



Benalla and District Inc.

## Newsletter – August 2022

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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### President's Report

Throughout 2022 we have tried to have a variety of guest speakers at Meet and Mingle, whether they be informative, educational or fun. In July we welcomed James Harrison as our guest speaker. James provided us with a fun filled morning bringing not only his ukulele but also his banjo, mandolin, violin and harmonicas. From the comments that were made after the morning, everyone enjoyed his visit.



Our guest speaker for Meet and Mingle in August will be Lucy Mitchell-Long from Benalla Health. Lucy will speak on Health Literacy which is a subject we can all probably do with some help on.

U3A Benalla are hosting the North East Regional U3A meeting on 6 September 2022 by Zoom, which will alleviate the need for participants to travel long distances. Any positive ideas to come from this meeting will be relayed to members via the Newsletter and Website.

In the last month I have updated the COVID-19 plan for U3A Benalla which is available on the Website. Whilst the State Government has cut many mandates, we are still advocating the use of masks inside if that is what our members feel comfortable with, given the current large number of COVID-19 cases in Victoria.

Claire Rudolph has only had a small number of members interested in "The Sky's the Limit" at the moment, so will delay starting that course until 2023.

Finally, U3A Benalla groups can continue into the second week of December if that is what the Convenor and group chooses to do. It is entirely up to the Convenor and group when they finish the year.

Margaret Jenkins

President

### Group Reports

#### Armchair History – Tudors

A small, cosy group tied up loose ends as we approach the end of the Tudor era. There are still some Tudor videos to watch. By November we plan to be brainstorming, and are already gathering resources, for an Australian history group next year.

Terry Case

## Art Appreciation

This month we were extremely privileged to listen to Peter Wegner who is a recent Archibald Prize winner. Peter explained the series of circumstances around him that came together and resulted in him winning the prize. This was most illuminating and thought provoking. Sometimes serendipitous occurrences can just happen and provide a pleasing unexpected result. This is what happened with him winning the Archibald Prize.

The exhibition in the Gallery however is not connected with his prize-winning portrait. The exhibition he has in the Gallery is of *Centenarians*. Pencil Drawings of people over 100. Each pencil drawing is on the same sized paper with space at the bottom for some comments from the sitter. The most frequent comment is that no one expected they would reach 100 years of age. Each drawing has been dipped in Beeswax. This greatly increases the sensation of the drawing.

This exhibition should not be missed.



Peter WEGNER, Bill Gregory (detail) 2022

Source: Benalla Art Gallery FB

Next 'First Monday' session – **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August 10 – 11 am** - Coinciding with Benalla Art Gallery's display of Clarice Beckett's *Spring Morning* within *The Ledger Collection*, join Jason Smith, Director and CEO of Geelong Gallery, as he explores the artist's life and practice.

Neville Gibb

## 'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

Our icebreaker activity in July caused much amusement, with a viewing of the short film '[Smashing Pumpkin](#)' from the SBS series 'Tales from the Golf', followed by discussion of themes which resonated with us.

This month's stories for the topic '*Ritual*' included Ray's delightful story of his 90th birthday celebrations; Marg McCrohan's memories and photos of her parents' Golden Wedding celebrations in April 1991; and Graeme's reflections on the funeral of an old friend attended the previous day, and the memories he had shared with him over time. Graham wrote beautifully about a ritual practice he developed while walking down a favoured bush lane to a lagoon near his home on NSW's far south coast.

Inspired by an expired passport and the current political climate, the topic '*Memories Treasure Chest*', brought forward Bev Morton's gripping story of attempted landing on an Arctic Island from a small Russian ship. It also evoked Carmyl's delightful stories, replete with evidence, of 'when marbles were in fashion' and when her 17-year beau (later husband Don) gave her a box of Old Gold Chocolates on their first 'date'.



'Catch up' stories this month included Marg McCrohan's '*Causes*' story of visiting detained asylum seekers at MITA in Melbourne, a story reflecting Marg's deep and long-term concern and advocacy for refugees. Marg Nelson's story of participating in the Farmers' March through Melbourne to Parliament House on March 26, 1985, was also powerful. Her '*Community*' story about belonging to a community of garden club members who enjoy growing and showing Chrysanthemums had an intriguing ending – a Chrysanthemum has been named 'Margaret Nelson' after her! Heather's story, about the senior homeowners' community at the Lifestyle Village in Sydney Road she has grown to love and advocate for, also related to our '*Causes*' collection, as did Barry's 'Rebellion' story involving rebelling against a CFA policy affecting access to 'loss of income compensation' when advocating for an older volunteer CFA fire fighter injured in the Lurg area during the 2014 fires.

Next month's topic is '*Right Here, Right Now*' 'A time capsule of the present which incorporates reflections on the past. Write a story about a situation currently unfolding in your life, right here, right now'.

The alternate topic: 'Member's Choice' 'This is your chance to develop your own '500 words' topic and share it with others!'

Bev Lee

## Be Connected

This month we continued the unit 'Online Hobbies' and looked at Blogging. Blogging is a means for you to share your interests and hobbies online with either a closed audience- people you select or the whole world - those who find your blog online.

Many people using blogs use a travel blog to share their travel stories and photos.

When visiting the App Store, some blogging apps are free and others you will need to pay. Google has a free blogging site called Blogger.

More recent social media such as Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr are another form for posting and sharing interests and hobbies.



Jenny Sawyer

## Brain Games

Elsbeth went to extremes this month to prove the need for continuation of neurobic workouts by forgetting 'Brain Games' was on. Luckily, she was in town and able to drop by the room and put on a fairly convincing act, muttering things about lost phones, covid tests, medical appointments and other distractions.

Let's hope the group humours her by giving her a chance to turn up on August 23rd!

