



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – October 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Seniors Week was celebrated in style by our Singing for Fun Group with an enjoyable concert that saw lots of smiles in the audience. The Group will be holding their annual Christmas Meet & Mingle concert in the Cooinda Hub on Wednesday 18/11. Please try to car pool and give yourselves time to be in the venue for a 10am start.

Friday 9/10 saw a number of us staffing an Information Table outside the newsagents hoping to recruit some new members. As the Politics tutor I was amused by the number of people who said the last thing they would do was join a Politics discussion but then held forth on the topic!

The Program Committee met to review new courses and set a timetable for 2016 classes. We still have some work ahead finalising details and the November newsletter will contain course outlines, timetables, enrolment forms and dates/venues for Enrolment days. New classes will include:- Collectors, Bird Watching, Play Reading and a couple of others are in the offering for Semester 2. In addition Railways and Brain Games are returning from hibernation for new sessions along with most of the existing classes.

I want to congratulate Graham Mitchell and his Investment Group who have decided to retire after a run of over 20 years! When I last checked the Age Finance competition, the group were in 3rd place and well positioned to give the leaders a fright in the few months remaining.

Please remember to book a place for the Christmas Luncheon to be held in Mansfield on 4th November. Find the form in the Newsletter.

Finally I want to thank John Avery for his long stint as our Network Representative at the Melbourne

meetings. John has played a significant role as our representative and we hope we can find someone to replace him; any offers?

*Terry Case
President*

Newsletter 2016

After six year I am relinquishing my role as newsletter editor and this will be my second last one.

My thanks to Freida Andrews and Bev Lee who will undertake this role in the new year. Details will be included in the November newsletter as to how to contact Freida and Bev.

Thanks to convenors and contributors to the newsletter. It is your articles and photos which make it the excellent newsletter that it is. Please keep them coming to the new editors. The newsletter provides an important historical record of the activities and programs of U3A Benalla over the years.

Judith Borthwick

GROUP REPORTS

Armchair History: the Victorians

PLEASE NOTE, the final session this year will be on November 13th as there will be no class on the 27th November.

I have been spending time developing a course and finding dvds for classes next year. We will start with the Romans and should get as far as the War of the Roses, covering a momentous millennium.

The period was typically portrayed in old history text books as the “Dark Ages”, but modern interpretations now portray it in a different light. The final classes for this year will look at the closing decades of Victoria’s reign and the beginnings of the Edwardian era. I will use the Zulu and Boer Wars to illustrate British Imperial experiences in this period. In addition I will show a fascinating dvd on the role of Victoria’s children and grandchildren in the events that tumbled towards World War One.

Armchair Traveller

Jenny Geer will take us on a trip across the Silk Road, from China to Georgia in the Caucasus region. Then, time permitting, she will give some insights into the earthquake recovery program in Nepal, where she worked on emergency relief. Terry Case will act as convenor. November 17th 11.45 am to 1.45 pm in W4.

Art Appreciation

Presenter: Shanley Cleeland, Education and Public Programs Curator, Benalla Art Gallery October 5, 2015

Our October session in the Bennet Gallery featured art installations by Sarah Crow, Dylan Martorell, Nathan Gray and the collaborative group DAMP from the Gertrude Street cooperative art studio in Fitzroy. This studio enjoys a somewhat stellar reputation and has exhibited at several Venice Biennales.

The art is interactive and the public are encouraged to participate. Indeed three of the art pieces rely on the public taking part for their artistic merit to become apparent.

An installation of musical instruments built from metallic refuse collected locally relies on the public touching the installations for musical notes and rhythms to be produced. Each artistic piece produces an electronic sound which is fed into a central speaker and music of sorts results as the musician artist intended.

Another installation is an audio installation that runs for 6 hours where the artist reads out the total catalogue of art works held by the Gallery.

The #straponpaintings installation features several large garments resembling aprons which have quotations and slogans attached.

The public are encouraged to put on the aprons and have their photo taken standing in front of artworks on the wall behind that have inspired the artist in making the garments.



There are also helmets made of the same cloth so you can be photographed and retain your anonymity.

