



## Benalla and District Inc.

### Newsletter – August 2015

P O Box 583

Benalla 3672

Editor: Judith Borthwick 5762 3442

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

Newsletter deadline: **12.00 noon 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday**

President: Terry Case 5762 1700

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

Secretary: Lorraine Knox 5762 1531

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

Web site: <http://u3abenalla.weebly.com>

#### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

On Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July the U3A North East Region held a Digital Technology information session at the Shepparton U3A. The event attracted approximately sixty participants. It had two guest speakers and seven sessions were run by local U3A members. Lorraine Knox and Beverley Lee were part of the organizing committee and Beverley, Ian McLeod and I ran sessions along with U3A members from Shepparton and Seymour. Beverley also created a website for the conference (<http://u3anortheastdlw.weebly.com>). If you would like to find more details of the sessions I would encourage you to dip into the website. The day was judged a success enabling us to share our skills and learn from each other, in true U3A fashion.



*Shirley, Ian, Judith and Lorraine who attended the Digital Technology information session in Shepparton*

The Program Committee will meet soon to start reviewing new courses for next year. If you know of any changes to courses or have suggestions please contact me.

**Terry Case  
President**

#### **GROUP REPORTS**

##### **Armchair History: the Victorians**

The Victorian era saw many changes and new inventions. There were once many coaching inns in British cities. In London most had been built *after* the Great Fire, replacing inns that had been built as far back as the mediaeval period. Before railway travel became commonplace coaches often took a number of days to complete long distance journeys, requiring changes of horses and places of rest for the passengers. Inns consisted of courtyards behind a conventional façade surrounded by galleries leading to guests' rooms.

Photos of people and buildings in the Victorian period will be uploaded to the web page.



*Portable wet-plate dark tent, c1860.*

Wet-plate photography, introduced in 1851, used coated glass plates that were developed while still wet, a complicated process but the resultant glass negative produced excellent quality prints. Victorians were great amateur scientists and loved dabbling with chemicals. In many ways the more involved the procedure, the more delighted they were.

## Armchair Traveller

Terry Case will take us "From Sea to Summit" in India and Nepal when we next meet on September 15. We travel with him by train from Calcutta for Darjeeling, where we view Mt Everest. We then trek through Nepal to the Anapurna mountain range.

## Astronomy



*Kuiper Belt and Pluto*

July 14th was an auspicious day for mankind when the space probe "New Horizons" reached its destination, the Dwarf Planet Pluto, in the far distant Kuiper Belt. We have now visited all the Planets in our Solar system.

The Kuiper Belt is a massive disc shaped region of icy objects, asteroids, small bodies and primitive remnants from the formation of the planets. Billions of kms from the Sun and beyond Planet Neptune this belt of cosmic debris orbits in the outer reaches of our Solar System

At Astronomy we were pleased to have Rupe Cheetham return as guest lecturer to take us on a journey with New Horizons to the icy world of Pluto.

The tiny piano sized, nuclear powered spacecraft, "New Horizons" was launched on January 19th 2006, to study our most distant planet, Pluto and the Kuiper Belt objects. In nearly 10 years it travelled 4.8 billion miles to perform the historic flyby of Pluto

and send back surprising images and data. It revealed a dwarf planet with plains and icy mountain ranges to 3,400 metres elevation.

Scientists were stunned to see no signs of craters from the cosmic debris from the Kuiper belt that is constantly pelting Pluto. This is a sign that it contains parts that are youthful in astronomical terms, perhaps less than 100 million years old, and may still be geologically active.

New Horizons now travels on to study two more destinations in the Kuiper Belt before its fuel supply runs out.

Most of our Astronomy members have travelled north to warmer climes so August has been a time of smaller friendly discussions.

One topic that intrigues is the discovery by the Kepler Planet Hunter telescope of Exoplanets in far away Galaxies. In the habitable zone of their star, the so called "Goldilocks Zone, these planets may support life.

Russian billionaire, Yuri Milner has donated \$100 million to fund a program called "Breakthrough Listen" to search for extra-terrestrial life far beyond the Solar System.

