



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – August 2020

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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Please send all newsletter items for the newsletter to newsletter@u3abenalla.com by 25 Aug 2020

President's Report

Another month and the Pandemic still hasn't reached its peak. So, we continue to stay put and keep looking after ourselves.

On Wednesday 22nd of July, 16 members met in the Gardens near the Art Gallery for lunch, chats & laughter. We were blessed with a beautiful sunny winter's day. It was agreed we need to do it again, so are looking forward to meeting together in the gardens on a Wine Appreciation day (4th Wednesday) after the Stage 3 reductions announced on Sunday 2 August are lifted.

Zoom Meetings are a wonderful way of staying in touch. If any member would like to learn more about Zoom, give me a call 0412263071 and we may be able to help to get you up and Zooming.

Stay safe and sound. Enjoy the little things - a warm bed and a sunny day.

Dorothy Webber
President

A Walk in the Park - Elizabeth Kearns

'Are you coming for a walk,' Bill asked.

Just give me a few minutes,' Ellen replied as she went into the bedroom. Picking up her hairbrush, she ran it through her unruly grey locks. She still wished she had nice manageable hair. Bill didn't seem to mind that she kept her hair short making it more controllable.

With her hair looking slightly tamed and ensuring the back door was locked; she waited inside the front door saying, 'I'm ready.'

Bill slowly and stiffly got out of the armchair and approached his wife. Ellen opened the door and stepped outside, holding the door open for Bill.

They walked companionably along the footpath, commenting on such things as the empty drink cans and bottles that were discarded by uncaring people, or the fronds that had been blown off the palm trees by the blustery wind the previous night.

When they reached the park, they stopped by the edge of the lake watching the waterfowl. Ellen would always notice if any of the ducks with unusual markings was missing. They would both be concerned, especially in the duck-hunting season. They knew culling was necessary, but it wasn't fair to the ducks. Surely they had a right to life too.

As they walked past the tennis courts, they watched energetic young people playing, running this way and that, in an effort to hit the ball back over the net. In their youth they had played tennis with friends and neighbours, now they were all parted by distance and death.

Walking along the park pathway by the water, meeting people, smiling, nodding and greeting strangers was part of the enjoyment of the day as was 'having a go' on the exercise equipment. They would count their movements on each apparatus and were pleasantly pleased if they reached the goals they set.

Further on they sat on a bench seat to absorb the serenity of the park and have a little rest before continuing on their way.

Bill sometimes picked a rose for Ellen. This was not allowed in the park, but Bill loved to see Ellen's delight when he gave her the beautiful flower.

On returning home one or other said 'I'll put the kettle on for a cup of tea.'

Today Bill said, 'Are you coming for a walk,' before realising Ellen was no longer there. He rose stiffly from the armchair, opened the front door, and sadly walked to the park.

It was a sunny winter's day by the lake but only a few people were out walking. Those who were in the park stayed well away from each other. The unused tennis courts looked forlorn. The exercise area was quiet and empty. Striped red and white tape surrounded the equipment with an official sign saying 'Closed.'

Even sitting on the park bench was out of bounds. Bill picked a pretty pink rose for Ellen, but he could not go to the cemetery to place it on her grave. That was 'unessential travel'. Life had changed and all because of Corona Virus.

This story, written for [Creative Writing](#) by [Elizabeth Kearns](#), is published with her permission. Thank you, Elizabeth.

Keeping Touch Online

Where possible, a number of Convenors are keeping in touch with members by Zoom. "It has been a fun way to keep our minds active as well as offering social stimulation". Three of the convenors with groups on Zoom are John Lloyd, Jane Rushworth and Margaret Jenkins, as pictured below.



John Lloyd
Sustainability



Jane Rushworth
Demystifying Psychology



Margaret Jenkins
Investment

Joy Shirley has been using email to keep in contact with her groups *Creative Writing* and *Film and Literature*, Bill Squire has been emailing and distributing notes with You Tube links to *Music Appreciation* class members, while *As Time Goes By* members are sharing stories which are appearing as collections on the 'Our Stories' page on the website. Pauline and Horst from German are in regular contact with class members and are even setting homework! Avid photographers and Facebook users Andi Stevenson and Bev Thornell have been happily supporting convenors to keep in touch with group members by sharing news and photographs of activities *Birdwatching*, *Easy Walks* and *Mid-Week Walks* online on our Facebook page.