The most accessible installation is a display of ceramic vases and

pots that have been deliberately smashed. The fragments have then been repainted in colors of works of art taken from the Gallery Storeroom and which have been placed on the largest wall in the room opposite the ceramic display. The presenting artists were allowed access to the Gallery Storeroom and the pictures chosen are displayed in the Paris Salon method without any identification attached. The repainted ceramic shards in the colours of the paintings opposite have then been reconstructed and rebuilt into vases and pots which resemble the original objects. One does not immediately see that the vases and pots have been rebuilt until closer inspection shows they have been put together like a jigsaw. The total project encourages interaction and tries to involve the viewer in understanding the creative urges of the artist.



This exhibition however provokes the constant conun

drum that is always present with any new art form – what is art and how do we recognize it? If we are told something is art should we accept it as art? There is no doubt that the artists themselves believe their installations are works of art. They

themselves work industrially at producing art and want the public to share in their creative process.

Astronomy

NASA recently announced the discovery of seasonal running water on the Planet Mars.

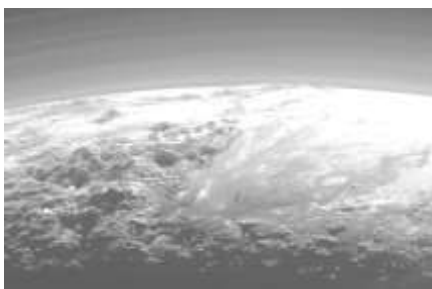
It's generally a little known fact that the chemical elements of water, which are oxygen and hydrogen, are abundant in the Universe. NASA and ESA missions are finding water on comets, asteroids and dwarf planets like Ceres and in the atmospheres and interiors of the giant planets, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune and their rings and moons have water ice. The signature of water is being found in giant molecular clouds between the stars, new born planetary systems and atmospheres of giant planets orbiting other stars.

Our Astronomy participants have all returned from their September travels and we are delving into the realms of the Universe once more.

At Martins instigation we studied the discovery of a saline ocean on Gannymede, Jupiter's largest Moon. Scientists estimate that the ocean is 100 km's thick, 10 times deeper than Earth's oceans and buried under a 150 km crust of mostly ice.

Inspired by this photo taken from the New Horizon Space Craft, looking back at Pluto near sunset, showing rugged icy mountains and plains, and layers of atmosphere in the weak sunlight; Jan gave us an update on the Dwarf Planet Pluto.

A project from Jeff initiated a film on the piece by piece building of the International Space Station. An engineering masterpiece. There are 16 nations involved in the Space Station. It's strange to think that people have actually been living and working in space for the past 13 years!



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that people have actually been living and working in space for the past 13 years!

Our latest foray into the mysteries of galaxies was an attempt to enter the realms of Black Holes. In 1916 Einstein's theory of relativity predicted the presence of Black Holes. He had found a new way to describe gravity. It was not a force but a consequence of a distortion in space and time. Now the Hubble telescope has proved their presence in the centre of galaxies.

From star evolution to black holes in a short session! Followed by a film titled, "Death By Black Hole". Did we achieve an understanding? I think we may have only scratched the surface. More work to be done on this one!

Albert Einstein once said "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It's the source of all true science." There will be no Astronomy on the first Tuesday of next month as the school will be closed on Melbourne Cup Day.

Chat n' Chew

Chat n'Chew will recommence in February 2016. Details will be included in the January newsletter.

Comparative Religion

The Jehovah's Witness guest speakers are still keen and should arrive for our November session in room W4 on Wednesday the 4th at 1pm. This will be our last session for the year and I suggest that because we have guests and it is our windup that anyone who feels inclined bring a small "plate" for afternoon tea.

I'll just mention some of the wishes expressed at the Winton session:

The central goal of the group should be the study of different religions and that it should be objective rather than subjective. That means that we study other people and their religions rather than express our personal ideas and beliefs about religion. While this is the virtual opposite to my preference I will attempt to stick to the wish of the majority - but, I will always welcome any personal expressions of opinion and belief! (I don't think that it would be out of place to discuss the root causes/origins of religions at some point.)