Elsbeth Maconachie

## Bushwalking – Easy Walks

Fourteen walkers set off in lovely-and unusual-sunshine for this walk along the riverside at Murchison. Winding along the Goulburn, we finished at the Meteorite Park before returning to explore the bridge and to view the outside of historic Thornbridge. A very satisfying lunch on the balcony of the bakery followed, and we then walked to the cemetery to study the beautiful stone ossuary dedicated to Italian prisoners of war.

Over a distance of about 9km, we discovered there is a lot more to Murchison and its history than is apparent from the usual quick drive over the bridge. Thanks to Glen for organising, and to Andi for photos, as always!



## Wednesday 3rd August

This walk, of about 8km, detailed previously, will take us along the Goulburn and Broken rivers from Victoria Lake, crossing the new suspension bridge to the Shepparton Botanic Gardens at Kialla, with a picnic lunch and walk to Honeysuckle Rise lookout.

We will leave the Seniors' carpark, Fawckner Drive, at 9.45am. Please confirm with Glen on 0431201077 or [gchess@hotmail.com](mailto:gchess@hotmail.com) by Monday 1st August. Remember a picnic lunch, and a hat is recommended as there are some very active magpies at the Gardens.

Car sharing for all walks is usually available for a small contribution.

## Wednesday 7th September

For this walk, we will be returning to Mt Pilot, walking along the Old Coach Rd, and enjoying a picnic lunch at the Woolshed Falls. A total distance of about 8km, we will meet at 9.30am, driving to Beechworth and continuing along the Wodonga Rd to the starting point. Please confirm with Glen as above by Monday 5th September.

Glen Chessells, Julie McNeill

## Chat n' Chew

We had a very enjoyable July lunch at the Northo. August's lunch will be at the Art Gallery. Lorraine is over her illness and is again the Chat n Chew Convenor. Please ring Lorraine 0427376991 to book for the Art Gallery 19th August 11-45am. All the more, the merrier!



Dorothy Webber

## Coin Collectors

Our small group of five Coin Collectors met for our July meeting with four apologies due to winter ills.

As usual there were a number of interesting coins presented to the Group due to their uniqueness, color, condition or rarity.

These included:

A first day cover of the 1971 Apollo 14 Moon Landing.

Pre-decimal £1 and £2 notes in crisp condition.

A 1966 round 50 cent coin. This coin is unique as it contained 80% silver and 20% copper and because of the silver content were discontinued after 1966. Present day 50 cents coins are 75% copper and 25% nickel.

A natural alluvial gold ingot weighing 5.5grams and based on current gold prices valued at \$493.

An old Persian (now Iran) coin obtained by a coin member's father when he travelled to the country around 1920's. This coin which had no identifying writing was checked against a mobile phone app called Coinoscope. One of our members demonstrated this handy app which is used by taking a photo of the coin which is then processed and compared to a search engine coin data base for identification.

A pre-decimal album of coins that had not seen the light of day for some years.

A unique 1988 medallion presented to one of our collectors at the Hamilton Agricultural Show for champion maiden poll ewe.

Full set of decimal currency coins (5 cents to \$2) covering all years from 1966 to present.

A year 2000 proof set of Australian coins with a beautiful blue colored 50 cent coin at its centre piece.

An edible coin cake was enjoyed for afternoon tea (see photo). One of our members achieved an OBE and presented a beautiful cake decorated with (chocolate) coins and in the colors (red/blue/gold) of his old football team Fitzroy, now Brisbane Lions.



Doug Smith

## Collectors

Although the number attending was small, a pleasant time was had discussing the history of the drinking vessels presented.

There were samples of crystal glasses with one collection being built up from a set of wine glasses received as an engagement present. A similar set of crystal glasses was collected "just because". A lovely wine glass with etched decorations was much admired.

A number of mugs were shown, including two depicting the Richmond Football Club (and an insulated mug). One of the two was a souvenir from a wedding reception that involved a trip on Puffing Billy to the packing shed at Nobelious where the reception was held

There were three commemorative mugs: one issued by Legacy to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953; a miniature double-handled love cup issued for Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee in 2012; and a mug to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VIII on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1937. However, the coronation never took place! Although he ascended to the throne on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1936 and coronation preparations were well under way, he abdicated on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1936 to marry divorcee Mrs Wallis Simpson.

There was a mug from the "old" Benalla East Primary school No. 2256 and, a cup and saucer hand painted years ago by an elderly lady at the Benalla Hospital Day Care Centre. A beautifully shaped hand painted coffee mug was also admired.



There will be no meeting in August. At the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September, let's commemorate! Have you won a sports trophy? Maybe you have celebrated a school or church anniversary or some other personal or public event of significance!

Janet Gourley

## Community Singing

It was pleasing to see members of the audience coming up to Brian Greed after Community Singing and congratulating him on his playing of the piano. Brian does a wonderful job playing all the songs from memory, needing only a reminder of the key a particular song is in before he starts playing it. In July Brian chose Sammy's Song Book No 2 for the first session, followed by the Tram Book of Songs for the second session.

The group is evolving and feeling comfortable with each other, and we enjoyed the odd story about a song, or a reference to there being another possible verse of another song. But everyone participated and enjoyed themselves, which is what Community Singing is all about.

The next session of Community Singing will be on Thursday 25 August 2022 at 10am in the Hub at Cooina. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

## Creative Writing

Each month I eagerly await the efforts from the class. I make sure I carve out the time to read the contributions ready to provide helpful feedback during the class. This month was no different.

### Hints:

We discussed two points this month. One was around some hints for editing our work. These included printing a hard copy, reading it in a different location from where it was written, reading the work aloud, and not expecting the first draft to be perfect.

The second point was around the use of different words to describe colours. While this can add to the richness of the text, it is a good idea to use words that people will understand without heading to the dictionary.