Group Reports

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

Our monthly stories are being shared as topic 'collections' on the website – a way of sharing them which allows recognition of common memories so enjoyed when we shared stories in class BC ie...'before covid'. This month '[Car Stories](#)' and reminiscences drawn from our '[Ideas Piggy Bank](#)' were shared on-line and added to our individual pages on '[Our Stories](#)'. A further story has been added to '[I Grew Up ...](#)'.

With more time at home than usual on our hands, a master list of '500 words' topics covered since the group commenced in 2015 to the end of 2020 has been emailed to class members. The aim is to encourage everyone to keep writing during the Covid-break! There's also a column for 'decades' to help us to

sequence stories into whether they occurred when we were children, teenagers, twenty or thirty somethings..., or seventy, eighty or ninety somethings!

Our topic for Monday 24 August is *'Right Here, Right Now'* - 'A time capsule of the present. Write a story about a situation currently unfolding in your life, right here, right now'. Upcoming topics for Monday 28 September - *'I came down with a thud'...* or *'Out of the Blue'* - 'Share your memories of a time when 'you came down with a thud' or when something happened 'out of the blue' in 500 words'. Email stories to bevee47@gmail.com. All welcome to join in!

Bev Lee

Bird Watching

Report: July outing at the inlet channel to Winton Wetlands

Nine people attended our walk along the bike track to Winton Wetlands 4km out of Benalla, on Thursday 11 June 2020. The weather was mild and sunny which made for a pleasant morning stroll.



There have been extensive plantings of native shrubs along the channel, and quite a few birds are making good use of this habitat – among them Superb Fairy-wrens, Grey Shrike-thrush, Red-browed Finches and Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

We saw 2 Whistling Kites fly overhead, and several Australian Ravens and Little Ravens. Andi's photo of an Australian Raven, pictured here, shows its diagnostic throat hackles.

Rupe explained that concrete structures along the inlet channel lower the water level as it gets closer to the Winton Wetlands. We looked at one structure which allows Kennedy Creek to flow unimpeded above the channel as it heads west towards the railway line. It was flowing strongly after good autumn rains.

We walked 2.6km and recorded 25 bird species for the morning. Details on eBird list:

<https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S71771259>



To be rescheduled! U3A Birdwatching visit to the Warby Ranges

Our birdwatching visit on Thursday 13 August to the southern section of the Warby Ranges off Taminick Gap Road, just north of Glenrowan, has been cancelled due to the introduction of Stage 3 Covid-19 restrictions. The walk, which was to start at the track to the communication towers known as the Ridge Track, will be rescheduled after current restrictions are lifted and it is possible again to have groups of 10 participants. Hopefully, spring wildflowers will still be in bloom and we can see Turquoise Parrots in this area.

Keep an eye on emails, the next newsletter and the website for updates. Kathy Costello 5762 5755, Mobile 0447 625755, email coskoy@bigpond.com.

Kathy Costello

Bushwalking

Easy Walks

Wednesday, 1st July 2020 - Violet Town

Helen Malone prepared a very interesting and diverse morning walk for 17 happy members in three separate groups. Early afternoon Helen arranged the opening of the Museum and a walk around the Southern Aurora Memorial Garden. In total, a just under 8 km walk was recorded by Andi Stevenson GPS.

The Honeysuckle Creek Walking Track Loop meanders along both sides of the Creek with signage and monuments describing historic and past events. The associated features - seating, footbridges, signs and

landscaping are a Violet Town community initiative. Over 80 species of birds have been identified including the locally endangered Grey Crowned Babbler. Observant members discovered two Grey Crowned Babbler



nests in a tree along the creek and a resident excitedly showed us a nest in her garden. Shadforth Reserve gave us another taste of nature; once an 18-hole golf course, cricket field and a one-mile horse training circuit, now also popular with walkers.