Secondly members would like **guest speakers**, but Laurence has told me that they are difficult to organize, so that might happen only occasionally. It may also help if we combine with the Wang group to make guest speakers more worthwhile.

Alternatively, I am going to try and find suitable speaker/documentaries/movies from the library and internet which can be played on room W4's TV via DVD or USB stick.

Thirdly some members are keen on the **member presentations** and these will be brief and of a topic of particular interest to the member. For example Marg Sellars likes the American Amish people and she may give a presentation about them. Also Jenny Geer has expressed the wish to present a topic when time allows next year.

Fourthly, and finally, we will stick to the **once per month session**, as it is now, and use email as a reminder of "what's on" and as a follow up for those wishing to clarify something from a session or to propose new studies etc.

Mike Larkin

e-Book Group

This month, we enjoyed My Brother Jack, by George Johnston. In this saga about the growing up years of David Meredith, and his larrikin brother Jack, Johnston beautifully evokes the claustrophobia and the quiet desperation of suburbia, as seen through the eyes of David. Daring to question the hallowed Anzac tradition, the author outlines in spare and brutal detail, the horrors experienced by the returned servicemen, many maimed mentally and physically. Some of these men, with nowhere to go take up semi-permanent residence in the Meredith household. David Meredith, however, rises above this oppressive atmosphere to become famous as a war correspondent, while Jack's dream of serving overseas ends after a tragic accident. This novel is a breathtaking achievement on every level: as a social history, as a chronicle of war, and as a description of rites of passage.

PS: Can I remind those with Kindles to bring them, fully charged up, to the November meeting. (in the Meeting room of the Library building, 9.45am)

Garden Appreciation

November 26th

Meet at Centre Car Park at 9.45 am.

We will visit the garden of Louise Armstrong and her mother, Mary Daws, Goomalibee Road. Please byo morning tea.

For our last visit of the year we will go to Geraldine McCorkell's for a byo lunch.

Gwen 5762 7017, 0438 627010

Garden Team

I'm told Kathy's driveway is in good trim after Sept 21st and on Oct 12th Val's garden beds enjoyed some extra attention.

The tea-party - oops - make that work party - can recommend the PWMU Apricot and Ginger slice. We might have enter the show next year but unsure whether floral or culinary sections would be more appropriate!

In November we expect to gather at Lois's on the 9th and at Tulip St on the 30th

Investment Group 1

At our recent meeting members present very much enjoyed the usual format which has proved so successful and enduring over many years. It was agreed that the recent vagaries of the stock market is no place for the faint hearted!

It is expected that the report for Investment Group No 1 next month will be somewhat different in content.

Investment Group 2

At the October meeting of Investment Group 2 we discussed the volatility experienced in the share market over the past month. Our thanks to Ian for providing us with a long term perspective of the ASX from 1987 to recent time. We also looked at a variety of exchange traded products which included Australian shares, International shares and bond products which can provide diversification to a portfolio.

The next meeting of IG2 will be on Friday 6 November at 2pm in W4.

Let's Talk Books

Due to the very hot and unpleasant day our group was a little smaller than usual, but the discussion about what we have been reading was lively. One book that took our interest was *Who Called the Cook a Bastard*, a little bit of history in that offering. A book that several members had read or heard about *Light between the Oceans* came highly recommended. *For Better For Worse or Lunch* by Christina Hindhaugh gave us all a laugh. Books were swapped and given away in the manner of all book lovers, a very enjoyable afternoon.

Our next meeting is on Cup Day so we have cancelled, so we will have our last gathering for the year on the **Tuesday 1st December.**

Lifeball

Lifeball continues on its merry way, although with fewer players however. But that's OK, playing within 2 zones instead of 3 sharpens us up greatly, and is even more fun than usual.

Marg is still not playing, although she is umpiring, which involves just moving along the side of the court. She hopes to resume playing next month.

Anne has also resumed after being in Austria visiting family for some weeks, and she is a welcome addition. Jan and Dick have been away for some months, but we do hope to see them again soon.

Gerry has brought both his grandchildren along on occasions, and young Jackson caught on really quickly, at 8 years of age. Even tiny Tasmin, at 3, was hopping into Rupert's exercise program with great enthusiasm, and it was lovely to watch.