### Our challenge:

The challenge for July was quite simple. Close your eyes for 15 seconds. When you open them, write 1-2 sentences about the first THING you see.

## Our stories:

For our written work to share with the class there were three prompts:

- **The caravan slowed to a cumbersome stop**
- **She sat on the tram, unable to make eye contact**
- **I ran away from home when I was ten**

An interesting group of stories this month gave us a lot to talk about. All prompts were used along the way, some humorous, other much more serious and challenging.

But what was really interesting, was that we had three poetry contributions. It is intriguing how we often have similar themes to our stories without any collaboration. All three poems were around the caravan, one involving a runaway 10-year-old, the other two provided stories about old vans.

The topics for our **8 August** class are:

- **The accommodation was booked and the departure day set**
- **"What are you doing?"**
- **{Emma} liked to cook when she had time**

We are always ready to welcome new storytellers to the class.

Joy Shirley

## Exercises for Fun

If you can jump out of bed these cold mornings and make an effort to join us at Exercises for Fun, you will be pleasantly surprised at how good you will feel after the effort! We start at 9.30am every Monday in the Seniors Hall. Hope to see you there!

Helen Jeffree

## Exploring the Universe

### The First Images from the James Webb Space Telescope.

At U3A we have followed the telescope's years of construction and its launch in the nosecone of an Ariane Rocket from French Guiana on Christmas Day. The French launch team placed it so precisely that precious fuel was saved for a longer life of observations. Then came the anxious time of waiting and watching as the telescope answered commands from Earth to unfold its solar panels, the giant sunshield and telescope array and prepare for its special operations. On 12 July 2022 the first images presented to the world exceeded all expectations.

In July we had the privilege of viewing them on our fantastic U3A HD television. In an area that would cover a grain of sand in our vision of the sky, Webb's powerful infrared vision showed us thousands of galaxies from only one billion years after the beginning of the Universe. In an image of one immature galaxy 13.1 billion years old, Webb detected properties of oxygen, hydrogen and neon.

The second image revealed the spectra of water vapour discovered in the atmosphere of a hot gassy exoplanet about one thousand light years away that orbits close to its star. This revealed the presence of clouds and hazes.

The amazingly beautiful Southern Ring Nebula, formed by the shock waves of gas and dust from a dying star was highlighted by the detail of light shining through foamy looking gas caused by molecular hydrogen. In its blue centre is revealed that this is a double star system. If you go to NASA zoomable images, you can click on faint smudges that can be zoomed to spiral galaxies!

Stefan's Quintet was discovered by French astronomer Edouard Stefan in 1877. Five galaxies, four of which are involved in a close cosmic dance driven by gravitational merging interaction, portray galaxy evolution.

The last image is truly spectacular, a portion of the Carina Nebula, an immense cloud of gas and dust that is a star nursery 7,600 light years away in our Milky Way Galaxy. Webb's infrared vision has revealed hundreds of new stars never seen before. Within the nebula there are bubbles and cavities and jets of gas being blown out by new stars.

To view these images, go to 'An Astrophysicist Explains the First JWST Science Images'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K2J-cO\\_tOI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7K2J-cO_tOI)

Bev Morton

## Family Research

Jane began this month's 'Pains and Gains, Tips and Tricks' segment with news of [National Family History Month](#) in August. Jane also reported on the recent Benalla History, Research and Archival Network meeting at FCJ. FCJ's recorded history dates to its foundation in 1900. The display of original dormitory furniture in the archive office brought back a flood of memories of Jane's days at boarding school!

Bev described revisiting a website (192.com) to find current addresses of people in the UK, then demonstrated a free site for correcting damaged photos. Go to Hotpot.ai ([hotpot.ai](#)) and follow the prompts

Andi has had the family tree she designed framed, ready to circulate to family members. We are keen to see the framed result! Andi is also working on discovering the origins of a family brooch.

Malcolm has adapted his 400-page family tree to produce a 46-page report in preparation for a family reunion on 9<sup>th</sup> August. He distributed copies, explaining that he had edited a My Heritage book report to focus on his father's family. Benalla Printers printed the booklets for him at a very reasonable rate.

Graham J described touring NSW and speaking with helpful local historians while writing his family history, sharing his elation when he discovered that a piano used in a local hall was donated by his forebears.

Graham will present his approach to writing and sharing his family story next month.

Keen to take next steps after classmate Graeme Morris sent her a burial list from Paris in which her elusive relative Percy Watkinson appears, Marg found providing a stamped addressed envelope to the relevant Government Department in Paris almost impossible. In frustration, Marg contacted Australia Post in Benalla, to discover that she could purchase Euro postage equivalent stamps at Benalla post office! The application has been sent off and she is now awaiting a response.

Barry reported that his 'almost complete family history' of both the maternal and paternal families has been circulated and well received by the family. Written in a format that allows individual families to add their specific content to the history for their descendants, Barry will bring a sample to the August meeting.

Graeme M described a gain this month when he loaded DNA onto the web, receiving responses from Europe. He is seeking the 1921 English census, which Bev explained is available at a small cost from Find My Past ([findmypast.com](#)). Graeme finds the Geneanet website very useful.

For July's topic '*There's No Place Like Home*'. Marg and Barry described homes remembered from childhood - Marg a castle in Ireland, Barry a post war triple fronted brick veneer in Lalor. Malcolm brought along aerial maps and photographs to show us his connection to land and home in the Greta area, particularly to Greta South.