The areas of remnant indigenous plants are complimented by the Community Forest with initial plantings in 2007 within the racetrack providing habitat for birdlife including the endangered Grey Crowned Babbler.

Following BYO lunch, Helen walked us through the productive and colourful Mary's Community Garden to the Museum, once a blacksmith, hardware supplies and an undertaker business. We appreciate Brian and John opening the building for our visit and for sharing their extensive knowledge from Major Thomas Mitchell camping by the creek in 1836 to the present day plus the displays. The nearby Southern Aurora Memorial Garden was a poignant reminder of this train disaster on 7 February 1969. In true country spirit, local people flocked to the scene to help & support the nine who died and over one hundred passengers and crew injured.

Thank you to Wendy Sturgess for taking a group on a shorter walk. U3A Easy Walkers appreciate the effort by Helen Malone in providing our fellow members with a very informative and varied outing to Violet Town on a pleasant winter's day.

Wednesday 15 July – Dookie Rail Trail

'A day out of the box' greeted 13 walkers who travelled to the township of Dookie to walk the 4 km rail trail walk from the township towards Katandra. The beautiful sunny day highlighted the healthy crops, the pretty township and its historic church on the hill.

Two separate groups followed the trail with its explanatory sign boards. The first group completed 3.5 kms of the trail, then returned via Saddleback Road which allowed closer viewing of St Mary's Church on the hill behind the town. The second group (or Gentle Amblers) completed a shorter stage of the trail, then returned back the way they had come.

Each group then had a leisurely lunch in the large picnic area in the centre of the town. This park features a tall clock with interesting history and one of Shepparton's Moving Art cows. Nearby is the Remembrance Day tree. The town sits nicely between Mt Saddleback and Mt Major both of which provide more walking trails. Some people visited the nearby shop and the metal works business before everyone headed home after a very pleasant and enjoyable day.



Wednesday 29 July - Winton Wetlands



The Easy Walks has developed into 3 interchangeable groups ... the Gentle Amblers; the Medium Pacers and the Brisk Walkers, titles for this report! This meets the varying abilities and the interests of members plus the current COVID19 distance regulations.

On a sunny winter's morning, 15 members, in 3 separate groups, walked varying distances on the track from the Dam Wall to and around The Hub. All walkers experienced the striking, stark landscape, history of the area and the Wetlands ecosystem. Lunch was BYO or Takeaway from the Hub Cafe; Manager, Samantha, provided individually packaged delicious hot meals

enjoyed by the Boat Ramp observing social distance protocols.

Thank you to the leaders, Wendy, Lyn and Glen and to members who contribute in many ways. Suggestions invited for the name of our present U3A title, Easy Walks and the three walking groups

Wednesday 5 August 2020 - Winton Wetlands #2

We just made it before the Stage 3 restrictions are introduced! On Wednesday, 5 August '20 (1st Wednesday) the plan is to walk another part of the Winton Wetlands Trail, this time from Benalla out to the Yarrawonga Road. Meet at Seniors/U3A carpark 9.45am for departure at 10.00 am. As mentioned in the July newsletter, members were asked to notify Wendy Sturgess on 0403226649 (leave a message if necessary) or email wendes47@bigpond.com no later than Friday 31 July if they plan to attend as there will be a limit on numbers.

To be rescheduled! Reef Hills Walk

The Reef Hills walk proposed for Wednesday 19 August will be rescheduled to adhere to Stage 3 Covid-19 restrictions applying from Thursday 6 August. Reef Hills, part of the gold rush era, was worked for reef and alluvial gold and proclaimed a State Park in 2002. Hopefully COVID-19 will allow us to visit this area later in Spring to enjoy the wildflowers.

Please keep an eye on emails, the newsletter and the website for updates. Margaret Walshe ph: 5762 3906/ 0427005202 or mwalshe20@gmail.com .