Our times have changed now - everyone is encouraged to arrive at 9.45, ready to play at 10am on Mondays, before the temperature rises too quickly.

Our breakup lunch will be on December 8 this year, at the Golf Club, and if it is anything like last year, will be a wonderful way to conclude our year's program.

We will resume next year on February 1, beginning at 10 am.

Give us a try - you won't regret it!!

Meet and Mingle

Our October Meet and Mingle took place at the Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop Learning Centre - with presentations from Councillor Barbara Alexander on directions being taken by the council to ensure Benalla remains a vibrant town which is attractive to older people and from librarian Debbie on upcoming and regular programs in the Library.

Terry Case reported on recent developments, then congratulated the Investment 1 group, which has decided to finish up this year after running as a U3A group since 1996. Seven of the original members are still attending this group, which as 'Ben-ites' is a regular leader in the Age Share Race. Graham Mitchell engaged the audience in reminiscing about the group and received very warm applause in recognition of his contribution as convenor of this long running and most successful group.

Next year's new 'Play reading' and 'Collectors' Corner' groups were advertised by respective group leaders, Keith Rogers and Judy Borthwick.

Our last Meet and Mingle for the year will be held at The Hub, Cooina on Wednesday 18th November. Please try to car pool, and give yourselves time to be at the venue for a 10 am start. Patchwork will be on display and the Singing for Fun group will entertain us. Our last Meet and Mingle for the year will be held at The Hub, Cooina on Wednesday 18th November. Please try to car pool, and give yourselves time to be at the venue for a 10 am start. Patchwork will be on display and the Singing for Fun group will entertain us.

Music Appreciation

25th September 2015

John presented the Beethoven Violin Sonata No.9, commonly known as the Kreutzer Sonata.

Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831) – violinist. We listened to two of his violin concertos, No.17 and No.19.

In the second session we listened to Peer Gynt, Suite, by Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), a Norwegian composer.

9th October 2015

John presented the works of composer Henry Charles Litoff (1818-1891). We listened to his Scherzo Presto from Concerto Symphonique No.4, and four movements of Concerto Symphonique No.2.

The second session we listened to Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite – also Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade.

Patchwork

Just a reminder that we are having our annual display at Meet & Mingle, which this year will be at the Hub at Cooina on 18th November. Quilts and display items can be dropped off with Dorothy or brought on the day. It would be appreciated if anyone who has a clothes horse and can bring it along does so.

Next year we will be doing a project quilt so have a look through your magazines and if you find a quilt you would like to do, bring it along and we will vote on the one we will do at our Christmas Breakup which will be on Thursday 3rd December, 12.30pm at the Hub. BYO plate and a wrapped fat quarter as a gift to exchange.

We now have a lock on our cupboard so if there is anything you want to borrow from the cupboard on other than a Patchwork day, give Dorothy a ring.

Politics

As I mentioned in the president's report I failed to gain any new members for this group during my session on the street Information Table. At times it felt like being in a Monty Python sketch as quite a few people wanted to have a long session on politics, without signing up. Remember Python's routine on "Paying for an Argument"?

We still find our classes challenging and entertaining with the likes of Donald Trump leading the race to be the next leader of the "Free World". Can you really run the American nation as though it is a TV sit com? Remember this is the nation that had Ronald Reagan terrifying the Soviets into submission.

We have spent quite a bit of time in the last couple of years learning about the nations and religious groupings in the Middle East: at times I've thought the class was turning into a Comparative Religion course. Next year some of our focus will be on the American Presidential primaries and religion still plays a big part still in American politics. New members of the class will be most welcome.

Singing for Fun

What an uplifting feeling it is when many people come together to sing. The Sing a long morning was an outstanding success. Seventy people came to fill the Baptist Church hall with wonderful sound. Many thanks to Geraldine who rolled off our song sheets and to our leaders Faith, Brian and Margaret and to our pianist Gwen. We are now preparing for "Meet 'n Mingle on Wed. Nov. 18th at" The Hub", Cooinda We would like to pack the hall out so tell your friends about it now. It will be a great morning out.

