



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – April 2015

P O Box 583
Benalla 3672
Editor: Judith Borthwick 5762 3442
editor@u3abenalla.com
Newsletter deadline: **12.00 noon 3rd Wednesday**

President: Terry Case 5762 1700
president@u3abenalla.com
Secretary: Lorraine Knox 5762 1531
secretary@u3abenalla.com
Web site: www.u3abenalla.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Attention Tutors and Convenors

We plan to have a meeting in W4 for Tutors and Convenors on Friday May 15th, starting at 2.30 and finishing at 3.30pm, I hope you can attend. We will demonstrate how to use our Elmo projector and help new leaders with the connections between the computer and TV and the use of the photocopier.

We hope to gain feedback and suggestions from you which will assist us in our planning for next year and to give you a chance to talk to other convenors and tutors.

Can I remind all of you, especially those who do not use W4 as a class area to maintain an attendance record. This information would be needed if there was to be an insurance claim. You or a member of your group should periodically add the details to the roll in W4.

I also want feedback from those of you who use the computer projector in your classes, we are not envisaging replacing this when it expires as we can now hook computers to the TV or use USBs to play material you have developed. Please talk to me if you see any problems with this decision.

Terry Case. President

GROUP REPORTS

Armchair Traveller

In March, we celebrated St Patrick's Day with a visit to some of the beautiful country near Killarney, including the Dingle Peninsula. To contrast our usual comfortable travel by air, boat or coach, we spent one hour watching the amazing bike-ride across Russia and China by adventurers Tim Cope and Chris Hatherley. This involved over a year of cycling through snow, heat, desert and dense Siberian forest – a truly amazing journey.

We meet again on May 19, when we hope to visit Colorado USA and possibly Norway.

We look forward to joining Terry Case on several epic train journeys on his "Railway Journey" session on April 20121.

Armchair History: the Victorians

In 1842 when Dickens set out from Liverpool on his first American tour he took a new steam powered ocean liner. Schedules could now be published in the expectation that a steam powered vessel would run to time.

In 1851 the word "Victorian" entered the English language. In that year Queen Victoria was able to take the Royal train from London to visit Liverpool and Manchester, before continuing north to her beloved Scotland. It was the year Victorians celebrated their achievements with the Great Exhibition. Visitors came not just from Britain, but also from Europe, America and the British colonies, the Victorians basked in the glory of being world leaders.

Prince Albert tried to change the monarchy to make it appeal more to the new members of the Middle Class, who were to dominate the Victorian world.

The aristocratic Tory Party re-invented itself as leaders such as Peel and Disraeli sought to widen its appeal, it emerged as the Conservative Party. Not all members of society shared the spoils, Elizabeth Gaskell wrote novels about the harsh conditions in Northern mill towns, these were a call for change. Dickens continued to amuse and shock his audience, The Old Curiosity Shop was a tear jerker that also raised the issue of child prostitution. A new generation of journalists and religious leaders took to the streets of the big cities seeking to challenge the complacency of those in power and bring about social change.

Astronomy – Learning about Planets, Stars and the Universe

As the Centre was closed on the Tuesday following Easter we have not had an Astronomy session during April to the time of this report.

Some of our members enjoyed viewing the eclipse of the moon through Astronomy Benalla's telescopes at the Gliding Club on Easter Saturday. After a cloudy day, the heavens cleared here in the North/East and revealed to sky watchers the phenomenon of the moon passing through Earth's shadow.

A total lunar eclipse that lasted around five minutes, turned our perspective of the moon's surface a russet red of reflected light. It was the shortest total lunar eclipse for this entire century.

This was also the third in a series of four closely spaced total lunar eclipses, six months apart, known as a lunar tetrad. The last of these will occur on September 28th. 2015

The significance of this eclipse of the tetrad coinciding with Easter and the Jewish Passover had the "doomsayers" very excited, but we seem to have survived yet again!

The popular term of a "blood moon" has no astronomical significance.

Chat n' Chew

Our next Chat n'Chew will be held on Friday 15th May at the Gallery Cafe, Benalla, at 11.45 am. For bookings or cancellations please contact Shirley on 5762 6768 before Tuesday 14th April. All welcome.

e-Book Group

Our book for March was 'Craft for a Dry Lake', a memoir by first time author Kim Mahood. Kim Mahood takes us to the Australian Outback of her

youth in this award-winning memoir. She explores her relationship with her father, her art and the places where she grew up, examining how a settler population relates to history and to land. An interesting discussion took place with different opinions being expressed but all enjoyed her evocative descriptions of the country. Because The Centre was not available on the day our group met in the library. Our next meeting will be held at the **library** on Tuesday 5th May at 10.00 am. Please arrive a little earlier so that our discussions can start at 10.00 sharp.