Margaret Walshe and Wendy Sturgess

Mid-Week Walks

Wednesday 8 July - LAKE TO LAKE, BEECHWORTH - Leader: Bev Thornell

Fifteen mid-week walkers left Benalla for Beechworth. From the new playground (and toilet!) car park beside lake Sambell, we set off in groups along the Pipeline Track towards Lake Kerferd. After an exceptionally bleak winter's day the day before, we were delighted to find ourselves walking in mild sunshine. The Pipeline track began to climb, past fenced off old gold diggings, (which we couldn't resist peering down into) and then detoured from the original route, now closed off, via a new section of track. Enjoying the tall timber, the bubbling of Silver Creek and the chance to enjoy the outdoors, nevertheless we were forced to detour around muddy and wet sections of the track. A lucky sighting of a small flock of loud yellow-tailed black cockatoos put a smile on bird lover's faces. We reached the perimeter of Lake Kerferd, which provides the water supply for Beechworth, and after a photo shoot or two walked across the spillway to the picnic area and car park beside the lake. A few optimistic fishermen were trying their luck, so we retreated to the nearby trees and several handy logs to enjoy a welcome lunch. The large Lake looked particularly lovely, sparkling in sunshine. Returning via a different loop, back at Lake Sambell we unpacked, freshened up and tucked into afternoon tea, provided as usual by the Club's Domestic Goddesses. I can confidently say all walkers enjoyed the day out in an interesting and scenic area.



Total walk length: 11 kms

Bev Thornell

To Be Rescheduled from Wednesday 12 August due to Stage 3 Regulations:

MT. MEG WALK S-3-4

Mt Meg is a gravelly, rocky conservation reserve near Thoona. The circuit walk begins near the car park and climbs to the summit following animal tracks and then descends along a fence line back to the car park. There are good views at the summit and wonderful rock formations.

Meet 9.15am Leave Benalla 9.30 am

Leader: Helen Spinks 0488 013059

Please note – this activity will be rescheduled. Keep an eye on upcoming newsletters for further updates.

John Boehm

Creative Writing

Our Creative Writing class has continued with members selecting from a list of topics to write a story and then share with the class. After reading the stories, the members are providing feedback to the authors.

The topics for our July class were:

Can you ever forgive me? (an idea from a class member)

She gazed at the box, fascinated and horrified.

He did indeed look very far from gloomy

The stories were varied, with all topics used by at least one member of the class. The box seemed to be very popular, with at least one member of the class looking at it from a different perspective – a mobile phone as seen by someone from the 19th century. There are a couple of class members who are writing a much larger story (a full novel perhaps), using the prompts as inspiration. But this month some other class members have also written sequels to earlier stories.

Some members continue to also write entries for the Australian Writers' Centre Furious Fiction over the first weekend of the month. For July, the main criterion was for the story to be based around a wedding or a funeral. We are still hoping that one of our stories will at least make the "long list".

Our next class is scheduled for 10 August with a choice between the following topics:

The surface of the lake was like a mirror

The greatest thing in the world

The four beautiful people were laughing

Within minutes it was all action

We will continue to share our stories and feedback via email. If anyone else would like to write on any of these topics, please send them to me at jshirley@internode.on.net and I will forward to the class, and also share the stories from the class with you

Joy Shirley

Demystifying Psychology

While Forensic Psychology still has us tantalizingly in its grasp, we took a detour on July 17th to look at "change" related to the introduction of the Melbourne/Mitchell lockdown.

"Change" – experienced every second of our lives and perversely avoided at all costs by many people - was looked at from three perspectives - (1) individual and/or small group, (2) community, and (3) leadership. Three of many relevant theories and commentaries were the focus.

1. Prochaska and DiClemente – proposes six stages of change - ranging from "I have no need to change", to actively introducing change, and to returning to old behavior patterns.
2. Jeroen Kraaijenbrink - 3 angles on why the Covid crisis is a catalyst for change. Pragmatically we must change anyway; intellectually a crisis shows that change is possible; and socially a crisis creates energy.
3. The hefty article Crisis Management: Leading in Constant Change (Authors/s unknown) uses a systems approach to analyzing leadership in a crisis. It offers insights into what makes a good leader in a crisis, behavioural & operational responses, & the community ability to thrive over the long term.

