



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – February 2024

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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Please send reports for the newsletter to newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com by 25 February 2024

President's Report

What a wonderful day we had at Enrolment Day on Wednesday 10 January! There seemed to be a continuous stream of people coming through the door to chat with the Convenors and then to fill in an Enrolment Form.

My thanks to all the Convenors who came and talked to those new to U3A Benalla, and also to our current members. It was great that you told them about the successful courses that you all run, and gave them the Information the prospective members were seeking. Thank you.

My thanks also to the Committee members, and others, who came early and helped set up the tables and chairs. That was an essential ingredient for the success of the morning.

Since then, enrolments have been steadily coming in. The first morning we opened the U3A Benalla Office on Wednesday 17 January we had another twelve enrolments. Opening the office has also provided the opportunity for members to suggest courses of interest, which is important information for us to work on.

The U3A Office will open each Wednesday morning from 10am to 12 noon until the end of February. So, if you have not enrolled yet, please come and bring your Enrolment form one Wednesday morning soon.

Alternatively, there is still the option for enrolment using on-line banking, enrolment by post and also for leaving the form and money in an envelope at the Redb4 Bookshop in Bridge Street.

To date we have received 338 Membership forms for our 46 courses. The numbers for some courses are very impressive: Garden Appreciation 78, Exercises for Fun 77 and Wine Appreciation 49. Patchwork has attracted 32 participants this year, and Music Appreciation 30. The consistency of these excellent numbers particularly for Patchwork and Craft and also for Music Appreciation shows the need for a larger room to be available to U3A Benalla, and the Committee will be continuing to ask Benalla Rural City Council for a larger room in 2024.

Some courses such as Ukulele and Community Singing have commenced during the second half of January. However, the majority of our programs are commencing in February.

The proposed name change of the building where we meet from the Benalla Senior Citizens Community Centre to the Benalla Seniors and Community Centre was suggested jointly in a letter by U3A Benalla and the Senior Citizens to the Benalla Rural City Council. This name change will make all people who use the building feel included.

Currently there is a survey being conducted by the Benalla Rural City Council to find out if the public is happy with the name change.

There are two ways in which you as members of U3A Benalla can show support for this name change. Firstly, there are forms just inside the side entrance of the building (the entrance we use) which can be filled in and handed into Customer Service by Friday 16 February 2024. Alternatively, the survey can be completed online by visiting: <https://haveyoursay.benalla.vic.gov.au/benalla-senior-citizens-community-centre-proposed-name-change>.

We would appreciate as many U3A Benalla members as possible filling in this survey so that the name change is adopted by the Benalla Rural City Council.

Margaret Jenkins, President

Enrolment Day 2024



Group Reports

Heads up... The Media team has introduced a new feature! The heading of each group is now hyper-linked to go to the group's webpage. If you are looking for further detail, keen to see extra photographs or feel like reminiscing by scrolling through past posts of group activities, you may find this new feature helpful.

A Taste of Art

Commences 7th February and held fortnightly on Wednesdays - 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm Broken River Painters, Barc Hut 11, Benalla Airport Precinct.

Carol Perry

Armchair History

Commences 9th February and held on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month - 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in Room 1.

Brian Harker

Art Appreciation

Our 'First Mondays' session at the Art Gallery on December 4 was a most enjoyable morning.



We were lucky to meet an artist with two works of art completed recently at the request of the Gallery. [Mark Dober](#) has painted what you could call a portrait of Winton Wetlands in gouache and watercolours. He has produced two exceptional paintings full of interest and detail. These are large paintings in which Mark has endeavoured to give an impression of Winton and in effect capture the essence of the land. He has tried hard to get the colours and idea of the area as he sees it and we admire him for this.

Mark also showed us examples of his other work on landscapes in various parts of Victoria. These are more detailed than his portraits of Winton. We have to note that his portrait of Winton was done in en plein air as quickly as possible and the other works he showed were done in the studio after some reflection and re organisation of the landscape. More orthodox works of art but nevertheless giving a good comparison between the two styles.

The '[Mark Dober: Wetlands](#)' exhibition, which runs until the 18th February, is well worth looking at.

Coming up at 'First Mondays' on the 5th February 2024 at 10 am, artist Chris O'Brien will be in conversation with an Arts Project Australia staff artist, coinciding with his exhibition *Oh, the places I've seen!* Meet other members after the session over coffee at the Gallery's Munro and Sargent Cafe.

Neville Gibb

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

The 'As Time Goes By' topic list is ready and will be distributed at our first meeting on 19 February. For our first class we have two 500-words options for continuing class members, two for new members – but it's fine to choose from either group's topics!

