familiarity and was able to provide a greater understanding of both the artists and the portraits. Her favorite was *The Hat Maker--Rosie Boylan* by Evert Ploeg. Catherine explained the concept behind the winning portrait and handed out Photostat copies of the 16th Century painting under whose influence it had been painted.



The [2016 winner by Warren Crosset is entitled *Self Portrait after St Jerome Flanders*](#). Warren Crosset is a Commercial Artist who won the prize with his first ever entry. It is fair to say it is one of the small number of standout portraits amongst the 30 finalists. It has elements of both Caravaggio and Da Vinci in it and it depicts the artist pointedly resting his left forefinger on an envelope with him looking pensively off to the right. He is dressed in modern dress but his surroundings except for the envelope are from the Reformation. The original painting on which it is based is attributed to as

being in the Style of Joos Van Cleve who painted in the 16th Century and this painting is in the NGV.

It is not often that modern painters can successfully include past references in their paintings but in this case Warren Crosset has it spot on. The envelope representing the skull has a modern stamp with a skull instead of the Queen and a fly is resting on the envelope. There is Cyrillic writing on the envelope which I presume makes mention of a skull. Instead of placing himself in his own house he has placed himself in St Peters in Rome or somewhere similar and he has a mediaeval bible on his desk. The value of this painting is that these influences are not readily apparent on first viewing and when they are obvious they do not look out of place. The central point of the painting on which the viewer's eye is drawn to is the artist's hand which is both resting and pointing to the envelope. Hands are often featured in portraits and this painting captures the hand completely.

The other 29 finalists are all of a certain standard with three or four standouts. One or two of these are exceptionally well painted and only the classical references in the winning portrait set it apart. The following rate a special mention – *Sacrifice of the Model*, *David Bichard of Carpathian*, *On the Verge of a Sudden Realisation* and *The Artist's Mother*. If you visit the Gallery I would advise close viewing of all these paintings.

Benalla has been fortunate to get this exhibition and a special effort to visit the Gallery is recommended. We thank Catherine for her interest in U3A and look forward to her next lecture on **Monday 1st August**.

Astronomy

July's Astronomy was notable for several reasons. Close to home it was the welcome return of our U3A tutor Rupe Cheetham.



Meanwhile in the Heavens, NASA spacecraft Juno arrived at Planet Jupiter after a five year journey. It has been successfully locked into orbit around the giant gas planet. Its mission is to study the atmosphere and also reveal details of the birth of the solar system.

Jupiter has been likened to a planet on mega steroids. Earth has a background radiation that exposes us to about a third of a rad. During its mission Juno will be exposed to 20 million rads. Jupiter spins so fast that its gravity is like a giant sling shot, hurling away anything that approaches. Immense storms tear at its atmosphere, but deep inside are the secrets of our early solar system, the amounts of water, ammonia, methane, helium and hydrogen. Juno will look below the surface. What is its interior made of and does it have a solid core?

Juno will travel in 37 highly elliptical polar orbits, making quick passes of Jupiter, and then getting out of there to escape the radiation. After 2 years it will be destroyed by plunging into Jupiter's atmosphere. This is necessary to avoid contamination of any of Jupiter's moons which may harbour a simple form of life.

Interesting facts about Juno are its solar power in an area of low sunlight and it's the fastest spacecraft on record, travelling at a maximum speed of 265,000 km an hour.

Back on Earth, topics for discussion at our monthly meeting were "Hot Jupiters," huge gas planets in other solar systems that orbit close to their Sun. Ancient Astronomy found on Babylonian stone tablets and the Orion Nebula, an immense cloud of gas and dust that is the birth place of stars.

Rupe took us on a sky tour for the coming weeks:

- **August 4th** sees the return of planet Mercury low in the North West with Venus 5 degrees above it.
- **August 6th** Jupiter will appear close in the sky to a three day moon and the reflected sunlight from the Earth will be visible on the moon's surface.
- **August 13th** the annual Persid meteor showers; very spectacular if you can tear yourselves from your warm beds between 1 a.m. and dawn!

Bird Watching

As Kathy is unavailable in July and August, the next outing will be to Chesney Vale on **Thursday 8th**

September . More details will be provided in the August Newsletter.

The remaining outings for 2016 are scheduled for **Thursday 13 October** and **Thursday 10 November**.