Back on the "Forensic" track we added to previous discussions about eyewitness evidence and how to spot a liar.

Think you would be a fairly accurate eyewitness? Watch the "Monkey Thief" video and join in the quiz (U3A website Demystifying Psychology - slide 12). Quiz questions and answers will be available on U3A website after 5 August.

For the curious, slide 14 will take you on an insightful and curious trip with a former CIA officer as she outlines "How to Spot a Lie". Seems our untrained eye/ear/gut does rather well at spotting a lie.

Part 2 discussion delved into theories of crime and community/political responses to each (see slides 15-25).

Classical minds view crime as an act of immoral, free will that weakens society. The preferred response is to deter through punishment supported by more prisons and stricter laws.

Biological theory supposes that criminality is largely an inheritable gene. Find the gene(s), rid the human body of those and/or medicate to control behaviour.

Sociological perspectives suggest it is who you live with and where you live, usually dysfunctional, that makes crime socially and financially worthwhile. Responses include diversion activities, introducing pro-social alternatives and alleviating poverty.

Interactionist theory says hanging out with criminals will likely make you one, ... as well as offer acceptance, social standing, and power. Responses include a belief in individual capacity for positive change and the power of pro-social interactions.

With no time left, we did not view the straightforward and powerful TEDx talk by the highly regarded actor, mentor, and indigenous leader Uncle Jack Charles (slide 25). The "Monkey Thief" Eyewitness quiz and Uncle Jack's TEDx are priorities for 5 August. See U3A website (D-O Demystifying Psychology) for further reading/references.

These discussion groups are quite casual. If any of these topics interest you and/or you'd like to see if zooming discussions are for you, then please join us on the first Wednesday (10:00-11:45am) and third Friday (1:00-2:45pm) to of the month. Zoom links/times are on the U3A website. Call me if I can help.

Jane Rushworth Convener 0437 621 575/ janerushworth2101@gmail.com.

Jane Rushworth

Exploring the Universe

Of Comets, great and small

There has been a lot of interest in Comet Neowise lately. Some people go as far as to say it's one of the great comets, sadly no it's not, but it's here, visible only in the Northern Hemisphere.

Discovered on 27 March by the NASA's Near-Earth object wide-field infrared survey explorer, (nice to know they are keeping a watch on near Earth objects), Neowise is not an interstellar comet. It formed from material from the disk of dust and gas around the Sun when it was a newly forming star.

Comets form in the early days of solar systems before the planets and are composed of dust, rubble, gas and water ice.

"Neowise is approximately 5 kms across and it's estimated that in this comet there may be enough water to fill 13 million Olympic swimming pools", Emily Kramer, a science team co-investigator for NASA's NEOWISE said during a news conference on July 15. "Most comets are about half water and half dust." Some scientists think that Earth's water may have been delivered here by comets.

Comets are fossils in cold storage in the icy realms of the outer limits of the Solar System, known as the Kuiper Belt and the Oort cloud. Here beyond the planets, where the Sun's influence is at its weakest, its immense gravity still draws the comets into an orbit around the Sun.

Neowise has made this journey in an elliptical orbit for around 7,000 years. Speeding up as it approached its nearest distance to the Sun at 43 million kms, under the Sun's influence the comet produced jets of gas and formed a tail of dust and another of ionized gases. The spectra of the light of its tail gas indicate a chemical make-up of hydrogen cyanide.

Each trip around the Sun depletes the comets and when they lose mass or are outgassing their orbit can change. It depends on the position of the jets that are outgassing. So as the comet heats up the jets can propel it even faster. At present, Neowise has orbited the Sun and is on its home journey at a speed of over 64 kms/second.

'Neowise' will not visit the inner solar system for another 6,800 years, but we may still see its influence as meteor showers are created by the Earth passing through dust suspended in space that has been left by comets.