Graham 'time travelled' back to Svendborg in Denmark, looking back using images of buildings from the past, then looking forward to a time when he may be able to visit Svendborg and perhaps locate a family home. Andi asked the question, did her forebear Thomas Thomas ever achieve his goal of owning a house? Andi found that after many years as an occupier of miners' cottages in the Talbot area, he did eventually own a house at 3 Belfast Road, Brunswick. Bev focused on the home of her Irish Catholic 'Lee side' great-grandparents from 1882 to 1915, '33 Cables Wynd, Leith, Scotland', concluding "I would love to speak to local historians in Leith who could tell me more about housing conditions when my great grandparents lived there".

August's topic is '*Correction*' - Write about a need for editing, or completed correction, which has arisen in your research. Who has it involved, why is the correction needed, what is your chief concern about it remaining uncorrected? How have you, or do you plan, to deal with it. What problems came up/may come up in doing so. If completed, how do you rate the success of your efforts?

An alternative – '*Member's Choice*' – A chance to develop your own topic and share the results with others!

At our next session we plan to celebrate National Family History Month with afternoon tea - please bring along 'a small plate' or some chocolates to share!

PS: A reminder - To celebrate National Family History Month, Benalla Library is presenting a session on '[Raising Australian Children Across Time](#)' on August 12, 2 to 3 pm, Benalla Library, Bookings Essential.



Bev Lee and Barry O'Connor

## Family Research – Beginners

In July's 'Pains and Gains' segment, Val was delighted to report that old Word files have been retrieved and she has written two 'chapters' based on 'Irish John' Hernan and another key character for her family story. Helen's DNA results arrived – confirming her understanding that her family is largely of Scottish origin.

This month we reviewed programs which convert PDF files to Word – especially pdf2go (<https://www.pdf2go.com/pdf-to-word>) - and the growing use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in photo restoration.

The free *Hotpot.ai* (<https://hotpot.ai/restore-picture>) program was applied to improve a photo of Helen's brother taken when he was a child, removing scratches and then 'colorising' it.

Other problem-solving included rectifying ancestry.com records (for a stepfather mistakenly listed as a biological father) and the tricky process of downloading and inserting images from Trove into family stories.

Work is continuing 'one to one' with members new to family research using ancestry.com. Going back to the generation which emigrated or were transported to Australia often develops family stories and themes very similar to the family stories and themes developed on 'Who do you think you are'.

With members travelling overseas and interstate over the next month or so, the smjall group is taking a break in August and will resume on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September from 1 to 4pm.

Bev Lee

## Film Discussion Group

With Winter on us, the numbers in the class were down this month. We discussed the film ***Operation Mincemeat***. This is based on a WWII operation to outwit German troops.

Operation Mincemeat was a successful British deception operation of the Second World War to disguise the 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily. Two members of British intelligence obtained the body of a tramp, dressed him as an officer of the Royal Marines and placed personal items on him identifying him as a fictitious Captain. Correspondence between two British generals which suggested that the Allies planned to invade Greece and Sardinia, with Sicily as merely the target of a feint, was placed on the body. Consequently German reinforcements were shifted to Greece and Sardinia before the invasion of Sicily.

This was a marvellous piece of history. In general, it was close to accurate. There were a couple of characters that were introduced that were not part of the actual history. These provided some extra tension opportunities, including one to provide some romantic tension.

We found it a good production with complex relationships. Tensions between the various characters and around the issues that needed resolution were well handled. All the main characters were well played, and even the more minor characters fitted well into the story. Favourite scenes were towards the end. One of these was the waiting to hear whether the Sicily landing was successful with the Germans believing the plan had been to invade Greece instead. And the final scene rounded the film well with the two main characters (played by Colin Firth and Matthew MacFadyen) having resolved the tensions between them.

Generally, the class found this a good story with ratings between 3.5/5 and 4/5.

Our next film class is on **10 August**. We will be discussing the film ***To Olivia*** (the story of the relationship between Roald Dahl and Patricia Neal) and possibly ***Mothering Sunday*** (based on a book by Graham Swift).

Joy Shirley

## Garden Appreciation

This month's activity was held in the U3A room in the Seniors building.



In a session on flower arranging titled, 'From the Garden', Melissa Mounsey demonstrated all her wonderful Floral Art skills using various plants including succulents, small tree branches, various coloured leaves, parsley (yes, parsley), flowers and buds. Melissa showed how to display all these plants to make the most of their individual lengths, colours and shapes. This worth-while activity was followed by lunch at the Royal.

There will be no activity in August, however on Thursday 22 September Garden Appreciation will be going to 'The Falls' Garden' at Longwood East. The Falls Garden is based at the foot of a unique natural waterfall fed by the Nine Mile Creek. Centred around a majestic lake and pavilion, the 12-acre garden features expansive laws with large native and a vast selection of ornamental deciduous trees. Cost of bus, entry and morning tea is \$37.00. Lunch will be at the Seven Creeks Hotel, Euroa, at own cost. Bookings, phone Gwen Turner on 0438 627 010 or email [gwenturner243@gmail.com](mailto:gwenturner243@gmail.com) Payment due 1<sup>st</sup> week of September, can be left at the RedB4 Bookshop. Please include your name on the envelope.

On 4<sup>th</sup> October, Benalla U3A Garden Appreciation members have been invited to visit Wangaratta U3A for an enjoyable gathering and plant swap. Further details in the September Newsletter.

Gwen Turner

## Garden Team

It was an energetic and very useful turn up at Tulip St in July and we look forward to Shirlie's cake when we meet at Ray's on August 8th. If it's really tasty, we'll reward her with a session at her place on the 29th.

Elsbeth Maconachie

## German

The happy German group is now focussing on the Home Environment, reading and learning all about daily life, their house, its rooms, its furniture and the activities performed in the house. This involves an enormous amount of vocabulary. We will try from now on to retain that vocabulary and verbally use it in question-and-answer sessions. As one member mentioned, if you don't use it you lose it!

I am very happy to challenge the group in many ways and yet see that their eagerness to learn doesn't wane. Another successful month!