Brain Games

It's hard to prepare with enthusiasm when a list of more than fifteen dwindles by July to two apologies and one attendee. Thus I have cancelled the August session and will run future sessions only if I hear from at least five people by the preceding Friday. If just one or two respond I will get back to them before the Monday.

I can be emailed at elspethm1@gmail.com, sent a text on 0418 621 764, a 101 can be left (after a longish wait) on 57621700, or a message left in my pigeonhole at Benalla pool.

Bushwalking

The weather has not been conducive to walking recently, and two midweek walks have been cancelled, however we managed one easy walk in July.

Easy walk – Wednesday July 6

Four walkers defied the threatening weather forecast and headed to the Warby Ranges and the Sunrise Track. This is a magnificent track through Grass-trees, Blakely's Red gum and wildflower bushland. There is a steep climb for a start, with great views to the south, then the track divides to form a loop which seems to follow most of the various ridges and hills till it meets the previous division point. It is a great walk and the senior walkers acquitted themselves well. The distance was about 5.7 km and it didn't rain!!!



Enjoying lunch on the Sunrise Track

Mid-week walk - Wednesday July 13 was cancelled due to rain.

Easy walk – Wednesday August 3

Last year we explored the Dave's Hill area near Mount Meg. There were only three walkers, so I hope a few more will enjoy the interesting area this year. *We will leave the Centre car park at 9.45am. Please ring Vaughan 5762 1980.*

Mid-week walk – Wednesday August 10

Irene Erskine will be leading the walk from the Erskine residence, along O'Dea's road to enjoy the delightful Sam's Creek valley, and visit some very impressive waterfalls. Some of the walk will be through private property, so take this opportunity to visit the hidden area between Tatong and Mount Tatong. *Meet at the Centre at 9.15am for 9.30 departure. Ring Vaughan 5762 1980*

Easy walk – Wednesday September 7

We will be walking part, or all, of the Friend's track, starting from Wenhams campground in the Warby's. It is a classic walk, and there should be quite a few flowers on display. *We will leave Benalla at 9.30am.*

Chat n' Chew

The next Chat n' Chew will be at **Hollywood Café** on Friday 19th August at 11.45 am. Please phone Shirley on 5762 6768 to register your choice from the menu as the restaurant has requested prebookings.

Collectors

Our Collectors group never ceases to amaze with the diversity of items brought along. Group members assure me that they have more than enough items to continue with the group.

Brian brought along a beautiful 'Ansonia' clock and explained its workings. He was able to explain how a 'gyro' works when Robyn brought along a gyro from one of the Japanese submarines which entered Sydney Harbour during World War 2. It was thought to have come from one of the torpedos.

Again in an unusual vein was Dave's froe, a tool in his collection used for splitting fence palings and shingles. He has researched his subject and had several photos of froes and items on their uses. Well done Dave.



There were many other beautiful items from firms such as Lladro, Radnar, Crown Derby, and Royal Doulton as well as carvings from New Zealand. There were several collections including one of glass and ceramic boxes, ceramic houses, another of floral ornaments and of ceramic figurines and Bev brought along an old tin with a picture of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth, and their daughters Elizabeth and Margaret as well as an antique writing desk.



Trinkets and other boxes

Unfortunately our proposed visit to see glassware at Goorambat in September will not go ahead as the owners no longer show their glass.

Carl Wantrup will be guest speaker at our August meeting. Carl is a valuer who specialises in Japanese and Chinese ceramics. He will bring along some of his own items. He has spoken to U3A groups in Melbourne.

Comparative Religion

For our July session Jenny Geer presented an excellent Power point talk with photos, via the W4 TV, about her pilgrimage walks/tours in Spain and Japan. Both the Camino in Spain and Kumano in Japan have a long history and are both listed as world heritage sites. The

Camino is, or can be, very long, 800 kilometres or more, and a minimum of 100 kilometres is required in order to qualify as a pilgrimage. The tomb of St James, of the Christian gospels, which is installed in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostella is the end destination point for the Camino trail. The trail is very well used by people from all over the world and for all sorts of reasons. It has food and accommodation stops at approximately every 20 to 30 kilometres. These vary in standard, mostly with dormitory style sleeping, so occasionally Jenny would indulge the luxury of a modest motel room. Pilgrims can walk, run, crawl, cycle and ride horses along the trail, it is up to the participant and their needs and abilities.