Leading researchers have secured time on two of the World's most powerful telescopes, Greenback at West Virginia U.S. and Parkes, Australia where they will scan 1 million of the closest stars and 100 of the nearest Galaxies for radio transmissions from advanced civilizations. The telescopes will scan the center of the Milky Way and the entire Galactic Plane and may answer that question. "Are we alone?"

## Chat n' Chew

Chat n' Chew will be held at 11.45 am on September 18<sup>th</sup> at the North Eastern Hotel. Bookings or cancellations to Shirley on 5762 6768 by 15<sup>th</sup>.

## e-Book Group

'The Narrow Road to the Deep North' by Richard Flanagan was our ebook for July. Starting with his old age, five stages in the life and loves of the main character, Dorrigo Evans, are interwoven. He is a flawed hero, committed to Ella, but when his regiment is shipped out he is deep in adultery with Amy, his uncle's wife.



*ebook group at the library*

The central event of the novel is an extended atrocity of the Burma Railway death railway as it is being constructed by hundreds of thousands of slaves, including 13,000 Australians. Dorrigo Evans as a colonel and a surgeon, is the acknowledged leader of the Australian prisoners after the fall of Singapore.

At every opportunity Dorrigo Evans tried to reason with the Japanese to improve conditions for the Australians. Flanagan wants nobody to be under any illusions about what went on and in this he succeeds brilliantly. Group members had widely differing *about this book*. *Judith Borthwick*

## Comparative Religion

Only a few people attended the July session and we finished early due to the cold weather, having discussed the homework from June and watched a video about Islam. The video contained the essential history of the rise of Islam and the role that Mohammed played.

Life for the mainly desert Arabs was one of almost constant warfare with other tribal groups over territory and religious allegiances. The only time that the fighting stopped and the tribes got together was in a sacred tent in Mecca where no fighting was allowed. This "ceasefire" also enabled trading to take place and so the human ingenuity for "turning a blind eye" prevailed.

Mohammed's genius was to declare a single God and this had the effect of uniting the various tribes. The sacred tent in Mecca was retained and other rules followed such as prayer 5 times a day, while facing Mecca, plus the various rules about hygiene, food and so on.

I was reminded by Mohammed's life story that it was similar to Ghandi's, whom we studied earlier in the year. Both Ghandi and Mohammed were as

much political strategists as they were spiritual leaders. In Mohammed's case major battles were fought to overcome resistance to his new religion and for Ghandi the "battle" to liberate India from the British was fought using "non-resistance" methods. These two leaders inspired major change to whole societies.

No homework was organized for this period, but for those interested, and wishing to prepare in advance for our next session, August 5th, we will watch the excellent video on Islam again, because so few of the class have seen it. We meet as usual in the ex-Centre room Dunlop Campus.

September's topic is as yet undecided.

At this stage a trip is planned in October to the Benedictine Monastery at Thoona and on the same trip we may stop at the Winton wetlands café for lunch, or afternoon tea, plus study the indigenous displays and possibly hear details about it from an indigenous representative.

In November, our final meeting of the year, we will study/discuss Christianity and Judaism.

Mike Larkin

## Film and Literature

Our group enjoyed the feel-good movie 'Mama Mia'. A vibrant romp starring Meryl Streep, Pierce Brosnan and many other fine actors. I won't forget the high energy performances of all the cast.

Our next movie will be 'The Theory of Everything' starring Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones and cast. The Oscar winning biopic of the life of Stephen Hawking, a truly remarkable man of our time. Our group will meet at 1.30 p m on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September.

Jim Casey

## Garden Appreciation

### September 24<sup>th</sup>

Meet at Royal Hotel Car Park 10 am. Byo morning tea. We will visit the garden of Libby McLennan, 43 Arundel Street (next door) then across the road to walk around St Joseph's Church garden, then to retirement village in Bridge Street. Lunch at Royal Hotel.

### October 22<sup>nd</sup>

Magpie Rise, a garden near Yackandandah.

### November 26<sup>th</sup>

Two gardens in Goomalibee. More information September newsletter.

Will be home from holidays end of August.

Gwen 5762 7017, 0438 627010

## Investment Group 1

Another pleasing win for our group in the Sunday Age Share competition as published in the Sunday Age on the 26th July. At our July meeting following the usual assessment of individual Stocks submitted by each member an interesting exchange of views took place on the investing experiences of each member.