Horst Gunther

## Investment

At the July meeting of Investment, we looked at figures for the financial year 2021-2022. These figures included gains or losses for each Sector of the market, as well as for the Australian Equity Indices. We noted that for the financial year there had been an overall loss of approximately 10% across most Indices, with the exception of the Small Ordinaries Index which had lost 21% during the past twelve months.

Looking at the Sectors of the Market we noted that the Utilities and Energy sectors had gained over 20% each, whilst the Consumer Discretionary and Information Technology Sectors had lost over 20% overall. As usual it is important to consider each stock itself, as individual stocks can vary quite markedly.

In the second section of our meeting, we looked at six Exchange Traded Funds which had been recommended by The Motley Fool as the best performing ETFs in 2021. We noted the five most important stocks in each ETF as well as the per cent return for 1,3,5 and 10 years. To bring this up to date we added the current price, the current distribution and the return per centage for the past 12 months.

The next meeting of Investment will be on Monday 1 August 2022 at 1.30pm in the U3A room.

Margaret Jenkins

## Let's Talk Books

We shared many laughs at our July meeting. Shirley produced a book, *Unnatural Causes*, by Dr. Richard Shepherd, a criminal pathologist who solves sudden and unexplained deaths. Her next book, *Histories of the Unexpected: The Tudors*. Written by Sam Willis, Henry V111 to Edward V1 produced much laughter as we romped through the Ducking Chair and Henry's Master of the Stools.

Memoirs featured by our next reader included *Four Seasons in Rome* by Anthony Doerr. On the same day his wife gave birth to twins, Anthony received the Rome Prize – a year-long stipend and studio in Rome - causing much upheaval and the difficulty of language with babies and living in another country. The memoir *Turn Right at Istanbul: A Walk on the Gallipoli Peninsula* by Tony Wright, speaks for itself and was enjoyed. Julia Baird wrote *Phosphorescence* which won the Australian Industry Book of the Year Award in 2021. Julia tells us how we can find 'the light within'! Rosie Batty's memoir '*A Mother's Story*' is a traumatic story from a very brave woman and highly recommended by our reader.

*Mrs Kelly* by Grantlee Kieza, a good writer who researches well. Our reader had attended the play in Benalla the week before; the book was enjoyed, but a lot was written about Ned and Mrs. Kelly popped in every so often.

Published in 2018, Danielle Steele wrote a heart-stopping thriller, *Accidental Heroes*. Our reader gave this a big tick for enjoyment. *Muster Dogs* by Alicia Grey, a well written book which follows the life of five kelpie puppies, was later made into an ABC TV Series.

Lorraine enjoyed and recommended a few books this month, among them *The Search* by Iris Johanson about a rescue dog, *The Street Lawyer* by John Grisham, *The Holiday Home* by Fern Britton set in Cornwall, *The Match* by Harlan Coben family secrets discovered and *Dream Town* by David Baldacci. The favourite of Lorraine's reads, *The Nurses' War* by Victoria Purman, a wonderful story.

*A Gentleman in Moscow*, by Amor Towles, was enjoyed by Corrie. *Queen of our Time – Life of Elizabeth 11*, appropriate at this time in history. A very satisfying read was *While Paris Slept* by Ruth Druart. Di Morrissey wrote her usual ripping story in *Before the Storm*, whilst Helen enjoyed *The French Photographer* by Natascha Lester. Last but not least, *The Wild Wood* by Posie Graeme-Evans, enjoyable historical fiction.

We look forward to meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in August.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Lifeball

With falling numbers, freezing temperatures and ever-increasing layers of clothes needed to stay warm on court, we decided it was time for a winter recess, as people are travelling, and we are also thinking Covid numbers are a bit too high for safety just now. We will be back on court on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September, hopefully fit and refreshed.

Lifeball is a great game for people who've always enjoyed team sports, and even those who haven't. We play every Monday 10am at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre, and follow the game with a warming cuppa, some post-match analysis, and some laughs. If you would like to come and try, or come and watch, coordinator Marlene Pitts is happy to hear from you on 0407240943.

Regular players are also asked to let Marlene know of absences.

Julie McNeill

## Meditation



Meditation is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month from 12.00noon to 1.00pm.

The meditation session is a wonderful way to start the week, grounding oneself with the benefit of Mindfulness, helping you to face the week ahead.

Caroline Sims

## Meet and Mingle

At the July Meet and Mingle our guest speaker was James Harrison, who recently moved to Benalla. James is a talented musician specialising in playing the Ukulele, but he also brought along other instruments including a banjo, mandolin, violin, harmonica and a ukulele banjo mandolin which is a rare instrument. There were also three tambourines, two of which he lent to 'helpers' in the audience to increase the musical sound.

As there were several would be ukulele players in the audience, James started with telling us about the fingering of the ukulele and also gave a brief lesson on how to construct chords.

During the morning James touched on aspects of his life including the fact that he had taught himself the violin during the 2020 lockdown.

After teaching the audience the fundamentals of playing he produced a song book and then led everyone in singing.

Perhaps the highlight of the morning was James playing the harmonica with the aid of a neck brace and the banjo at the same time.

We all had a great morning and thank James for sharing his musical ability with us.

Our guest speaker for Meet and Mingle in August will be Lucy Mitchell-Long from Benalla Health. Lucy will speak on Health Literacy which is a subject we can all probably do with some help on.