The Kumano in Japan requires visits to a number of different areas which includes temples and shrines and because it is located in mountainous country it means walking up and down lots of steps. This pilgrimage only involves about 50 kms of walking in total and there is some danger from wild bears. Pilgrims carry a small bell to warn off the bears. Jenny was most impressed with the standards of quality and orderliness by the Japanese in both building and maintaining the shrines, paths and facilities. Because the Camino and Kumano are “twinned” Jenny has a special certificate acknowledging this achievement.

Unfortunately the August session of Comparative Religion will be the last for this year due mainly to a decline in numbers. My approach to the topic has been somewhat unconventional and so it has been a partial success only. I did enjoy most of the classes and the enthusiasm of participants and I appreciate the support of Benalla’s outstanding U3A organisation.

For the August session on Wednesday the 3rd Laurence Neal will present information and video about the Exclusive Brethren. This replaces the scheduled talk by a Buddhist teacher/practitioner which was cancelled due to insufficient notifications of attendance. Because this will be the last class the other scheduled topics and trips for the remainder of the year are also cancelled.

Having learned from this experience to be more forthcoming about my area of greatest interest and still wanting to be part of U3A I may propose a different class for the summer of 2017 when short courses may be held. As a guide to what such a class would entail, it will include inquiry into beliefs of all kinds and some focus upon wisdom, the understanding about and the

acquisition of it – think of Socrates for an approximation of what I am talking about! The course would **not** be about conventional or academic philosophy nor the promotion of any ideology, political or religious.

Thank you to Mike Larkin for convening this group throughout 2015/16.

E Book Group

Our latest novel was *The Little Paris Bookshop*, by Nina George. This was translated from the German and was on best seller lists in 2013. Despite rave reviews from many critics, we were not impressed by this offering, proving yet again that 'best seller' status can be illusory. We are asked to believe that the central character, Jean Perdu, lived in seclusion for 21 years, as he believed his lover had abandoned him. An unread letter reveals a different story, and so he sets out in pursuit of the truth, accompanied by some other less than credible characters on their own quests. The best writing comes from the author's lyrical descriptions of French countryside. Sadly, this isn't enough to save a novel too heavily reliant on co-incidences and an insubstantial plot.

Film and Literature

As intended, we watched an episode of *Talking Heads* written by Alan Bennett (who also wrote *The Lady in the Van*). This was *Bed Among the Lentils* with Maggie Smith playing a vicar’s alcoholic wife.

This is a monologue, presented by Maggie Smith. She is talking about her life as a vicar’s wife, and in doing so raises some interesting questions. Why is the vicar’s wife expected to attend every service? A lawyer’s wife is not expected to attend court; an actor’s wife is not expected to attend every performance. When the Bishop visits, she is asked about her thoughts on women conducting services, and the vicar answers for her. All this points to the vicar’s treatment of her as a possession, not of great value, having no thoughts of her own. Perhaps this is the reason for her alcoholism. It is when she meets an Indian shopkeeper who treats her as someone of value, worthy of having a conversation, that she finds a reason to address her alcoholism.

Maggie Smith’s performance is outstanding. Initially it appears that her presentation is deadpan, both in lack

of facial expression and tone of voice. However, in reviewing sections of the presentation, we found a range of facial expressions, and some tonal variations. It was perhaps more the way she held herself – head to the side, and body very still – and her appearance – lank hair and dowdy clothes – that gave the impression of her unhappiness. Towards the end, this changes when the new relationship develops. Her hair has been styled and she has a lighter feel about her. Certainly an interesting DVD that promoted an enjoyable discussion.

We had a little time, so a couple of people talked about movies they had seen and the impact they had had. One was *The Help*, based on the book about the treatment of coloured maids in America's south. The other was *Bad Neighbours 2*, an American comedy which, while a rather silly movie, had an underlying message to young women that they do not need to think of themselves as only sex objects.

Next month we will be watching a much lighter American movie that is a modern day story possibly along the lines of *Taming of the Shrew* which we watched earlier in the year. It will be interesting to discuss whether the same messages come through this much lighter movie. *Everyone is welcome, particularly anyone familiar with the Shakespeare play.*

Garden Appreciation

August - our winter break.