## Investment Group 2

The meeting of Investment Group 2 in early July was held a few days into the new financial year. Hence we looked at trends within various sectors of the market for the past twelve months, and made note of those sectors which had showed an overall positive return for the past year. We also discussed the performance of ASX top 20 stocks versus other categories over the previous twelve months. The next meeting of Investment Group 2 will be held on Friday 7 August 2015 at 2pm in W4.

## Let's Talk Books

A hardy group of 13, with several apologies registered, gathered at the Benalla Library for our August session. Once again the reading range was wide and interesting. Dorothy had borrowed a book from the Library that contained letters written by Queen Elizabeth to her Secretary over the last 20 years, these contained her thoughts about British Prime Ministers and members of the Royal family, good to take a peek inside the walls of Buckingham Palace. Another book of interest 'The Price of Life' was the account of Nigel Brennan who was kidnapped and held for ransom. Heather had read the history of John Gould (of bird fame) it seems his wife was the artist who created the beautiful drawings, we have Gould books displayed in the library in a glass case. Peter Watts featured and also the Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See was said to be a good read. Once again some books

were swapped and lent, a pleasant couple of hours passed very quickly. See you all again in September.

Geraldine and Lorraine

## Lifeball



Winter time has seen quite a few of our members join the grey nomads in tripping around, going North, West, and South even to Europe. Despite these absentees, our numbers have been sufficient to have our regular Monday afternoon games at 1-30pm at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre, Ackerly Ave. With the cooler conditions it has spurred the members to be perhaps even more active to keep warm. This great activity provides a safe game supplying our three main development needs, physical, mental, and social for retirees. Anyone interested in taking on this game is welcome to join at any time throughout the year. We wish Margaret Merriman all the best for a quick recovery from her home inflicted injury – autographs may be written on the plaster-cast.

Please contact Sec. Marg Merriman 57 62 1404, or Pres. Gerry Herman 57 62 3193 for any further information.

## Making the most of the Internet

The Semester 1 'Making the Most of the Internet' course finished on June 9. Our tutor Ian McLeod's internet knowledge provided the basis for a great course, but he would like to 'regroup' before running another course. Ian's approach was most engaging and he left us with lots of ideas, handouts and YouTube links to follow up as lifelong learners.

The final session included a presentation on the many features offered by Windows Club; an introduction to Windows 10; Open Office and Google Maps. YouTube videos drawn on during the



session will continue to be available on ['Ian's Blog'](#) to help us to continue to 'Make the Most of the Internet'.

Thanks Ian for all your work!

Making the Most of the Internet participants may be interested in a new group – working title 'Tech Savvy Seniors'—a 'taster' session will be held on the second Wednesday in August (Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>) from 10 am to 12 midday in W4. For more information contact Bev on 5762 8171.

## Meet and Mingle

will be held in W4 on Wednesday September 16<sup>th</sup> at 10.00 am

## Music Appreciation

24/07/15

Max presented a DVD entitled 'In Search of Mozart'. Produced in association with the world's leading orchestras, opera houses and musicians, and told through a 25,000 mile journey through Europe along every route that Mozart followed.

14/08/15

John presented a little known composer, Franz Krommer (1759-1831). His Oboe Concerto, was played by the Czechoslovakian Symphony Orchestra; and also, his concerto for two clarinets. John also presented the violin concerto by Johann Brahms (1833-1897), played by the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, with Japanese violinist, Takako Nishizaki.

## Politics

In our latest class we ranged over many issues, from the scourge of drugs in our community to the Greek financial crisis. We contemplated the disgrace of politicians misusing allowances, whilst the public is told "the age of entitlement is over". The politicians must have forgotten to tell that to the multi-national companies that pay little or no tax in Australia.

We continue to see major differences between politics and media in Victorian and New South Wales. It is interesting to compare the differing views of people in our two biggest states.

## Singing for Fun

Two of our leaders have been on the sick list for some weeks. Margaret broke her ankle and is still in recovery mode. We hope to have them both back

soon. Brian and Gwen have been in charge and have started preparations for our "Sing Outs". The Harmony group will be presenting a programme at the monthly dinner at the Hub Cooinda on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Sept. When we will be singing some old favourites and some new songs. "Annie's Song and" Down by the riverside" are sounding really good.