Tech Savvy Seniors

Our October session featured the introduction of five new U3A iPads. Funded by a grant to U3A from the Benalla Bowling Club, the I pads are to be used to increase the digital literacy of U3A members. Thanks go to Barry for his role in seeking funding for and procuring the iPads; Bill for helping with the difficult task of fitting them into their 'Otter Box' covers; Bev for setting them up for use and Marg Walshe for offering her support to others in learning to use them. The iPads have been distributed initially to members of the Tech Savvy 'Mentors' working group who are planning next year's new 'Tech Savvy--Drop In' activity for learners.

Information sharing this month included watching two segments from 'Download This Show', an ABC program which reviews developments in Information Technology. The first introduced the new Apple Watch and asked "How intuitive is its interface?", the second debated the use of 'biometrics' ie. fingerprinting instead of passwords/codes when logging into modern computer technology. The video clips are available on the Tech Savvy web page if you would like to find out more.

With most of the 'Tech Heads' group interstate or overseas, the remainder of the session was spent on 'Mentors' and 'Bloggers' group activities. 'Mentors' focused on learning to use the iPads—lots of questioning, suggestions, problem solving and moments of joyful discovery were audible as they did so. 'Bloggers' gathered around the W4 computer to discuss 'work in progress' on their blog, taking advantage of time together to share their blog's concept; talk about the learning involved in developing their blog page and to pick up ideas from one another.

At our next session on November 11th, Terry Dillon will be discussing Smart TV's.

Towards a Sustainable Future

Weather conditions featured in our discussions this month, including the weather conditions around the Lancefield fires. We continued to track the El Nino event and discussed an excellent article '[When the Indian Ocean and El Nino join forces things can get hot and dry](#)' which incorporated the change in the El Nino outlook by the Bureau of Meteorology and a further update. You can check out the most recent BOM outlook at

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary>.

The role of increasing ocean temperatures appears to be clearly implicated in the upgraded impact of El Nino. There is mounting evidence that higher ocean temperatures are also impacting on world's coral reefs, more than a third of which face major bleaching, including the Great Barrier Reef.

Renewable capacity growth continues with development of two large scale solar projects. The first, in northern Queensland, colocates and combines a large solar project with a large pumped energy hydro storage project. The second, a large utility-scale solar voltaic plant in Broken Hill, will soon join a sister large scale solar plant in Nyngan,

with the last of 677,760 solar panels being installed in Broken Hill recently.

Signs of shifting values in the finance sector were evident this month, with shareholders concerned about losses and stranded assets pressuring AGL and Origin for faster responses on emissions reduction and superannuation funds pushing resource companies for provision of more detailed reporting on the risks posed by climate change to their business. The news from this sector is mixed, however, with the Investor –State Dispute Settlement provisions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership threatening to allow large corporations to challenge efforts to tighten environmental laws and regulations at local, state and federal levels. Community energy is of great interest to our group and appears to be developing momentum. Energy storage innovation, particularly the development of batteries, is predicted to drive a revolution in power grids. Home energy integrated solutions are now available; battery storage makes sense to consumers on the current feed in tariff and cheaper batteries are inevitable with economies of scale. We imagined the evolution of cooperative clusters of 10 residences with solar panels feeding into a joint distributed energy scheme - something akin to a water supply cooperative, such as at Hamilton Park. Our sessions are always full of interesting topics which can only be touched on in this report. There is much more to write about – but this will have to do for now!

Walks

Easy walk October 7

The lack of rain has brought havoc to the wildflowers of the Reef Hills. The display was well below normal, but ten eager walkers discovered a surprising number of different species, and it proved to be a good day out. I have been watching many promising plants shrivel without flowering, and those that have flowered are undersized. After morning tea at the picnic area we did a car shuffle and followed an old track from the Gun Club which took us back to the picnic area for lunch.

I know that park management is trying to limit the activities of four wheel drives, with good reason during wet weather, but they do preserve a lot of the old mining tracks for walkers and horse riders.



USA walkers searching for wildflowers in the Reef Hills.