Thursday September 22nd

Meet at 9.30am at **Rosie Archer's**, 28 Walker Street, Benalla for a cuppa. We will view the garden and then leave from 10 to 10.30am to go to 27 Kay's Lane, Glenrowan, home of **Jess Kay**.

Thursday October 27th

Meet at the Flexible Learning Car Park at 9.30am, to travel to **Karn Station** to view the garden and enjoy morning tea. Lunch at Tatong Tavern.

Thursday November 24th – to be arranged.

All morning teas – coffee, tea, milk and hot water will be supplied. Please bring your own mug and a small plate to share. For more information phone Gwen – 0438 627 010 or 5762 7017

Garden Team

The rain was pouring down in the early hours of Monday July 11th, but by late morning it was fine enough for us to carry out our planned work at Rupe and Gwen Cheetham's. After two and a half months in hospital and rehab, Rupe had only been home for a few days, but he and Gwen had a few jobs planned.



Lois and Shirlye weeded the pots that Rupe grows for the Benalla Hospital Auxiliary stall. Bill dug out a couple of clumps of ornamental strappy plants which Gwen no longer wanted, and moved a heavy pot of hostas on a trolley to a better spot.

Jane and guest member Rosie pruned some bushes which were growing out over the lawn and then chopped them into small pieces into the compost bin. We all enjoyed working in the weak sunshine, until called in for a sumptuous afternoon tea.



It was a pleasure to relax in the warmth of Gwen's lovely smile and receive Rupe's grateful thanks for our help.

It's time we set dates for the rest of our year rather than waiting for a full gathering to do so. Please arrange a swap if necessary and let us know as far in advance as possible.

August 8th - Lois / 29th - Shirlye

September 12th - Kathy

October 10th - Jane & Bill / 31st - Val

November 14th - Elspeth

Elspeth can be emailed elspethm1@gmail.com; sent a text on 0418 621764 or a 101 can be left (after a longish wait) on 57621700.

Investment

To commence the July meeting of Investment we had a look at the financial implications of Brexit, which had been held about a week before our meeting. Following this on a more positive note we studied some good long term shares as suggested by Elio D'Amato on Commsec.

However, the feature of the afternoon was a segment from one of our members, Anne McLeod, on *How I Play the Share Market*. Anne outlined a well thought through strategy that obviously works. All of our members enjoyed hearing about Anne's system and found it very interesting.

*The next meeting of Investment will be on **Friday 5th August** 2016 at 1.15pm in W4. My thanks to Peter Simpson who will be leading discussion at that meeting.*

Let's Talk Books

A small group attended Let's Talk Books in July, with many away, a few unwell & miserable weather outside.

What a fun afternoon we had! As usual the discussions went off the track a few times. *84 Charing Cross* provided a wonderful recipe for Yorkshire Pudding, this book is still doing the rounds of the group. Dorothy then provided a huge book from 2003 *Movie and Video Guide* with all details of movies and videos produced from 2003 back.

We then talked about how 'Google' has stopped all those arguments and discussions around the table with everyone having a different answer, now just google and the answer is there.

Australian books mentioned were *Out of Alice* by Kerry McGuiness; *Diamonds and Dust a story of a Northern Territory cattle station, it's culture and aboriginal heritage* and *Queen of the Road*. *High Mountains of Portugal* by Yann Martel, (author of *The Life of Pi*) is comprised of 3 stories and like the author's previous book was a different read. Maxine enjoyed a book of short stories by Canadian writer Alice

Munro and also *The View from Castle Rock*. Back in time we then went to *The Alchemist* about a shepherd who wanted to see the Pyramids.

We had a very funny discussion about books that come in paper bags!..... and one of our group – no names – had an experience with the hose of the vacuum cleaner at the car wash that was determined to remove her trousers.

*Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 2nd August** at 2 p.m.*

Lifeball



Lifeballers in action!

Lifeball is played every Monday at 10 am at the Indoor Recreation Centre. Why don't you help us to enjoy ourselves by coming along to see how much fun we have??