Margaret Jenkins



## Music Appreciation

July started with a bit of a 'buzz': Vaughan-Williams' overture to the "The Wasps" - a fifth century BC satire on the Athenian judiciary system for which he (Vaughan-Williams) had been invited to compose incidental music. The tempo of the morning "upped" with a Liszt 'Tarantella' before settling back to the more sonorous and lyrical tones of a Rachmaninoff Sonata. An "imagined" concerto by JS Bach for violin and oboe - 'imagined' because no original manuscript exists for the concerto - invited us to imagine a conversation between the two solo instruments while a chamber orchestra 'buzzed' in the background. Mendelssohn, whose personal musical voice, it is said, reached maturity by the remarkable age of seventeen (a feat some say that even Mozart did not attain) rounded out the first session with one of the thirteen string symphonies he had composed by the age of fourteen.

Ancient Greece was also the starting point for the month's second session as Jordi Savalle and his "Concert de Nations" played the prologue to Monteverdi's "Orfeo" as the story of Orpheus, son of the god Apollo and the muse Calliope, is told. Even without any mythology attached to it, the so-called "Pathétique" Symphony of Tchaikovsky is a landmark in the history of the symphonic form. The idea of closing with a slow movement was bold and unprecedented. Tchaikovsky thought it his greatest work. Composed in Russia in 1917, Prokofiev's 1st violin concerto had a long gestation, with numerous travels backwards and forwards across the Atlantic with the composer, before being premiered in Paris in 1923, only to be found too romantic and passé to chic Parisian audiences. With an enormous orchestra, deep bells, offstage brass and percussion, vocal soloists, and a large chorus, Mahler's 2nd Symphony fashions a sound world all his own, exploring themes of afterlife and the resurrection of the dead. Being too long a work for our group to consider in its entirety, we were content with the rousing finale - a fitting climax to the session.

You can read more about the works selected, and listen to the recordings, by turning up the [Music Appreciation](#) page on our U3A website.

Bill Squire

## Page Turners

### Steven Conte: The Tolstoy Estate

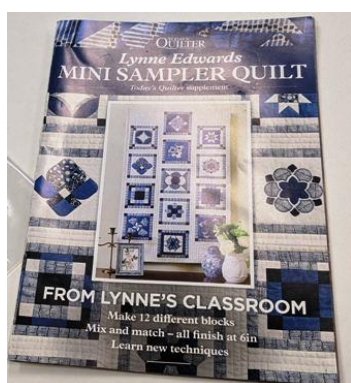
In 1941 as the German army advanced through Russia, a German army medical team occupied the historic estate of Leo Tolstoy, a cultural icon of Russia. Conte has woven his novel round this historic six-week period. The bitter winter, the flood of casualties from the war front close by, the exhaustion of the surgeons and the increasingly bizarre behavior of some of the medical team formed the backdrop of a remarkable friendship between Paul Brauer - a surgeon and Katerina Trubetzkaya – a novelist and the director of the Estate. Drawn together by their literary interest in Tolstoy's novel – War and Peace, they form a cautious friendship between enemies. Both survive the war, but they never meet again, only correspond for many years.

Conte explores friendship, duty, brutality and acceptance in a theatre of war. An unusual war novel, especially for an Australian to write. Some in our group would include it amongst the best books they have read. Recommended for readers who like well written challenging ideas.

August 2 – *'The Cuckoo's Calling'* Robert Galbraith 'Strike, a troubled war veteran, attempts to solve the mystery death of a model who supposedly fell from her balcony'

Meg Dillon

## Patchwork



We have started on our block of the month project.

It's fun seeing the blocks, and the sampler quilts, coming together!

'Show and Tell' this month featured a beautiful hand pieced and quilted quilt, a great achievement.

Dorothy Webber



## Play Reading

Our play for July was "The Golden Legion of Cleaning Women". This was written by Alan Hopgood, an Australian playwright.

The play is set in three acts, with nine parts. As is often the case in the middle of the year, several class members were missing. With only six people we were still able to share the roles so that everyone had a good turn reading the play.

The comedy deals with a group of cleaning women who decide to battle with the big business executives in their office block. Reading information thrown in wastepaper baskets proves invaluable in their quest for revenge. The strength of the 'League' is in the secrecy – no-one can know what they are doing. They do have some support from the downtrodden son of one of the executives. But when he appears to be about to tell others of the work, they close down the league, giving all their financial gains to charity.

A fun play, enjoyed by the class

Joy Shirley

## Politics and Current Affairs

Politics and Current Affairs this month covered many areas of the world's 'happenings', from Ukraine, China, America, and Papua New Guinea to name a few. We are very lucky to have Brian Vial in our group as he has had many years of contact with various people and has kept up with the history of Papua New Guinea. Brian was able to clarify the situation about the elections currently being held in PNG.

The 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 rebellion against voting results and subsequent invasion of the American Congress building by Trump supporters was also discussed.

China's interest in the future of Taiwan and America's involvement and the ramifications of a proposed visit by Leader of the House, Nancy Pelosi, was another topic that was delved into.

Both the upcoming State Election and the result of the recent Federal Parliamentary elections were included in our discussions, with the future of the Teals and Greens, as well as the Nationals, and their effects on Government of our country.

Politics is running as a masked group to ensure the safety of those who might otherwise fear to attend. Brian will be inviting the two PNG engineering students he supports to a future session. It will be good to see them again.

Heather Wallace and Terry Case

## Saturday Cards – 500

Have a spare Saturday afternoon? If so, come along and join us for a game of 500. We have lots of laughs, (as well as some serious card games). The room is warm, with a lovely tree'd outlook over the lake. An ideal setting to play cards. Look forward to seeing you, 1.30 – 3.30pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday each month.

Heather Wallace

## Singing for Fun

We have had a variety of sessions this month in Singing for Fun. In one session Kieran chose a series of Scottish songs and Carmyl chose three Welsh songs that were in our song books.

Brian introduced us to "Waterloo", which everyone seemed to enjoy, as well as "Seventy-six Trombones" which is a favorite of the group.