Bev Morton

Film and Literature

We have continued watching a film of our own choice and then sharing our thoughts on the film with the class via email. The films watched were:

Peter Pan Live! - A live studio production, made for television, based on the old story about Peter Pan and Tinkerbell

Military Wives - a 2019 British comedy-drama film starring Kristin Scott Thomas, Sharon Horgan and Jason Flemyng

A Good Woman - the romantic comedy/drama (2004), based on Noel Coward's play 'Lady Windermere's Fan'

Last Chance Harvey - a romance about Harvey, a divorced man whose job is to write advertising jingles.

Mao's Last Dancer - This film tells the story of Li Cunxin, an 11-year-old Chinese boy from a rural area of China and his extraordinary rise to fame in the United States as a ballet star.

Toast - a British biographical comedy drama. It is the story of Nigel Slater, the British chef and TV presenter

Self Made - inspired by the life of Madam C.J Walker an African American washerwoman who rises from poverty to build a beauty empire and become a self-made millionaire.

Captain Fantastic - The story of Ben Cash, (Viggo Mortensen), his wife, Leslie and their six children who live deep in the off the grid wilderness of Washington State.

Django - Django was born Jean Reinhardt, a Romani/French jazz guitarist and composer, also a talented violinist and pianist.

Some of the films were based on true life stories, but is as often the case, the films stray from the real story. In some cases, the class member indicated that they were pleased they had seen the film before reading about the life of the main character.

The class members continue to enjoy the process and we will continue with this approach until we are able to resume our usual class sessions. I expect that over recent weeks many others have watched various films and we would be happy to receive your thoughts on a film you have watched. You can send me a message on jshirley@internode.on.net and I will share your thoughts with the class. Also let me know if you agree to share your email address with the members of the class.

Joy Shirley

Garden Appreciation



As I am writing the sun is out following a frosty morning. The photos are of Shirley and Dan Kearney's lovely sunny courtyard, great place to have a cuppa or read the paper, we all should have one of these spots in our garden. Pink weeping flowering tree is on the drive. St. Joseph's Village is so well landscaped. Roses, Camelia, Daphne, Gardenia. Beautifully performed blooms all year round and a group of mixed Citrus trees add interest. Stay safe and happy.

Gwen Turner



German – Conversation

During the month of July members received a lot of new topics on normal life with new vocabulary, reinforced by selected You tube lessons to acquire good pronunciation of the written material. The advanced members will have a good knowledge of proper pronunciation and should have no problems to read Romulus with Pauline in the Spring, if motivated to follow the suggestions provided. It takes motivation to teach one's tongue to acquire the different sounds of the ABC in German. It has been an interesting month for me to find the required URLs in YouTube. If I have encouraged some members to spend some time looking at the

suggested URLs or to investigate further to find more, I will be very happy to have been of some help. It is a pleasure to do this job.

Horst Gunther

Investment

During July we had two Zoom Investment meetings with about nine members attending both.

In the first meeting Malcolm Sanders shared with us information about how he runs his share portfolio, and his share activity philosophy. It was an interesting presentation which gave us all a lot to think about. Thank you, Malcolm.

We also looked at the end of financial year ASX segments and how they had performed. The all ordinaries and the ASX 200 showed falls for the financial year 2019-2020 of 12% and 13% respectively. However, the Midcap shares fell by only 5% during this period.

In the second Zoom meeting we looked at the Midcap shares in more depth. We found that about one third of the Midcap shares showed above average returns, whilst six of them were very encouraging.

Our next Zoom Investment meeting will be at 2pm on Friday 7th August 2020. You will get an invitation the day before.

Margaret Jenkins

Let's Talk Books

Hello everyone, be happy, Spring is just around the corner. This month I have a couple of new books that have just been published. Kate Grenville's latest novel **Room Made of Leaves**, her first new novel in a decade. Kate brings Elizabeth Macarthur, wife of John Macarthur, the father of the Australian Merino sheep, to life as a person in her own right. I am sure if you are a reader of Grenville this will be enjoyed. Also just out, **The Survivors**, a new Jane Harper read. A reckless mistake has devastating consequences. I have enjoyed her previous books enormously. Highly recommended during conversations with friends are **The Things She Owned** written by Katherine Tamiko Arguila, the complexity of lives lived between cultures. **A Gentleman in Moscow** by Amor Towles, a work of historical fiction, Count Alexander Llyich, a Russian aristocrat used to 'the good life' is sentenced by a Bolshevik tribunal in 1922 to a life of house arrest in the luxurious Metropol Hotel in Moscow (a hotel that still exists today). A beautifully written and very descriptive book, most enjoyable.