April 23rd

Meet at Gwen Turners, 2/69 Arundel Street South at 9.45 for a morning tea cuppa. Park in front of old Court House. Walk down path to Unit 2. We will then visit a beautiful display of Bonsai plants at the home of Anelli and Geoff Smith, 139 Arundel Street South, Benalla. 5762 3816. If you are not coming for morning tea please be at 139 by 10.30, then back to my home 2/69 Arundel Street for byo lunch in the garden.

Please let me know if you are coming.

May 28th

Meet at Centre car park by 9.15. Morning tea will be at Wodonga TAFE Horticulture Campus. Karen Armstrong will meet us. You may have heard Karen on the ABC radio garden show. We will be able to view the gardens.

Then to Peard's Nursery. Plants, pots and gifts. Lunch at Borelli's Restaurant next door. We will need to know numbers to book us in.

Gwen 5762 7017, 0438 627010



U3A AGM March 2015. Members mingling during morning tea.

Investment Group 2

Members of Investment Group 2 met early in April just before Easter. We discussed factors which have influenced the current Australian Share Market, with the All Ordinaries approaching the 6000 mark. We also looked at the graphs of some shares which have markedly increased in value during the first three months of 2015.

The next meeting of Investment Group 2 will be on Friday 1 May 2015 at 2pm in W4.

Lifeball

Lifeball has been great recently. We had 3 new members early on, and they loved their introduction to our fun game. We held our Fun and Friendship Day in March, attended by 50 players from Albury, Myrtleford, Rutherglen, Mansfield and Eildon, and a super day was enjoyed by everyone. The lunch was superb - of course!! - and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. This coming Friday, the 17th April, 9 of us are going to Myrtleford for their Fun and Friendship Day, and they always hold a wonderful day as well - these days are really something to look forward to!!

We have reverted to our other time for playing, now Easter is over - we arrive at 1.15pm, ready to play at 1.30pm, now the weather is cooler!

I can't stress enough how much fun we have, and I would like to encourage you all to pop in and have a look, and you might just like to give us a go.

See you, Marg Merriman 5762 1404.

Making the most of the Internet

Our April session began with visions of the Future via a comical YouTube video '[Elders respond to Google Glass](#)' (not 'glasses' as this new innovation has only one lens!). On a more serious note, it's always good to have a reliable reference source. Ian recommended Koroush Ghazi's '[Tweaking Companion](#)' to Windows users. There is a free Regular Edition and a Deluxe Edition which is available as a PDF E-Book 'for around the price of a cup of coffee'.

Privacy, safety and copyright issues continued to be on the agenda, with discussion of malware and Malwarebytes Anti-Malware 2.0's free product and Wickr, a combination of messaging apps which doesn't keep a record of users' communications. Illegal downloading is again in the news. Ian showed us examples of correspondence likely to be received by

people found to have breached copyright by downloading files illegally.

Subscriptions to Virtual Private Networks (VPN) and movie streaming services such as Netflix both reduce the possibility of being found guilty of illegal downloading or 'pirating'

[Virtual Private Networks \(VPN's\)](#) don't record who has been doing what and when. They circumvent 'geoblocking'. With a VPN network subscription of around \$40 pa we can go to a server in most places in the world - in London, for example - to select and watch eg. BBC I-view which would otherwise be geoblocked. Free VPN's are available, however may be more problematic.

[Netflix](#) has arrived since we last met. Ian gave us an article comparing different streaming services then demonstrated his trial subscription to Netflix - he's finding the quality good, no buffering, smooth streaming. We can subscribe for one month free - however need to make sure we set a cancel date before the end date if we don't want to keep it. According to Ian, it's worth \$9 a month not to have ads! In the latter part of the session, Bev introduced three easy to learn web design platforms Weebly, Wix and WordPress - which are available in free versions on the web.

Our U3A Benalla website is currently being redesigned using Weebly, which is easy to learn by anyone with word processing skills. The web address is

<http://u3abenallatesttheme3.weebly.com>. Examples of Weebly, Wix and Wordpress websites can be found on the side menu of the '[Making the Most of the Internet](#)' group page (under M - '[DIY websites](#)'). Feedback on our trial website is important and welcome! Next session will include some time spent learning how to develop a simple web 'blog'. On a political note - particularly as Benalla awaits the roll out of the NBN - we talked about an article reporting that Simon Hackett, the NBN Co director employed by the LNP Government to implement its cost saving change to fibre to the node technology, recently said he is a strong supporter of connecting premises directly to fibre!

Meet and Mingle

Meet and Mingle will be held at The Centre on Wednesday 20th May at 10.00 am. All welcome.

Music Appreciation

27 March 2015

Joan presented a session of variety:

A DVD entitled 'Visions of Vienna' with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Bacchanal, March Militaire and Carnivals of the Animals, by Saint Saens.

Itzhak Pearlman, violinist, playing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.

Alfred Brendel, pianist, playing 'St Francis 'Walking on the Water'.

10 April 2015

Beverly commenced the session with Mozart's 'Concerto in C Major' for flute and harp, played by the Czeck Radio Symphony Orchestra.