During July we also introduced Brian Colman as a Leader for the group. Brian has a background in Musicals in the '90s and thought he would like to try at being a Leader in our Group. Thank you, Brian, for putting your hand up and finding different songs for us to sing.

We have been without Margaret Merriman this month as she has been in hospital with pneumonia, and then spent a fortnight in respite care at Estia Health. Marg is recovering and has moved to Freemasons for more respite care. We are hopeful that Marg will be back with us in August sometime.

Thank you to Gwen Barnes who has been accompanying our Leaders. For something different Kieran has asked members of our Singing group to take turns in choosing songs for his section of the program. Joyce Borschmann was the first to choose a series of songs.

At our third Singing for Fun for July we had a week when there were three members of our group all celebrated a birthday. Congratulations to Wendy, Rupe and Joyce.

The next Singing for Fun will be on Thursday 4 August 2022 at 10am in the Hub at Cooina. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

## Stock and Land

### Varroa mite threat

The dreaded varroa mite arriving at Newcastle and attacking Australian bees, aligned with our July beekeeper speaker Warwick Bone.

Until a few weeks ago Australian bees had been free of this pest but suddenly it was sighted and suspected all around Newcastle. Warwick said its impact on bees was horrific, because translated into human terms, a varroa mite on a bee, was equivalent to something the size of a rabbit attached to the back of a person's neck, sucking blood.

He said an immediate problem, was being able to transport enough Australian bees to pollinate almond trees around Mildura for six weeks over early spring, to ensure a crop. And bees don't like almond trees much anyway, Warwick said. Just like endlessly eating chocolate.

But he was really with us to talk about permaculture and holistic grazing which he said was all about good design. A key to that is doing what huge herds of wild grazing animals in Africa do, which is heavily graze a small area quickly, move on and not return to that area until every plant there has had a chance to regrow.

That means useful plants get as much chance to recuperate as weeds. An example he gave was 4500 acres divided into 30-acre paddocks near Holbrook, carrying 2500 head of cattle. The farmer moves all the cattle to one new paddock every day which means each paddock has 150 days to recuperate.

Our next speaker on Tuesday August 2 will be **local policeman Ross Plattfuss talking about farm crime.**

David Palmer

## Sustainability

In our first July session, the Sustainability group began the preparation of an integrated sustainability index that attempts to integrate the social, environmental and economic elements of sustainability; a replacement for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is currently used in Australia which focuses only on economic indicators. The New Zealand government is preparing a draft Wellbeing Index. Our index is based on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the primary organising system. We had a go at drafting 'targets, measures, indexes and scores for these goals. We discovered it's not an easy task.

In our second session we looked at what was needed to achieve a net zero carbon energy system for Australia. We compared two approaches from advocates to 'electrify everything' on the understanding we will eventually achieve carbon-neutral electricity production. The first was a bottom up (household up) approach proposed by Rewiring Australia and the second was a top-down approach proposed by the Clean Energy Council. We then considered these pathways with the Federal government's policy it took to the last election. We found that the new government's policy generally matched the primary steps each of the advocates propose.

John Lane

## Tech Savvy Beginners – Apple

This month we had a revision session. So, we put pen to paper and recorded answers for the research tasks set for our iPads.

Our first tasks were in the Settings App, which has a lot of information within it. We each found our iPad's GB capacity and how much GB capacity we had left.

We found the time in Montevideo on the Clock App. We checked out the weather forecast for Benalla over the next week.

And we saved a News story in Bookmarks. It's a tricky operation - but we are still working on it!

Finally, we checked out the distance to Tamworth and some accommodation for two nights.

We managed to do all of these tasks in about an hour.

So, to all the Apple iPadders who attended - Well done. 👍 ☆ 😊 ☆ ☆ ☆

Jenny Sawyer

## Tech Savvy Beginners – Android

July's topics included:

- What is GOOGLE DRIVE?
- Creating folders in GOOGLE DRIVE and downloading data into file.
- How does the phone Calendar work?
- What is the Internet?
- Antivirus Software (Be Connected).
- Using on-line forms (Be Connected)
- Staying safe on-line.



Robyn Lukey

## Tech Talks

This month in Tech Talks we reverted to more mundane discussions about just how Technology relates to the world. We looked at the list of internet speeds amongst countries in the world and wondered why Australia was so far down the list. We looked at the world's worst carbon polluters both per capita and actual and again wondered why Australia was so far down the list.

Finally, we brokered the concept of whether it was possible to go cold turkey in the use of coal. It is worth considering that in the past at various times we have also gone cold turkey on some things. We stopped killing whales cold turkey when it was obvious the species was in danger (admittedly with the exception of one country, but the world is working on them). We stopped cold turkey the use of certain refrigerants when the danger to the Ozone Layer was obvious. Could the world do the same with coal?

Neville Gibb

## Wine Appreciation

On a rather foggy morning, 19 of us travelled south on the freeway to Fowles Winery at Avenel. The Cellar door and restaurant have undergone a massive renovation/new build with windows looking out to the Strathbogie Ranges.

Having perched ourselves at the bar, we proceeded to taste up to 10 different varieties of red, whites and rose wines, all grapes grown on their 350-acre vineyard and made by Matt Fowles.



Katey, our host, was very knowledgeable about the wines and happy to discuss them with us.

We then wandered into the amazing restaurant, again with floor to ceiling windows looking out over the paddocks to the ranges, and had a very delicious lunch accompanied by equally delicious wines. The staff was very friendly and attentive.

Next month on 24th we off to Indigo Vineyard, 1221 Beechworth-Wangaratta Road, Everton Upper followed by lunch at the Beechworth Pantry, 77 Ford St. Meeting as usual behind Aldis at 1000.

Please RSVP by Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> via [nicnakmac90@gmail.com](mailto:nicnakmac90@gmail.com) or phone/text on 0428 696 408.