Too Close to the Falls by Catherine Gildiner. An amazing and very humorous memoir about Catherine's extraordinary childhood in a small American town situated near Niagara Falls in the 1950's. A lovely encapsulation of the life and times of that era in small town America.

I really enjoyed a book from the library **The Liberation of Brigid Dunne** by Patricia Scanlan, set in Ireland, about two members of a family who entered the convent. At the moment I am reading **Where the Crawdads Sing** by Delia Owens. It is getting a bit better the more I read. Nevertheless, keep reading and I hope some of these books find their way into your living rooms.

Geraldine McCorkell

Music Appreciation

Our following of the planned MSO concert schedule for July kicked off with a couple of pleasant surprises in Dvorak's "Legends" – 10 piano pieces for four hands and a Beethoven concert aria "Ah Perfido"! To balance out these little known works, a scintillating rendition of an old favourite in Brahms' Violin Concerto, and maybe "the greatest graduation piece of all time", in Shostakovich's First Symphony, rounded out the first session for this month.

"An Anthem for our Time" and "A message of consolation and hope in times of tragedy" is how Brahms' "Ein Deutsches Requiem" has been described. This was the feature work of the second of our programmes for this month. In a sense then, an appropriate work to listen to and think about as so much of our world is engulfed currently with tragedy and grief on a huge scale. In keeping with that sentiment, Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" bookends our programme – a memorial to a departed friend. In between there was Elgar's lengthy Violin Concerto - a work steeped in mystery – and a little-known (or not so often played)

Beethoven Overture. Check it all out on the Music Appreciation page on the U3A website where you will find the programme notes and the YouTube links to the music performances.

Bill Squire

Politics and Current Affairs

Political Kick Start

In the midst of political turmoil and the American presidential campaign our group is in limbo! What can be done? I am thinking of a late September re-start, Covid-19 regulations willing, meeting in the park near the Art Gallery. The sessions will be for 1 hour, 11 am till noon; 2nd and 4th Tuesday.

There are some tables and benches, but BYO chair if you have one!

The session would be cancelled in bad weather. I think we need a forecast of 15 degrees to be comfortable, below that we will not meet, although if you and friends want to walk and talk politics to keep warm, then go ahead and I might be there too!

Meetings in the Park will hopefully commence on Tuesday 22nd September 11am. To give me an idea of numbers please text me a few days beforehand on 0427621700.

Terry Case

Singing for Fun

Early in July we learnt that the original Convenor of Singing for Fun, Joyce Borschmann, had unfortunately had a fall at home and had fractured her pelvis.

At the moment Joyce is at Benalla Health being well looked after and receiving physiotherapy treatment. When a bed is available in the rehabilitation area at North East Health at Wangaratta Joyce will be moved there for more intense physio.

Due to COVID restrictions patients at Benalla Health can only receive one visitor for one hour per day. By phone Joyce told me that she looks forward to seeing her daughter each day. She can, however, receive phone calls preferably through her mobile or through the hospital switchboard.

On July 28th Joyce celebrated her 90th Birthday. We all hope that you had an enjoyable day

Margaret Jenkins

Covid-19 Musings

It seems some of us are becoming - often by necessity and not always without feelings of frustration - a little more 'tech savvy' during the corona virus break.

Judy Amery: "I've been using my mobile phone to help me to practise Recorder, recording the alto line, then playing it back and accompanying it with the soprano line. I'd only just joined the Recorder group when Covid-19 hit and I'm really missing it".

Wendy Sturgess: "I'd been a bit resistant to using Zoom on my PC as I had to have it rebuilt fairly recently. I decided to join a Zoom meeting a few days ago when a family member's funeral in the United States was broadcast using Zoom. I will keep using Zoom, but on my old iPad, not on my PC."