Topics for continuing class members:

- *'Life Changing'* Was there ever an event in your life which became 'life changing' for you, an event which you might include as a theme if you wrote a memoir? Tell us about it in 500 words. For example, Martin Amis threads memories and feelings about the murder of his loved younger cousin Lucy by a serial killer through his memoir [Experience \(2001\)](#); while [Claire Bowditch](#) threads memories and reflections on the death of her loved next-in-age sister through her memoir. (Of course, your theme doesn't need to be quite as dramatic as these). *OR*
- *'Interesting people I have known....'* Tell us about an interesting person or two you have known who you would definitely include in your memoirs in 500 words.

Topics for new/newer class members, or those who haven't written on them in the past:

- *'New in Town'* Have you ever been the new person in town? Or did someone else's arrival have a profound impact on you? Share your story in 500 words. OR
- *'I Was There'* Have you experienced a significant news, historical or cultural event first-hand? Share your personal piece of history in 500 words.

If it's your first session, feel free to bring a first effort, or simply 'pass'! (...and, for continuing members, there's always the option of 'member's choice').

Bev Lee

Australian Shares & Stock Market

From Kenny Rogers singing 'The Gambler' to Les Rogers' presentation on 'The History of Batteries'!

Our December meeting opened to the tune of Kenny Rogers' video singing [*"The Gambler"*](#)

*"You'd better count your money
When you're sittin' at the table
There'll time enough for countin'
When the deal is done!"*

The month of December has again not been good, with very few rises and a lot of red on our selections sheet. While Lithium has been centre of our discussions for many months, I hope 2024 we can look across all eleven sectors in detail. Our Bendigo Invest Direct Watchlist for the 11 months is negative 12%. This is reflected in the market overall.

Les put together [the history of batteries from the lead acid to Nickel Cadmium to Lithium](#) types in a very good Power Point presentation. Lithium will remain the best storage solution in the near future although there are several other types being developed but technical problems are impediments.

Les received a jar of Vegemite for his assistance during the year and today's presentation.

Our long-term stock winner was Margaret J with her XRF selection that gained 28% for the year and the customary home-made jar of jam was handed out. Margaret W came a close second with her selection of NXT that gained 26%. Well done.

Afternoon tea was a long break during which we enjoyed a slice of fruit cake from the local supermarket.

After the break we looked at the implication of the dramatic fall in Lithium prices and the importance of the cost of production. Investors who take note of the Short Sellers list were forewarned of the downturn in lithium companies. We then viewed the eight companies who gained over 50% in the ASX200 and the two companies who lost 50%.

The volatility of the market of the past 12 months was evident in the charts of CBA and BHP.

The final results of our selection charts demonstrated a difficult year for stock pickers.

Our short-term stock winner was Neville with his selection of IND (INDUSTRIAL MINERALS LTD) that rose with profit of \$9,105. Neville also received a jar of jam.

Our December meeting was our last as the *'Investment'* group - the first meeting of our newly badged *'Australian Shares and Stock Market'* group will be Monday 5th February 2024. It is the last report co-written by co-convenor, John Hanlon, who decided to retire at the end of 2023. As group member and previous Investment convenor Margaret Jenkins wrote in her President's message in January 'Thank you, John for your thoughtful and helpful sessions throughout 2023. The wisdom in what you presented was enjoyed by all members of the group.'

John Hanlon & Malcolm Sanders

Be Connected

Building Digital Communities Grant – Bendigo Bank Digital Community Project

During December 2023 we were notified by the Good Things Foundation, which set up the Be Connected online course, that U3A Benalla had been awarded a Building Digital Communities Grant Round 1.

The aim of this grant is to offer an opportunity to Bendigo Bank customers at risk of being left behind in the digital world to have access to local digital skills training.

U3A Benalla offer several digital literacy programs in 2024. These include the [Be Connected - Android course](#) with Ruth Jelliff as Convenor, and the *Be Connected - Tech Advice* program which provides one on one assistance by appointment with Robyn Lukey and Jenny Sawyer.

We look forward to helping the Bendigo Bank customers seeking assistance with digital training to access these programs.

Margaret Jenkins and Ruth Jelliff

Be Connected – Tech Advice

Anyone who is a U3A member can obtain some 'one on one' help in operating and using their mobiles, tablets or laptops you can book a time with either *Jenny Sawyer (Apple)* 0409 545 182 or *Robyn Lukey (Android)* 0403 164 931. Meetings are by appointment and are usually held in U3A Classroom 2.

Robyn Lukey and Jenny Sawyer

Be Connected – Android

Commences on 1st on February and held on the 1st and 2nd Thursday of the month - 10:00 am to 11:30 am.

Ruth Jelliff

Birdwatching

Commencing on 14th March and held on the 2nd Thursday of March/April/May from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon Meet Seniors Carpark.