Nicole McFarlane

## Program News

### Covid Safe Plan v 7

1. In line with U3A Network requirements it is mandatory for U3A Benalla members attending face to face U3A activities to produce evidence of being vaccinated.
2. Any member of U3A Benalla who is feeling unwell is asked not to attend a class or group to which they belong, but instead get tested for COVID 19 either by using a RAT test or by phoning Benalla Health to make an appointment.
3. An Attendance record for each class will be located on the table inside the U3A room or other venue being used by U3A Benalla. Every person entering the U3A room or other venue will be ticked off on this attendance record which contains the COVID-19 immunisation status of members.  
Persons not currently enrolled for a particular group or class or who have not had their COVID-19 immunisation status recorded, are required to give their name and produce evidence of their COVID-19 immunisation status to the Convenor who will record it on the attendance sheet.
4. Members when attending U3A Benalla groups, classes or functions may choose to wear a face mask indoors.
5. It is suggested that members when attending U3A Benalla groups, classes or functions keep 1.5 metres apart at all times.
6. Outdoor groups such as Bushwalking or Bird watching do not have to wear masks, but U3A members may choose to do so.

Margaret Jenkins, President

## Member News

*Vale - Dr Margaret Ann (Mardi) Scharp OAM*



Dr Margaret Ann (Mardi) Scharp OAM had a stellar nursing career. I knew Mardi as a Registered Nurse (Sister), Nurse Teacher and Director of Nursing (Matron) at Prince Henry's Hospital in Melbourne.

Mardi left Prince Henry's when she was seconded to the Health Department Victoria to oversee the transfer of General Nursing Training from the hospital sector to the tertiary sector in the 1980s.

During her career she was heavily involved in nursing advocacy with the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (RANF), the Victorian Nursing Council (VNC) which oversaw nursing registration and statewide exams and the College of Nursing Australia (ran post graduate nursing degrees). Many of her roles involved board memberships or Presidency. The VNC role also involved setting of and marking finals examination papers statewide.

Mardi travelled extensively, both overseas and locally, with her husband and other close friends. She played the bagpipes and was a member of bands which played during Moomba and Anzac Day marches in Melbourne.

At U3A, Mardi was involved with Singing for Fun, Community Singing and Brain Games.

Mardi was on the original Steering Committee of Age Friendly Benalla in 2017 and remained as a Committee person of AFB until 2021.

Mardi moved to Benalla to live in Coinda, where she was near her brother John, participating in activities there such as managing the roster for The Hub.

To me she was a great friend and work colleague with a lovely nature and willingness to help and support her friends and family.

Wendy Sturgess

# What's On

## Monday, 1 August

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Art Appreciation - The Life and Work of Clarice Beckett
- 12:00 Meditation
- 13:30 Investment
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books

## Tuesday, 2 August

- 10:00 Page Turners - 'The Cuckoo's Calling'
- 10:00 Stock and Land - 'Farm Crime' - Ross Plattfuss, police officer
- 12:15 German - Advanced

## Wednesday, 3 August

- 09:30 Play Reading
- 09:45 Easy Walks - Shepparton - Victoria Lake to Botanical Gardens
- 14:00 Be Connected

## Thursday, 4 August

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Android
- 13:00 Patchwork

## Friday, 5 August

- 10:00 Sustainability

## Monday, 8 August

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 14:00 Creative Writing
- 14:00 Garden Team

## Tuesday, 9 August

- 10:00 Politics and Current Affairs
- 12:15 German - Advanced
- 14:00 Tech Talks

## Wednesday, 10 August

- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 13:30 'A Taste of Art'
- 14:00 Be Connected
- 14:00 Film Discussion Group – 'To Olivia' and possibly also 'Mothering Sunday'

## Thursday, 11 August

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Android
- 13:30 Executive Committee Meeting

## Friday, 12 August

- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 14:00 Armchair History

## Saturday, 13 August

- 13:30 Saturday Games - '500'

## Monday, 15 August

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 12:00 Meditation
- 13:30 Coin Collectors

## Tuesday, 16 August

- 10:00 The News - Fact or Fiction
- 12:15 German - Advanced
- 14:00 Exploring the Universe

## Wednesday, 17 August

- 10:00 Meet and Mingle – 'Health Literacy', Lucy Mitchell Long, Benalla Health
- 14:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Apple

## Thursday, 18 August

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Android
- 13:00 Patchwork

## Friday, 19 August

- 10:00 Sustainability
- 11:45 Chat 'n Chew – Benalla Art Gallery

## Monday, 22 August

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 14:00 As Time Goes By - Memoir Writing – 'Right Here, Right Now'/'Members Choice'

## Tuesday, 23 August

- 10:00 Politics & Current Affairs
- 12:15 German - Advanced
- 14:00 Brain Games

## Wednesday, 24 August

- 10:00 Wine Appreciation – Indigo Winery, Everton Upper/Lunch at the Beechworth Pantry
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 13:30 'A Taste of Art'

## Thursday, 25 August

- 10:00 Community Singing
- 13:00 Family Research
- 17:00 Newsletter reports due today

## Friday, 26 August

- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 14:00 Armchair History

## Saturday, 27 August

- 13:30 Saturday Games - '500'

## Monday, 29 August

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun

## Tuesday, 30 August

- 12:15 German - Advanced

## Thursday, 1 September

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Tech Savvy Beginners - Android
- 13:00 Family Research - Beginners
- 13:00 Patchwork

## Friday, 2 September

- 10:00 Sustainability

## Monday, 5 September

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Collectors - Let's Commemorate! Trophies and more
- 10:00 Lifeball – returns after break!
- 10:00 Art Appreciation
- 12:00 Meditation
- 13:30 Investment
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books