Mid-week walk October 14

Vaughan led a group of 12 on an excellent expedition over and round Mt Meg, part of the Nature Conservation Reserve. After a short walk in, a steady incline led us up and along the ridge, following a series of pink granite peaks. We found a gnamma hole (water storage made by the previous occupants), a stand of Northern Sandalwood (1 of only 7 locations known in Victoria), several kangaroos, and an echidna.

We enjoyed our lunch on the Northern edge, sitting high on the pink granite rock face, in shade with a pleasant breeze, looking across the valley to Thoona. We could see the pub... but there were a few fences in the way.

The walk totalled precisely 7 kilometres end-to-end, and our scrambles encompassed 100 metres up and down; the highest point (Mt Meg) being just over 300 metres above sea-level, down to just over 200 metres on the West side. On a warm day, it was not too arduous a walk, but one did have to watch where one's feet went.

The Pink Devonian granite intrusion formed the range around 400 million years ago. It has worn down a little since, and is very photogenic.

Andrea Stevenson.

*“Benalla Bushwalkers climbed Mt Meg
But Beverley said she'd sooner
Sit in comfort and be fed
Across the valley at Thoona”*

Easy walk November 4

We hope to visit Pangarang Lookout in the Warby Ranges. It is not very long, but has a climb to the lookout. It gives great views to the farming land to the west of the range. The lookout is named after the previously resident Koori people. If the weather is too hot, I have an alternative track in mind, also in the Warbys. We will leave the Centre car park at 10am. Ring Vaughan 5762 1980.

Mid-week walk November 11

In the centre of the Mt. Buffalo range, two walks are proposed, both starting from the same place. There are magnificent views, rock formations and flowers. In the morning we will climb to the Corral with features such as Mahomet’s coffin, the Castle and the Sentinel. The afternoon walk is up the zig zag track to the Cathedral and on to the Hump. Ring Vaughan 5762 1980 Meet at the Centre 8.00am for 8.15 departure.

Wine Appreciation

Wednesday 28 October 2015

Meet at 10 am for visit to Valhalla Wines at Wahgunyah.

Lunch is at Tuileries café at Rutherglen.

This is our last visit for 2015.

Next month is the U3A Christmas Lunch at Mansfield.

The bus will leave from Benalla Bus Lines at 11.00 am on Wednesday 25th November. Cost \$45

Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop members have been quite busy over the past months or so, meeting fortnightly instead of monthly for extra writing and sharing opportunities. Three 500 words topics - ‘For Better for Worse’, ‘Cringe’ and ‘A Test of Courage’ - and a children’s story have been shared at recent meetings. ABC Open’s 500 word topic for our ‘third Monday’ meeting in November will be [‘My Big Secret’](#) *‘Are you ready to get that secret off your chest? Maybe it was a spontaneous act of daredevilry that friends would never believe, a youthful transgression, or an embarrassing experience you’ve never been able to laugh about - until now. Describe the incident, the stakes at play, why you’ve kept it a secret and what it feels like to share it now that you are older and wiser.’* Topics such as this can appear rather heavy going, but somehow we each manage to interpret them differently, usually with a lightness of touch which makes sharing them enjoyable. An end of year challenge remains – to write a short stand up comedy routine.

(continued next column).

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

Sharing these should be a fun thing to do just before Christmas. Writing Workshop is being offered again in 2016 –if you are interested in reminiscence based writing, with an occasional change of genre to keep things interesting, please think about joining us.

Please detach this form and return it with your payment

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Mansfield Golf Club

Wednesday 25th November 2016



Bus leaves at 11.00 am from Benalla Bus Lines Cost \$45 (includes bus and two course meal).

I/We will be attending the Christmas luncheon
(Please print).....
.....
.....

Partners welcome

Phone

I/We will be travelling on the bus.

YES NO (Please circle)

Please return completed form together with your payment to either:

- Post to U3A, PO Box 674, Benalla, 3672
- Leave at ReadB4 bookshop (next to Hide’s Bakery) in an envelope marked U3A Christmas luncheon
- Bring to U3A Meet and Mingle at **The Hub** on Wednesday 18th November.

Payment to be received by Wednesday 18th November.