Kathy Costello

Brain Games

Commences on Tuesday 27th February and held on the 4th Tuesday of the month - 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Elsbeth Maconachie

Bushwalking – Easy Walks

We had a great turn out at the Tatong Tavern on December 6, with fine warm weather for our last meeting of the year, with a plan to follow an enjoyable lunch with a stroll around Tatong. The weather had other plans for us, and by the end of lunch we decided it was a bit too warm for walking. Andi's maps and research will be put to good use later in the year, when we will perhaps walk *before* we have lunch!



For our first 2024 walk on Wednesday March 6* we will start at Victoria Lake in Shepparton and head along the Goulburn River, crossing the suspension bridge and enjoying a picnic lunch in the Shepparton Botanic Gardens. The Gardens, auspiced by the Australian Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne, offer many shorter walks of interest and views across the valley from Honeysuckle Rise, and will provide a total walk of about 8kms, with an optional walk around the Victoria Lake Wetlands on returning.

We will meet at the Seniors' carpark, Fawckner Drive, to leave at 9.30am, with confirmation to Julie by text, email or phone message on 0407823031 or juliemcneill55@gmail.com. Remember to bring drinks, and a picnic lunch. Car sharing is usually available for a small contribution.

Future walks: the calendar is taking shape, and members are asked to keep an eye both on the newsletter and the U3A homepage for news and updates. We will be heading to Bright in May for the glorious autumn colours, and Bev will lead us on the popular Cherry Walk, so get those cameras ready!

*A reminder that Easywalks commence in March to avoid likely hot conditions in February.

Julie McNeill

Cards '500'

Commencing 7th February and held on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month - 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Doug Smith

Chat n' Chew

During 2023 we changed our *Chat 'n Chew* lunches to the 2nd Friday of the month, however the tradition of having our first lunch of the year at '*The Royal*' hasn't changed! Our first lunch for 2024 will take place at the Royal Hotel, cnr Arundel and Bridge Streets, on Friday 9th February, arriving at 11.45 for a 12 midday start.

Members who have enrolled in Chat 'n Chew need to let me know each month if they wish to attend. If I'm not available to answer the phone when you call, please leave a message—also, don't forget to include your name in the message, not just the phone number.

If you wish to attend the February Lunch at the Royal, please contact me on 0427 376 991 by Tuesday 6th February 2024.

Lorraine Knox

Chess

Commences on 20th February and held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month - 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm U3A Room 2

Doug Smith

Coin Collectors

Commences on the 26th February and held on the 4th Monday of the month - 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Doug Smith

Community Singing

During January we had two enjoyable sessions of Community Singing at the Hub at Cooina. Thank you to Brian Greed for playing as usual for these sessions, and to Kieran Smith for being our MC.

Brian does a fantastic job on the piano. He only needs to know the name of the song, and the key it is in, and he has no hesitation in accompanying the Community Singing. Thank you, Brian for starting Community Singing in January. We all enjoyed it.

February will see the start of Singing for Fun on Thursday 1 February 2024 at 10am at the Hub at Cooina.

Due to Brian offering to have Community Singing on both the 4th and 5th Thursdays of each month, this means that every Thursday morning at 10am there is Singing at the Hub. What a wonderful idea!

Hope to see you all at Singing each Thursday.

Margaret Jenkins

Cooking Solo

Commencing on the 14th February and held on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Uniting Church, Carrier Street, Benalla

Gwen Mildren and Val Whan

Creative Writing

Discussion topic

"They've given me an awful lot, and I'm so deeply fond of them, and I love spending time with them, so I'll keep going for a very, very long time, I promise everybody that."

This was a quote from Richard Osman, who has written some gentle mysteries. He was talking about the characters in the books. This led to a discussion about the value of getting to know the characters included in our stories. Defining their personality and physical characteristics can help in writing their story even if these are not actually included in the story. For example, deciding their age can help in working out how they would act in a story.

Our stories:

As usual we shared our stories. It was interesting that a few of the stories were not complete, leaving completion as a possible writing activity during the U3A break.

After feedback and discussion around writing, we went to the North Eastern pub for pre-Christmas drinks.

Writing in January:

We will be keeping our writing going over the U3A break. No prompts for this. Instead, each person has a set of four cards. Each set had a female character, a male character, a place and an activity. The challenge is to write something incorporating each of these. We will share our stories around the second week of January for feedback. It is possible that we could use this feedback to revise our story for sharing during the February 2024 class.

And, of course, those who had started a story, could look at finishing the story to share either in January or at our February class.

Joy Shirley

Demystifying Psychology Course

Greetings Everyone and all the best for an interesting and enjoyable 2024.

Sessions will be held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday beginning Tuesday 20th February from 10:00am to 12:00pm in U3A Room 1 in the Benalla Seniors Building in Fawckner Street, Benalla. Following sessions will be held on March 19th, April 16th, May 21st, and June 18th.