Phone Marg Merriman on 5762-1404



Meet and Mingle

Beth Smith, a dairy farmer from Tatong, spoke at our July meeting. Beth explained some of the difficulties dairy farmers are currently facing with low milk prices and dairy companies demanding they pay back money they have been paid. Many dairy farmers have already spent that money doing improvements to their farms and will now be forced to borrow to pay this money back to Fonterra. Despite the difficulties Beth seemed positive about life as a dairy farmer



Lorraine and Beth at Meet and Mingle

Neville Gibb will be guest speaker at the next Meet and Mingle on the 17th August. His topic will be London – 1000 villages.

Music Appreciation

24 June 2016

John presented the session with music from the following composers.

1. **Jenohubay (1880-1937)**. Hungarian violinist, composer and teacher. We listened to two segments of his Concertos, 1 and 2.
2. **Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)**. His cello concerto with Yo Yo Ma, soloist with the New York Symphony Orchestra.
3. **Samuel Barber (1910-1981)**. His Neo Romantic music, Adagio for Strings.
4. Concluding with Jenohubay's Violin Concerto, No 2 with Chloe Hanslip, soloist.

8 July 2016

John presented the session with music from the following composers.

1. **Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)**. Swedish (born in Finland). We listened to his compositions, Finlandia and Karelian Suite, played by the CSR Symphony Orchestra, Bratislava.
2. **Erik Satie (1866-1925)**. French composer, known to be an eccentric. We listened to a selection of his piano works, Klara Korondi, pianist.
3. We returned to Sibelius with a selection of his Romantic music, for strings.

22 July 2016

John presented:

1. **Carl Orff (1895-1982)** German composer. We played his Carmina-Burana, a large scale work, consisting of 24 poems set to music, the first of which is the well known, O Fortuna.
2. **Peter von Winter (1754-1825)**. German violinist, and composer of flute concertos.
3. **Antonio Rosetti (1750-1792)**. We played a flute concerto with Bruno Meier, soloist with the Prague Chamber Orchestra.

Patchwork

Patchwork meets at The Hub, Cooina. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 4th August at 1pm.

Play Reading

In my last report of our Group, it was clear that the relationships between members of "The Doll" characters were breaking down. Barney and Roo have a huge fight which breaks up house furniture and the Dolls of 17 years. Pearl walks out permanently as she is not prepared to behave in the manner of previous girl friends. Roo wants to know whose fault it is for the "dust up" and is promptly told by Emma that it is no one's fault, it is that he and Barney are simply too old for this kind of conduct.

Not only that, young Johnny Dowd is the new cane cutting "gun". Dowd and the gang decide to head to Mildura in the off season and Roo won't go and Barney decides to stay with Roo as they are mates. Roo reluctantly accepts this. Olive leaves in a drunken state.

The final scene is extremely emotional as Barney puts his hand on Roo's broad shoulders; the men look into each other's eyes and walk out of the house together.

Several of our Group shed a tear at this stage and some others were very touched by the ending – including the convenor !!

Our next reading is “Winter Glory” by Peter Cloke. This play is one in a series involving the redoubtable quartet of Dame Beatrice and her lodgers - Nan, Hattie and the Brigadier - who feature in earlier comedies by Cloke. This play may well be the last in the series because, in an unfortunate slip-up in the quartet’s scheme to put a pathetic pet out of its misery & to help an ageing actress fade away at a peak of happiness, they dispatch themselves heavenwards as well.

Another fun play for our Group

Politics and Current Affairs



Mark Knight from the Herald Sun had this take on Malcolm’s long wait prior to a result being declared.

The results for the Senate are still not clear, but detailed results are available for lower house seats like Indi. It will enable us to analyse differences in voting patterns in this electorate and see how Benalla voted.

At some stage we will put Politics to one side and look at Current Affairs once more as we have a number of issues awaiting our attention.

Rail and Tourism

At our next session on **Tuesday 2nd August** we will travel further into the Canadian Rockies from Field to Revelstoke. The DVD to be shown is about another famous Tourist Railway in Colorado *The Durango and Silverton*.

Singing for Fun

Our Harmony group was faced with a real challenge when Brian introduced a new song "It's my party" in

three parts. Even though a few of our altos were away we managed quite well. We are looking forward to perfecting the harmony to "Harbour Lights" and Faith is challenging us with the two part song "what nonsense". It's a great fun song. Good to have Gwen Cheetham back with us.