## Tech Savvy Seniors

Eleven members attended the first session of the new 'Tech Savvy Seniors' course on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August. What a diverse group! Members had a wide range of reasons for joining the group and a diverse range of computer experience across the spectrum of computer types, from Apple to Microsoft to Android; from Barry's experience on main frame computers in the early days, to pc's, laptops and now ipads/tablets and iphones/smart phones today.

Windows 10 has just been released. Experience of our 'early adopters' with the new Windows 10 installation has also been diverse. Terry is finding it very workable whereas Ian has concerns and has given us a link to uninstall it should we have problems (posted on 'Ian's Blog'). Most group members seem happy to wait until the bugs are sorted out. We will continue watching the rollout of Windows 10 with interest and during the session watched a YouTube video describing the features of the latest version.

The class included lots of formal and informal sharing, beginning with a 'Show and Tell' session. We learnt from Heather about the new Ginio magazine downloading service available through the Library; then later about the way in which Judy was able to virtually command her tablet via Siri to wake her up with a voice message that morning. We learnt from Margaret W that the new I-pads will be 64G and 128G, not 15G and 32G as they are now; and from Ian that the reason for this is the amount of memory required for High Density downloads. That's just a brief snapshot of what we discussed!

Coffee break was a little longer than planned as there was such valuable small group problem solving and sharing of wisdom in the room! We are going to factor in a longer break as a result.

In the second half of the session we broke up into small groups to follow up interest areas as 'Bloggers', 'Tech Heads' and 'Mentors'. Each group developed a sense of direction for the next three months and then ideas were gathered for content

and speakers for our next session.

I left the class marvelling at the diverse and resourceful ways in which class members were continuing to strive to meet their learning needs and respond positively in an ever changing digital environment.

If you were unable to attend the first session but would like to join in, you might be interested in reading the [Course Information](#) handout and the [Overview of Working Groups](#) documents. For further information, contact Bev on 5762 8171.

## Towards a Sustainable Future

Looking towards a sustainable future through different lenses, from the 'personal' to the 'local', 'state' 'national' 'regional' 'international', our class always has much to discuss.

Locally we see evidence of positive change. Increasing numbers of our neighbours and fellow U3A students have solar panels on the roofs of their homes and are considering ways in which to 'retrofit' to make their homes more energy efficient. Group members recently participated in a council sponsored tour of recycling facilities -- Frank reports holding discussions in his neighbourhood about the latest initiatives afterwards. We are now becoming accustomed to classifying our waste and putting out our red and green bins; then yellow and green bins, on alternate weeks in response to local council recycling initiatives to reduce the amount of landfill. It is pleasing to hear these initiatives are already proving successful in doing so!

Benalla Sustainable Future Group recently worked with Benalla Rural City to organise another successful Sustainable Housing Forum at BPACC which a number of U3A members attended. In another initiative, the 'Rec-less – Less Water, Less Often, More Resilient Open Spaces' project, which aims to better manage public spaces such as parks, sports grounds and gardens as climate change occurs, Benalla Rural City is asking for community feedback through an online survey available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RS2CWH6>. Please consider completing it.

We always greet with enthusiasm positive research reports of strategies to address climate change. We can visualise local dairy cows receiving the minute dose of a dietary supplement which suppresses methane production by ruminant animals without suppressing milk production; the adoption of strategies to reduce the frost risk caused by El Nino events; and the acceptance and spread of new

bladeless wind turbines developed by Spanish company Vortex Bladeless (*\*Developments in renewable energy – can bladeless wind turbines mute opposition? Guardian, June 1, 2015.*).

At State level, we read that Daniel Andrew's government is 'unashamedly pro wind power', has condemned the instructions by the Abbot government to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation not to invest in wind projects, and is to announce plans for the renewable energy which will bypass federal government policies. This is particularly significant given that our state is the heaviest producer of 'dirty' brown coal sourced electricity. We will have the chance to hear more about directions being taken by the Victorian Government at the Annual General Meeting of the Benalla Sustainable Future Group on August 27 when guest speaker Dr Nicholas Aberle, Safe Climate Campaign Manager for Environment Victoria, will speak about **"6 Steps to Climate Leadership: The path to a cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Victoria"**.