Expect session #1 to be a bit information dense. You will be introduced to some frequently used concepts and engage in two "hands-on" activities – (1) pre and post testing, and (2) completing a personality type inventory. The good news is these activities are homework assignments to complete and bring to session #1. (I can hear groaning ... "Homework!!"). Emails containing instructions for your homework have been sent to each group member. Contact me if you have not received the email (reminder: check your spam folder).

For those who cannot print the documents attached to the email, or who do not have email, I will leave copies of (1) pre & post testing, and (2) the personality type inventory on the table outside the U3A Room.

Finally, it's not too late to join *Demystifying Psychology – Course*. Contact me, or come along to session #1, complete an enrolment form, and join in the fun.

Jane Rushworth

Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group

Welcome back to some, ... and welcome to first-timers.

The *Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group* convenes on the third Thursday of the month at Ruby Blue Cafe (64 Nunn Street, Benalla - conference room at the back).

Many thanks again to Ruby Blue Cafe for their on-going support for this U3A group by making the room available at no cost. Access the room (1) via the cafe proper, or (2) from the side door on the lane located on the left side of the cafe. We can still purchase cuppas if we wish and there's no requirement to do so.

Looking forward to diving into 2024 with some great conversations. See you all on Thursday 15 Feb at 2 pm.

Jane Rushworth 0437 621 575

Exercises for Fun

Commences on the 5th February and held each Monday - 9:30 am to 11:30 am in the Seniors Auditorium

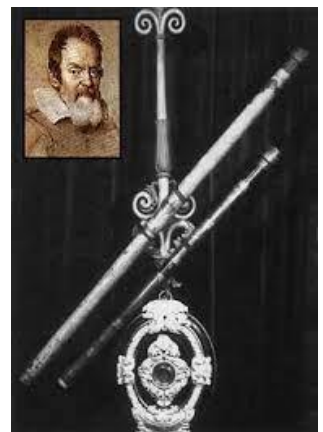
Helen Jeffree

Exploring the Universe

From Galileo to the James Webb Space Telescope

In the last 300 years our knowledge of Astronomy has come a long way. Up to the early 17th century the night sky could only be observed with the naked eye. Thus, Astronomy was only concerned with the position and measurements of heavenly bodies. In the spring of 1609 Italian Astronomer Galileo Galilei heard that Dutch spectacle maker Hans Lipperhey had invented an instrument that magnified distant objects by 3 times. Galileo made his own 3 powered spyglass from spectacle lenses. Teaching himself the art of lens grinding he produced telescopes magnifying up to 20 times. He saw more stars and celestial objects than ever before!

In December 1609 Galileo studied the moon's phases and drew pictures of a moon with a surprisingly rough surface. In January 1610 he made the amazing discovery of 4 moons orbiting Jupiter. It wasn't a wandering star, it was a planet.



Galileo also observed and documented the phases of Venus and his discoveries proved Copernicus's theory that the Earth and other planets revolved around the Sun. He made so many important astronomical discoveries and mathematical calculations that he is called the Father of Observational Astronomy and Modern Physics.

Astronomy advanced with the invention of the telescope. By the late 19th century thousands of photographic plates had been created that could be studied by astronomers.

The different types of light, the electromagnetic spectrum, opened up a new field of study.

The first astronomical use of spectroscopy was analyses of sunlight. Every natural element in the universe has a characteristic fingerprint of light that can tell us the properties of stars, planets, supernovae and interstellar gasses, their mass, temperature, and distance.

In 1923 Edwin Hubble determined that our Milky Way was not the only galaxy in the universe. By measuring the distance of stars in what was thought to be the Andromeda Nebula he discovered that it was actually a far galaxy. Cosmology was alive and well.

A telescope is like a time machine. The images from The Hubble Space Telescope brought the cosmos to us all. The James Webb with its technology and huge mirrors looks further back than the great Hubble Telescope and with the two working together we can expect more great discoveries of the early universe.

What would Galileo Galilei think of the James Webb Space Telescope? Of a telescope using infrared vision that can detect objects in space that we humans are not capable of seeing and has allowed us to peer back 13.5 billion years in time.

This is an exciting time to be '*Exploring the Universe*'.

Bev Morton

Family Research

Family Research will be held on the 4th Thursday of the month at 1:30 - 4:00 pm. This semester begins on Thursday 22nd February 2024 in the large U3A room at the Seniors building in Fawckner Drive. At this meeting Barry and I look forward to hearing from you so that we can tailor the semester to the group needs. So, have a think about what you would like to see achieved as (1) a group and (2) what your personal aims might be ... besides finding that elusive and terribly rich relative who has left the entire estate to you!!

Note that group members can also access "drop in" support on the 3rd Thursday 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm.

Jane Rushworth and Barry O'Connor

Family Research – Getting Started

Welcome to this year's participants. There has been a great response to enrolments for *Family Research - Getting Started*. In the first session on Thursday 1st February we will be discussing information sources that we can use when researching our family and how to get started when setting up our family tree on Ancestry.