Vale Jan Casey. It is with great sadness that we say farewell to our wonderful member Jan Casey. Jan was one of our altos who had a great knowledge and love of music. She took charge of our morning tea sessions and was always there with a smile and a willingness to do extra jobs. She will be sadly missed.

Tech Savvy

Our July meeting began with a challenge for more members of the group to set up Twitter accounts and follow up news concerning recent set backs to the Google Glass project. Rich discussion followed viewing of a thought provoking and pertinent TED talk titled [‘How to upgrade democracy for the internet era’](#). Last month’s theme of digital photography then continued with Terry updating us on new applications, including [Photosynth](#).



After the coffee break we broke into groups. The Mentors working group tabled a spreadsheet prepared by Bev and Marg W reviewing the Tech Savvy Drop In group participation during first Semester, then allocated themes to presenters for Drop In sessions to mid September.

The Tech Savvies group talked about topics including malware; developments in virtual reality; downloading YouTube files (Firefox does this easily but Peter is going to put an alternative in the Dropbox Techsavvies folder)

and discussed the news that Microsoft are no longer forcing Windows 10 on people after losing a court case costing \$10,000 in the small claims court. Les has been following up Ian's suggestion of using 'Malwarebytes' to resolve malware problems and will report back about this at a future Tech Savvy Meeting.

At our August meeting Peter Simpson will explore technological changes over time in the television industry, drawing upon his rich and extensive working life as a television camera man.

Tech Savvy Drop In

Our first Drop In theme for July involved exploring the camera features on mobile phones and ipads/tablets and practising simple photo editing. It's quite a buzz when someone successfully crops a photo or applies a colour filter for the first time.

Our second theme, presented by avid reader Heather Sloan, involved exploring on-line borrowing services available through our Library. Heather introduced us to 'Borrow Box', from which library members can borrow e-books and audio books on line; and 'Zinio', through which library borrowers can register to read from a selection of 60 online magazines, including favourites such as 'House and Garden'. Library cards and password address books need to be kept handy when locating, installing (and later remembering how to get in to!) these apps.

Next month, Marg Walshe will be presenting on 'Notes' and if there's time, 'Pages', while Marg Jenkins will provide a perspective on online banking. During our last Apple iPad session in September Jenny Sawyer will introduce the simple blog format she uses when travelling overseas while the final Android group session will check out a similar blog format.

From mid September we will be changing to a shorter drop in format preceding the 10 week Google App course being presented by Terry Dillon. If you are interested in attending the '[Google Apps](#)' course, put your name on the list on notice board in W4, or email Terry terry@greygypsies.com.au. Finally, if you'd like to check out or revise some of the resources we have been developing for the Drop In –check out out the [TSDI website, http://u3abenallatsdropin.weebly.com](http://u3abenallatsdropin.weebly.com), particularly the 'Packages' section.

Towards a Sustainable Future

Improving the energy performance of our homes takes on new meaning in winter. Many Victorian homes are considered to be little more than '[glorified tents](#)' in terms of thermal performance, with the average energy star rating for existing houses in Victoria at 2-3 stars well below the requirement for new houses of 6 stars. We read an article listing [22 actions we can take to improve our home's energy performance](#) even if we haven't taken the step of installing solar panels on our roofs, then heard about BSFG's upcoming Sustainable Building Forum titled '[Retrofitting existing homes for energy efficiency and thermal comfort](#)'. It's being held at BPACC on Saturday 13th August from 1.00 to 4.30 pm.

We also considered visions for the future, listening to a thought provoking Ockham's Razor program, '[Citizen Utilities - the future of Solar](#)', which built upon our ongoing interest in the potential of shared precincts for solar generation for Benalla, then discussing the 'Sustainable Energy' component of Benalla's draft Community Plan. There was agreement that the plan would benefit from more specific statements relating to environmentally sustainable buildings/building development, perhaps something like

'Benalla will be a model city in locally produced renewable energy; shared precinct renewable energy production and distribution; sustainable building design and development; electrically powered bus and fast train transport and in renewable energy based electricity charging facilities for motor vehicles'.

We welcomed new member Gabija Arnold in July. It was interesting to read a report by Investment group convenor Margaret Jenkins titled '[Clean Energy and the Share Market](#)' on their web page. On a final note, did you make any changes—however small-- in your use of single use plastics during [Plastic Free July](#)?