It is in considering events at the national level that we spend much time and continue to 'shake our heads' in stunned amazement. We read a plethora of research based reports suggesting the need for policy to support renewable energy and the longer term transition to a zero carbon energy environment; yet our Federal Government's policy responses at the national level remain relatively tentative at best, and at times obfuscatory. With elections coming up in both the USA and Australia and the Paris talks imminent internationally, climate change issues are clearly on the political agenda. Our class discussions in 'Towards a Sustainable Future', sustained by well researched articles selected by our facilitator, John Lloyd, will undoubtedly continue to be lively and informative!

## Walks

### Easy walk Wed. August 5

Equipped with a good supply of waterproof clothing, we drove through intermittent showers on the way to Yarrawonga. The rain had stopped by the time we started walking on the Gorman Park circuit, but it was cold enough for gloves. It is on the Northern side of the Murray just below the weir.

Gorman Park is natural bushland, which has been preserved and augmented by replanted areas and well formed tracks. It is bordered to the North and

West by billabongs and the Yarrawonga-Mulwala Golf Courses, and to the South the Murray River. We then drove to the Yarrawonga Yacht Club to park and had our lunch in the Chinaman's Island Rotunda. There was a heavy rain shower before we walked the well maintained circuit. It is a very interesting area, with many interpretive notice boards and re-planted native plants. The lake has returned to its normal level, and the Cumberoona is floating again. Eight walkers had a very pleasant day.



Morning tea in Gorman Park. Photo – Margaret Jenkins

The mid-week walk in the Stanley Forest was cancelled due to weather conditions.

### Easy walk Wed. September 2

We will be walking to the top of Mount Killawarra in the Northern Warby Ranges. It is only 334m high, and we start from an elevated level, so it is not too hard. There should be quite a few wildflowers out by then. We leave the Centre car park at 10.0am.

### Mid-week walk Wed. September 9

From the freeway, driving past Broadford, I think most people have noticed a prominent conical hill to the west. It is Mount Piper and is noted for the many butterflies that congregate at the top at certain times of the year.

There is an interesting zig-zag track to the top and a circuit track round the base. It may seem to be a long drive, but it takes about the same time as it does to the top of Mt. Buffalo.

Please ring Vaughan 5762 1980. We assemble at the Centre Car park at 8.30am for 8.45 departure.

## Wine Appreciation

### Wednesday 26 August

Meet at car park at 10.00 am for travel to Amulet vineyard along way to Beechworth. Lunch on site [in lieu of Baarrooka which has closed.]

### Wednesday 23 September

Meet at 10.00 am for visit to Boynton's Feathertop winery at Eurobin.

Lunch at the Red Stag Restaurant nearby.

Noel Meagher 5762 3149

## Writing Workshop

The topic for our July workshop, 'Lost and Found', began with a presentation by guest writer Neville Gibb. Neville's reflections on the differences between the London he loved and left 42 years ago and the London he rediscovered in 2014 related closely to our task of writing about 'the loss of something we treasured; our search to find it; feelings about the loss and rediscovery; the lengths we went to, to get it back and whether our lives changed as a result'.

Member stories which followed included the loss and rediscovery of a treasured gold watch; of a little child who had 'gone off in a huff' on a farm; of a loved old car in inner Sydney; of a key which symbolized responsibility for the care of a neighbour's pets; and of a family history with the death of a father. If you would like to read some of these stories click on '[Blogs](#)' in the Writing Workshop area of the new website.

ABC Open's 500 'Words' September topic, set to synchronise with a new ABC documentary series, is '[For Better For Worse](#)' - 'Share your story of a long term romantic relationship and what kept or has kept you together. How did it start? What did/have you learned through the ups and downs?' As 'For Better for Worse' may be a difficult topic to share in a rural setting with often few 'degrees of separation' between U3A members, an alternative topic is available- '[Cringe](#)' 'Your eyes squint, your cheeks burn red, your teeth grate. Share a personal cringe-worthy tale of woe that you can't quite forget!'

Our regular monthly meeting is on the third Monday of the month between 2 and 4 pm in W4. Alternate fortnightly catch ups at a local café will be trialled in the coming months.

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