Deb Saunders

Film Discussion Group

For our last film discussion for 2023 we briefly discussed two films, *Saltburn* and *Napoleon*.

Saltburn sounded similar to *Brideshead Revisited*, so was of interest. The summary talked about a relationship between a "lower class" student with an aristocrat while studying at Oxford. The film ended up being very different. The "lower class" student was really from a middle-class family and after some untimely deaths ended up living in the property previously owned by the aristocrat family.

The second film discussed was *Napoleon*. The history of Napoleon's rise and fall was covered with scenes depicting some of his major battles. Some publicly published reviews suggest some important events were missed. A major focus though was on his relationship with Josephine. Interestingly in the film his fall seemed to coincide with his divorce from Josephine. Was this really the case, or used in the film to add extra interest?

We also looked briefly at the two new films that were due to start screening in Benalla in December. These are *Journey to Bethlehem* and *The Old Oak*. The information had only just been released, but from the description it sounded as if they may be of interest. It will be interesting to discuss these at the first class in 2024 if any class members have seen them.

Joy Shirley

Garden Appreciation

The Garden Appreciation group will meet in the Seniors' carpark at 9:30 on Thursday 22 February to car-pool. Our first outing will be to the garden of Melissa and Guy Mounsey at 1901 Samaria Road, Moorngag. It's on the left-hand side, the business name is 'My Little Potting Shed'. Melissa, who is a well-known local florist, and Guy are now growing a wonderful variety of flowers. The flower beds are in the open so you may need hat, umbrella and drink.

Please bring a small plate to share at morning tea and your own cup. Tea, coffee, milk, hot water will be supplied. Lunch will be at Tatong Tavern, Tatong/Benalla Road at 12 midday.

It's very important to let me know if you are attending, also if you have any dietary requirements – 0438 627 010, gwenturner243@gmail.com.

I'm very pleased to welcome new & old members and am looking forward to visiting private and public gardens with you this year. I hope you all had a lovely Xmas and New Year!

Gwen Turner 0438 627 010

Garden Team

Commencing 12th February, held on the 2nd and 5th Monday of the month - 2 pm to 4 pm - at various venues.

Elspeth Maconachie

German

Hallo Freunde, bitte beachtet, dass wir unsere Sitzungen am Dienstag, den 13. Februar, beginnen werden, da ich leider am 6. Februar meinen jährlichen Termin bei meinem Kardiologen habe. Gruß ...

Hello friends, please note, we will start our sessions on Tuesday 13 February because, unfortunately on the 6 February, I have my annual appointment with my cardiologist.

Horst Gunther

Let's Talk Books

I hope you have all read lots of interesting books and anything else our group would be interested in hearing about. There is a little pile of books on my desk ready to be talked about, swapped or given away. I am looking forward to catching up with everyone and I am sure we will welcome some new members to begin 2024. See you on Monday 5th February.

Geraldine McCorkell

Life Ball

With a record breaking sixteen players at our latest game, we are looking forward to an active year. It is great to be able to take time out as needed, especially on the warmer days. The increased numbers have provided a bit of discussion about the rules, as we return to playing a full court-- it's a discussion we're happy to have!



Rene Martens' great time lapse photos of goals thrown by Ted Doxey (L) and Phyl Doxey (R) recently

Lifeball is a modified walking version of netball/basketball. It is a great game for those who've always enjoyed team sports, and even those who haven't. We play every Monday at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre in Ackerly Avenue, and follow the game with a cuppa, some post-match analysis and some laughs. If you would like to come and try, or watch, coordinator Marlene Pitts is happy to hear from you on 0407240943.

Julie McNeill

Meet and Mingle

The guest speaker at Meet and Mingle on Wednesday 21 February at 10am will be Barry O'Connor who will speak on *Scams*. Barry has some figures on the number of scams which he wants to present to Meet and Mingle members, so they are aware of trends over the past twelve months. All U3A members' welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

Music Appreciation

Commences on Friday 9th February and held on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month – 10 am to 12 noon.

Bill Squire

Page Turners Book Group

The selection of contemporary novels, some crime fiction and a few books based on actual events chosen by the 2023 Page Turners Group for the first half of 2024 can be [downloaded here](#).

The book for our first meeting on Tuesday 2nd February is *The Bookbinder of Jericho* by Pip Williams. When refugees from Belgium arrive in 1914 it sends ripples through the lives of twin sisters who work in the bindery at Oxford University Press in Jericho. A story about knowledge and access to it.

Meg Dillon

Patchwork and Craft

Thanks go to Michelle Button for her embroidery skills on the new aprons for the *Cooking Solo* class. Michelle has been very generous to U3A, and I highly recommend her if you want any embroidery done. Looking forward to seeing you all again in 2024, and watching our skills develop.