John presented an unknown composer/violinist, Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, 1814-1865. Compositions were Concerto Pathetique Concertino, Eligie Sur la Mort d'un, Rondo Papageno. The violinist Ilya Grubert, with the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Politics and Current Affairs

Tax seems to be the domestic theme this month as members of a Senate Committee expressed shock at the Multi Nationals shifting profits off-shore and leaving the Australian tax payer to cushion their debts. Much wailing and grinding of teeth will probably be of no use as these companies armed with their battalions of lawyers and accountants will ease their way round any new tax laws. So are the "Lifters" to be charged with an increased GST? Will "brave" politicians change Pensions and Super? The Politics group might need our Investment classes to give us a bit of advice on these issues.

Towards a Sustainable Future

It's always interesting to discuss rural, 'bottom up' sustainability initiatives in our class. At a recent sustainability living festival at Woodend, a \$100,000 grant was announced for a solar farm at an old timber mill. The income earned from the tenant's electricity payments will be reinvested in more solar panels, creating a perpetual fund for community energy. Also in Central Victoria, Newstead has received a \$200,000 grant to become fully powered by renewable energy. Closer to home, Indigo Shire Council, after a community consultation process, voted unanimously to formally adopt a policy totally opposed to the coal seam gas industry. Indigo Councillors spoke of the north east

being both a prime site for renewable energy and of prime agricultural land - 'fracking and agriculture don't mix'. Agriculture is the subject of the recent 'Appetite for Change' study. It seems food production changes are a barometer of climate change. For farm animals, heat stress during heat events is significant. Dairy cows produce less milk, beef cattle are delayed in reaching target weights. Warmer nights mean plants have less time to recover before the next day's growth. Wines, especially merlot and shiraz grown in our Mediterranean climate areas, will be less suitable for growth by 2050. Bananas will continue to feel the impact of cyclones. Potato production could be affected by potato famine like conditions. We also read about a South Gippsland dairy farmer who is encouraging 'her girls' to calve in April and May to mitigate summers that seem much earlier and longer and less conducive to grass growing. Looking through a 'food miles' lens, we discussed a thought provoking article about how the concentration of ownership of food production alongside mind boggling food miles can lead to waste and insecurity in farming communities. Land was also on our agenda in terms of the need for improved strategies to tackle the growing electronic waste stream entering landfill; and the need to consider the impact of coal seam gas exploration via fracking on seismological changes and earthquakes. Another jam packed month!

Walks



U3A Walkers on top of Mt Samaria – photo by Margaret Jenkins

Short Walk: Mt. Samaria, Wednesday, 1 April 2015

Seniors conquer Mt Samaria 953 metre rocky summit on April Fool's Day!

The Samaria ranges has an interesting record. This slender plateau provided a source of food for the local Aborigines. In the 1840s much of the area was under grazing. With stands of magnificent mature trees, by the 1920s a large scale timber industry was in operation. In 1979 about 7000 hectares were declared a State Park. Today, Mt Samaria State Park eucalyptus forest offers many walking tracks, scenic views and a glimpse of history. Welcome to Lynn & Freya and thank you to our leader, Vaughan Cowan. Margaret Walshe.

Gough's Bay, 8th April

Travelling from Benalla, through Swanpool and Mansfield sixteen Benalla Bushwalkers (including Carol and Graham from Alexandra) arrived at Gough's Bay. We began our 12 km hike from the caravan park, walking through town before beginning the gradual incline via gravel road to our first lookout over the bay. Stunning scenery, turquoise dappled water seeping into hidden inlets surrounded by sun dappled hills. Continuing, we walked through pine regeneration and scattered eucalypts before settling for lunch at the lakeside at Fry's Bay. Hiking on, we continued to view the lake from many aspects, arriving back at Gough's bay for afternoon tea at the park. Thanks Sue for leading the walk, and everyone for your company and a most enjoyable day.

Kerrie Cooke



Both walks in May will be at Beechworth to enjoy the Autumn Leaves.

Short walk, Wednesday 6th May

A circuit from what remains of Lake Sambell, round the town, and back through the Chinese gardens. We will leave Benalla at 9.30am from the Centre car park. Vaughan Cowan 5762 1980.

Midweek walk, Wednesday 13th May

A circuit of the town and surrounding bush, mainly to admire the autumn leaves. We will check the condition of Lake Sambell and possibly walk the Gorge Road and part of the Cascades. Meet at the Centre car park at 9.15am for a 9.30 departure. Vaughan Cowan 5762 1980.

David Harvey

Wine Appreciation

Wednesday 22 April

Meet at 10.30 am for the short drive to Kooyonga Chapel winery at Moorngag.

Was a work in progress in 2011 so expect progress. Lunch at the Tatong Tavern.

Wednesday 27 May

Meet at 10.00 am for travel to Broken River Vineyards at Kialla.

Lunch will be in nearby Shepparton.

Noel Meagher 5762 3149

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