Barry (and Pamela) O'Connor: "I'd like to break my IT at the moment! We are continuing to have constant dropouts. It's very frustrating, particularly when I'm immersed in family research and the internet drops out in the middle of something interesting... We do use Zoom for family meetings and celebrated Pam's birthday recently on Zoom. Our car club – the North East Mini Owners Group – usually meets at the golf club in Benalla on the first Monday of the month with an attendance of 24 to 30 people. Since Covid-19 we have been having a monthly Zoom meeting of around 6-8 people who have good internet reception and the skills to use Zoom. Pamela has regular Zoom meetings with other volunteers in the St Vinnie's welfare team. Pamela said it's fine, 'as long you have a clean top on'!"

Heather Wallace: "I'm using Facetime more with the family instead of the phone, and I've learnt to use Zoom now for quite a number of things... I must say though that I'm getting a bit grumpy with the media increasingly forcing us to pay for digital subscriptions which can be quite expensive up front..."

Len (and Rae) Jeffers: "I've been vegetating pretty much, U3A wise... no Zoom meetings! Rae's taken over the secretarial role at Probus so I've been working to adapt the U3A data base program to suit their needs. Rae is doing German with Pauline and Horst and has been doing lots of homework. She's also keeping up with Recorder practice, though apparently waits until I'm out of the house! We're still riding our bikes every day. We had to take a mask today. We don't have to wear it when riding, but I had to put it on when I went into the Post Office".

Bev Lee "I blocked someone on Twitter. I became suspicious when a 'new follower' message popped up shortly after I'd retweeted tweets reflecting my concern about the ABC cuts. When I looked at the person's account their posts were very derogatory about the ABC. They had all the hallmarks of a troll... I certainly didn't want them trolling my posts. I found a video in twitter's support area which helped make blocking the person easy to do. Nipped in the bud!"

Les Rodgers: "The Microsoft software on my computer keeps upgrading overnight, so it seems every other morning there's a problem to be solved, such as the computer not talking to the printer and so on... Something else faintly technical... I decided to bring technology to bear on my tomatoes this year! My total crop last year was three tomatoes after the predators had finished, including birds, fruit fly and other nameless invaders. This year I am adopting an automatic drip-fed hydroponic system in my shed, under high powered variable led grow lights. Hopefully, the fruit fly won't know about my shed and the birds and others are excluded. I also have a head start as my shed is frost resistant. I have two varieties, one a green tomato which is eaten green and another more conventional red one."

Also heard around the traps –

"I sold something on Benalla Swap and Sell on Facebook"

"I've begun to make voice calls over Facebook Messenger."

"I'm thoroughly enjoying exchanging video calls with my grand-daughter using my iPhone"

"I purchased a dozen bottles of local red online using Benalla's new Buy from Benalla website"

Did you know that our website has a search-box? It is at the top of each page and in the footer. With the website containing content added since 2015, it's a great way to find something you are looking for. Also at the top of each page in the blue menu is the label 'FB', which takes you directly to our Facebook Page. Why not 'Like' and 'Follow' us on Facebook?

Beverley Lee - with thanks to Judy, Wendy, Barry (and Pamela), Heather, Len (and Rae), Les, (and a few 'anonymous others'), for participating!

What's On (Covid- 19 Stage 3 restrictions apply)

Wednesday, 5 August

9:45am Easy Walks - Winton Wetlands Trail #2

10:00am Demystifying Psychology Zoom

Discussion Group

Friday, 7 August

9:30am Sustainability - Zoom Meeting

2:00pm Investment - Zoom Meeting

Friday, 14 August

10:00am Music Appreciation

Friday, 21 August

9:30am Sustainability - Zoom Meeting

1:00pm Demystifying Psychology Zoom

Discussion Group

3:15pm Investment - Zoom Meeting

Monday, 24 August

2:00 pm As Time Goes By - 'Right Here, Right Now'

Friday, 28 August

10:00am Music Appreciation

Wednesday, 2 September

10:00am Demystifying Psychology Zoom

Discussion Group

Friday, 4 September

9:30am Sustainability - Zoom Meeting

2:00pm Investment - Zoom Meeting