Dorothy Webber 0412 263 071

Photography

Commences on Thursday 22 February– meets on the 4th Thursday 10:00 am to 12:00 noon Feb - May

Rene Martens

Play Reading

We read two short one act plays in December. These were both described as “short plays for women”.

The first play was *Five Freaks A'Fiddling* by Stuart Ready

The play takes place in the staff area of a department store, Bilstons. It was about a group of charwomen who impersonate influential customers to promote an aspiring 'Miss Bilston' who cannot attend her interview because she has had to go to the doctor. The doctor diagnoses chickenpox. Her mother is determined that her daughter will win the title.

It was an easy comedy that gave us some laughs.

The second play was *Full Steam Ahead* by Kaye Macauliffe. This was also a comedy.

The members of the Guild are putting on an unrehearsed play reading. The play, co-incidentally entitled "*Full Steam Ahead*", is about the old level crossing keeper and a young mother trapped with her innocent baby in the path of the oncoming Night Express. Dramatic intensity is heightened by the Guild's tea urn, which rumbles menacingly throughout the proceedings, threatening imminent explosion if not pacified by the only member of the Guild who understands it.

It was a relaxed way to end our 2023 year of Play Reading. Now we are looking forward to some new plays in 2024, beginning with *The Winslow Boy* by Terence Rattigan on Wednesday 7 February at 9.30am. It should be good!

Joy Shirley

Politics and Current Affairs

Commences on 13th February and held on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month - 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Brian Harker

Recorder Group

Commences on the 14th February and held on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month - 10am to 12 noon.

Janet Douglas

Singing for Fun

Singing for Fun members had a busy December, singing at a Remembrance Service at Benalla Health, a concert at Estia, ending with a convivial Christmas lunch at the Golf Club on the 14th December.



Singing for Fun recommences at 10am on Thursday 1st February at the Cooinda Hub

Margaret Jenkins

Sky's the Limit



Our speaker in December was *Bruce Cowan*, a Benalla based glider pilot, who spoke about early pilots and attempts to make heavier than air machines stay airborne.

Bruce started with early optimists who flung themselves off high towers with minimal winged attachments and often fatal results. Then he progressed with more successful kite and glider pilots, who were often successful in Germany; then later with the Wright brothers and their dubiously acknowledged success, as the first successful powered aeroplane pilots with their Wright flyer.

On Tuesday 6 February at 2pm, local model aircraft builder *Roly Gaumann*, will talk about and later show us examples of his life

work of building and often competitively flying model aeroplanes.

David Palmer

Stock and Land

In early December we joined with the Sustainability group to look at the work of Gretals Australia Pty Ltd's work in commercialising the pharmaceutical benefits of certain types of eucalyptus leaves.

Chairman, MD and CEO of Gretals, *Alistair Cumming*, initially showed us their eucalyptus leaf processing plant in Benalla, before taking us to Gretals' farm at Lurg. There the company is assessing various irrigated eucalyptus lines, with the aim of discovering leaves which produce compounds applicable to human cognitive and respiratory health, neuro degenerative diseases, animal health applications and substances which might counter antibiotic resistance.

The company has already discovered promising species and aims in a few years to list on the New York stock exchange.

At 10 am on Tuesday February 6, our speaker will be *Rodney Cook*, a fifth-generation beef, sheep and cropping farmer from Baddaginnie.



David Palmer

Sustainability

Welcome to a new year with the Benalla U3A Sustainability group. Our first meeting is scheduled for this Friday 2 February but due to a bad cold I have cancelled this session. A bad start, I know, but better than me giving you my cold (at least it's not COVID!)

So, our next session will be on Friday 16 February commencing at 10:00 am. Sorry for any inconvenience.

In the meantime, here's a photo of our joint excursion with the Stock and Land group in early December to visit Alistair Cumming's innovative venture developing a method of milling the leaves from a very specific species of eucalypt to extract substances to be used in the pharmaceutical industry.



I've emailed links to some articles that you may find interesting to read before our 16 February class, including:

The Conversation 10 Jan 24 – [2022 Antarctic Heat Wave](#)

The Conversation 11 Jan 24 – [Heat affecting storms and floods](#)

The Hans Rosling video on [why most of the world is better off than you think](#) (9:30 min) (also on our web page) provides a hint as to what I'll be talking about at our next session.

John Lane

Tech Talks

Commencing on the 13th February and held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month - 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at U3A in Room 2.

Neville Gibb

Ukes4Fun – Getting Started

The Ukes4Fun Getting Started group commenced on the 15 January. Over the past 3 weeks the group has learnt the 4 chords that form the basis for many of the songs that have been written as well as learning the secrets of strumming. The group then moves into the Just Jamming group and have been participating in this group as well.