Wine Appreciation

Wednesday 24 August 2016

Meet at car park at 10.00 am and travel to Magar Hill winery. Lunch at Seven Creeks Hotel, Euroa. Yet to be confirmed.

For more information phone Noel Meagher (5762 3149) or Keith & Heather Rogers (5762 4086).

Writing Workshop

At our July café catchup Pat Treleven described how the [Wheeler Centre](#) and the [Australian Writers' Centre](#) inspire her to write, reading us her intriguing response to the Australian Writers' Centre's '23 words' Winter Solstice challenge to write a story using just 23 words, including the words winter, silhouette and writer!

'Advice' – our topic for July – was presented at both our café catchup and regular sessions. Advice such as 'Courtesy costs you nothing'; 'Don't learn to milk the cow or it will be your task for life. Leave that task for the boys'; 'Coves what's had the experience, they knows yer see'; 'Our children survive in spite of us, not because of us' and 'Don't mix your drinks', provided fertile ground for reminiscing and story telling.

The topic for our next session '*What happened in (eg) Vegas*' (*working title*) has been set by ABC Open's Shepparton producer, Will Kendrew, who is hoping to take part. The brief – *Spill the beans on something from one of your holidays, something that just doesn't happen in every day life*. Look at photo albums, emails, letters, even Facebook, for reminders of holidays and the events that happened on them, then describe one of those holiday moments in detail.

The ABC Open topic for August '[Experiences of the Unexplained](#)' will be our alternative topic, or topic to share at the café catch up. The brief - *Have you ever had a brush with the spiritual world, a stay in a haunted house, a moment of psychic synergy? Make us shiver in our boots with your story of an otherworldly encounter. Tell us the story as it happened and how you see it now.*

Our next Café Catchup is **Monday 1st August 2.30 to 3.30 pm or so by the fire at the Northo; regular session Monday 15th August from 1.30 to 3.30 in W4.**

Program News

➤ Opera – Come over to the dark side!

Murder and mayhem; lost love and death! Yes, Opera takes the dark themes and weaves beautiful music around the fanciful stories. Join us to listen to four popular operas. You will recognise some of the music and get to see and hear some of the great performances on recent DVDs.

This program will be held on 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings 21 Warana Court, starting at 7pm.

Dates: October 12 and 26; November 9 and 23.

Presenter: Meg Dillon **Maximum participants 10.**

Enrolment: Contact Meg on 5762 6558 prior to July 25 and after September 1st to enrol.

➤ 'Google Apps'

'Google Apps' is an extremely versatile application, incorporating many free features including Chrome (web browser), email, contacts, docs (word processor), sheets (spreadsheet), calendar, photos, sites (create and maintain your own website). This course is applicable to Windows, iOS and Android users. Participants will be required to have their own tablet, phone or laptop, should be competent in basic use of their device and have a gMail account. Notes on creating a gMail account will be sent on enrolment.

Days: 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays and 3rd Wednesday

Dates: September 21 & 27; October 4, 11, 19 & 25; November 8, 16, 22, 29 **Time/Venue:** 2.30 to 3.30 pm in W4 (NB - Tech Savvy Drop In sessions will be held from 1.30 and 2.15 pm on these days)

Presenter: Terry Dillon **Enrolment:** Contact Terry's mobile 0419 343129; email terry@greygypsies.com.au, or add your name to the list on the W4 notice board.

Around the Traps

It's almost Bald Archy's time again! Don't miss the 23rd **Bald Archy Prize 2016**. Swanpool Hall (2386 Midland Highway) 20th August to September 4th. 10 am to 4 pm daily. Dining room open every day for morning tea/afternoon tea and lunch. Enquiries 5768 2400.

Newsletter/Website News

- Please check your Newsletter and the calendars, group reports and timetables on the website for updates and changes to scheduled meetings.
- The next newsletter deadline is on **Monday 22 August** at midday.
- Newsletter reports will be uploaded to the website at the end of that week. Additional photographs for the web can be sent to bevelee47@gmail.com.

Freida Andrews, Newsletter Editor

Bev Lee, Website Manager

Our thanks go to Steph Ryan MP and the staff at her Benalla Office for printing this newsletter.