Heather Wallace

Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming

Ukes4Fun had an early start to their year with members eager to get together and have some fun. As this is our second year, we were able to get into the swing of jamming straight away.

As an aside, during the last year I lent my Aklot Soprano Ukulele to a group member and when I opened the Uke case to tune the instrument before my first class this year, I noticed that an Ashton Ukulele had been put in the case in error. That is what happens when we are in a hurry to pack up sometimes and not checking our equipment. If my Aklot Soprano Uke can be returned I would be very grateful. I have taken very good care of the Ashton Uke whilst it has been in my possession, and it is looking forward to being reunited with its rightful owner.

Heather Wallace

Wine Appreciation

Welcome back and welcome to our new members. I look forward to exploring new wineries and eateries in North East Victoria with you.

Our first sojourn will be on Friday 16th February to *Squires Winery* at 6900 Murray Valley Highway, Esmond (Yarrawonga). After the tasting we will have lunch in their onsite restaurant overlooking the river.

Our meeting place is the Senior's car park at 10.00am. If everyone could meet there this month until I know how many will require a lift, it would be appreciated.

Please reply by Sunday 11th February either by return email or phone/text 0428 696 408.

Nicole McFarlane

Other News

Celebrating course endings in December

During December the *Family Research - Intermediate* group met at Rambling Rose for a farewell gathering following a very rich and interesting two years together. It was a delight to work with this group, to share their enthusiasm and the love of the history which surrounded their family research. Members of the group are largely moving into the Family Research group and planning to 'drop in' to the 'drop in' from time to time. Huge thanks to Judy Barry for mentoring this group, who valued her family research skills and experience very highly.



A belated *Family Research-Beginners* morning tea in December at Rambling Rose celebrated the 'graduation' of hard-working Phil Hughes from the 2023 beginners' group and marked the transition to *Family Research – Getting Started* with new convenor Deb Saunders in 2024. It also marked the completion of John Barry's year-long '*In the Lap of the Gods*' course in 2023. Passionate about Greco-Roman history since childhood, John put so much work into the delivery of '*In the Lap of the Gods*' in 2024 he says he has enough material for a book!

The web pages of *In the Lap of the Gods* and other groups which are either taking a break or concluding in 2023 such as *Collectors*, the *Jane Austen Book Group*, *Tech Savvy Apple 'Pages'* and the '*Wise Guys Book Group*' can be found on the website under *Groups/Recent Groups*.

Bev Lee

New Convenors and Co-Convenors in 2024



Ruth Jelliff
'Be Connected – Android'



Gwen Mildren and Val Whan
'Cooking Solo'



Deb Saunders
'Family Research – Getting Started'



Andrew McFarlane
*New Co-convenor with David Palmer
'Sky's the Limit'*

Office Volunteer Program

U3A is a volunteer organisation, with members playing 'reciprocal' roles by both learning from others and providing volunteer services to the group. Being a convenor is a key volunteer role, but we also have other volunteer roles, some quite challenging, all rewarding.

During December we had our first meeting of Office Volunteers, a new role as we open the office for enrolments on Wednesday mornings from 10 to 12 until the end of February.



Office Volunteers Ruth, Julie, Rina and Margaret check out the storeroom during orientation!

Thank you to the Executive Committee of 2023

It is almost time for the 2024 AGM (Wednesday 20 March) and election of new office bearers. It's time therefore to thank all members of the **Executive Committee**, particularly those who are retiring, either from the committee or from positions in the committee, for their thoughtful endeavours and often tireless work!



Sitting: Julie McNeill, Margaret Jenkins (President), Geraldine McCorkell (Secretary), Dorothy Webber Standing: Nicole McFarlane, Corrie Witlox, Ann Nelson (VP), Len Jeffers (Membership Officer), David Palmer (Publicity) Absent: Neville Gibb (Treasurer), Lorraine Knox (Welfare), Heather Wallace (Newsletter Editor)

It's also time for members to consider nominating, or nominating others, for the committee. There will be more information about the AGM and a link to the Nomination Form in the next newsletter.

Some more Christmas photos





More photos from Christmas celebrations in December - from the German break up lunch at 'The Royal', to 'Cards' 500 festive afternoon tea to extra photos from Easywalks' Tatong Tavern breakup.

Remembering ...

Brian Howard, Keith Rogers and Stella Wharton

The past few months have seen the passing of three U3A members who played an important part in the life of U3A for over a decade and for whom U3A was a much-loved part of life.

A member of U3A Benalla from 2007 to 2022, *Brian Howard* was for many years John Lloyd's backup convenor for the Sustainability group, convening the group and providing interesting material for discussion when John was travelling or had other commitments. A retired engineer and accomplished tool maker, Brian was also a member of the Tech Talks group. Brian presented models he had built to demonstrate the principles of solar thermal power to both groups, boiling a kettle of water in the process. Brian's story '*My Other Life*', a favourite in our 'As Time Goes By' collection, relates to his passion for working with wood.

Particularly well known in Benalla as a former Principal of Benalla High School, an involvement written extensively about elsewhere, *Keith Rogers* was a member of U3A Benalla from 2013 to 2023. A lover of fine wines and the theatre arts, Keith was for many years a co-convenor of U3A Benalla's Wine Appreciation group with his wife Heather and Noel Meagher. When the Play Reading group commenced in 2016, Keith, a local thespian, was asked whether he would like to be involved. Keith became the group's 'creative director', selecting plays and encouraging class members until he became unwell.

Stella Wharton passed away at Coinda on Monday 29 January. An active member of U3A Benalla from 2012 to 2023, her son Ian said that Stella had enjoyed her time with U3A and asked us to inform our members of her passing. Memories of Stella include her letting us know that her family would like to donate a collection of recorders of different sizes and tones to our new Recorder group in 2018, a gift described as 'truly wonderful' by convenor Janet Douglas. In 2019 Stella shared news of a program run by U3A Melbourne, 'Revise Your Shorthand as you Train Your Brain'. It's still on our list of suggested courses if the interest is there. Finally, a favourite memory of Stella relates to her electric vehicle, her zippy red scooter!

What's On in February

Thursday, 1 February

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Be Connected - Android
- 13:00 Patchwork and Craft
- 13:30 Family Research - Getting Started

Monday, 5 February

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0428 210 944
- 10:00 Art Appreciation - 'First Mondays'
Chris O'Brien, 'Oh the places I've seen!'
- 11:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 12:00 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 Australian Stocks and Share Market
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books

Tuesday, 6 February

- 10:00 Page Turners - 'The Bookbinder of Jericho'
- 10:00 Stock and Land - Rodney Cook, fifth generation
Baddaginnie beef, sheep and cropping farmer
- 14:00 Sky's the Limit - Roly Gaumann

Wednesday, 7 February

- 09:30 Play Reading - The Winslow Boy, by Terence Rattigan
- 10:00 U3A Office Open Hours - 10 to 12
- 13:30 A Taste of Art
- 14:00 Cards '500'

Thursday, 8 February

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Be Connected - Android
- 13:00 Family Research--Getting Started (One-to-One)
- 13:30 Executive Committee Meeting

Friday, 9 February

- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 11:45 Chat 'n Chew - The Royal Hotel, Arundel St.
- 14:00 Armchair History

Monday, 12 February

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0428 210 944
- 11:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 12:00 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 Creative Writing
- 14:00 Garden Team

Tuesday, 13 February

- 12:15 German
- 14:00 Tech Talks

Wednesday, 14 February

- 10:00 Cooking Solo
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 10:00 U3A Office Open Hours - 10 to 12
- 13:00 Family Research - Getting Started
(One-to-One Appointments)
- 14:00 Film Discussion Group

Thursday, 15 February

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 13:00 Patchwork and Craft
- 13:30 Family Research - Drop In
- 14:00 Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group

Friday, 16 February

- 10:00 Wine Appreciation - Squires Winery, Esmond
- 10:00 Sustainability

Monday, 19 February

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0428 210 944
- 11:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 12:00 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 As Time Goes By - Memoir Writing

Tuesday, 20 February

- 1000 Demystifying Psychology Course - Session 1
- 12:15 German
- 13:30 Chess
- 14:00 Exploring the Universe

Wednesday, 21 February

- 10:00 Meet and Mingle - Barry O'Connor 'Scams'
- 10:00 U3A Office Open Hours - 10 to 12
- 13:30 A Taste of Art
- 14:00 Cards '500'

Thursday, 22 February

- 09:30 Garden Apprec'n--Melissa & Guy Mounsey's
garden, 1901 Samaria Rd, Moorngag
- 10:00 Photography
- 10:00 Community Singing
- 13:30 Family Research

Friday, 23 February

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

Sunday, 25 February

- 17:00 Newsletter reports due today

Monday, 26 February

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0428 210 944
- 11:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 12:00 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 13:30 Coin Collectors

Tuesday, 27 February

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

Wednesday, 28 February

- 10:00 Cooking Solo
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 10:00 U3A Office Open Hours - 10 to 12

Thursday, 29 February

- 10:00 Community Singing
- 13:00 Patchwork and Craft

Friday, 1 March

- 10:00 Sustainability

Monday, 4 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Lifeball - Marlene 0428 210 944
- 10:00 Art Appreciation
- 11:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 12:00 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 Australian Stocks and Share Market
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books

Be Connected - Tech Advice - one-to-one sessions by appointment for members experiencing problems operating mobiles, tablets or laptops - Contact **Robyn** (Android Devices) **0403 164 931** or **Jenny** (Apple Devices) **0409 545 182*** Venue: Classroom 2. Referral on will be suggested if necessary.