



Benalla and District Inc.

## Newsletter – March 2020

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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### President's Report

We have started the new year with plenty of enthusiasm and continue with new memberships daily. Our numbers are very impressive. Of course, this is due to our wonderful Convenors and the courses on offer.

My biggest thank you to all the volunteers at the RedB4 Book Shop for handing out our Membership packs and handling the Registration Forms.

Benalla U3A's **Annual General Meeting** will be held at Meet & Mingle on Wednesday 18th March from 10am to 12 noon. A Nomination form is included with the March Newsletter. Give a thought to coming on the Committee. It is important to have new people with new ideas to keep our U3A growing in the future.

It has come to my notice that many Members are not aware that they can claim Travel and Accommodation when they travel 100k or more to a Medical Appointment. One member only found this out after 2 1/2 years of travelling to Melbourne. Seems it's one of those things you only find out about by word of mouth.

A wonderful Social Dinner was held recently in conjunction with the Be Connected program. Thanks to the Be Connected Program for the Grant that enabled us to enjoy a get together and meal.



Dorothy Webber, President

### Group Reports

#### Armchair History – Tudors

The group is looking at royal involvement in British History over the years and its implications in the Tudor era.

Terry Case

#### Armchair Traveller

Last month Neville Gibb gave an interesting talk on his father's experience as a prisoner of war in Changi during World War 2. On March 3rd David Palmer will be our guest to speak on Walking the Camino Trek in Spain and on April 7th we will hear from Wendy Sturgess of her train travels in Europe. A big thank you to these contributors. I am always on the look-out for other presenters and will certainly appreciate volunteers.

Ray O'Shannessy

#### Art Appreciation

On Monday 3 February we were welcomed by the Galleries new Director Eric Nash.

Eric introduced himself and expanded on his hopes and dreams for the gallery. He advised how the Gallery has been digitally recording unframed prints and paintings and showed us one painting held in the gallery's archives by Russian Painter Danila Vassilieff who spent some time in Australia in the middle 20th century. He also showed us other examples of this artist's work and explained his influence on several Australian Artists. We thank Eric for his efforts and look forward to the March 'First Monday' where he has organised a lecture by the artist Phillip Edwards who has paintings of Mount Buffalo in the Simpson Gallery.

Neville Gibb

### 'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

There's something quite special about reminiscing through story telling! It was wonderful to welcome new and welcome back returning class members this month. Class members who had tackled the holiday topics of '*Something in my life I'm really proud of*' and '*Auntie, Uncle or cousin*' shared stories which were often moving and evoked memories for other class members. Our topic for March is *Making Waves* – the brief: "Is there a time in your life when you've been accused of making waves?" It could be in your personal life, the workplace, socially...even politically. So, what have you done that's caught people's attention, and changed the usual way of doing things? It can be funny, sad, poignant, illuminating— it just needs to be a captivating!

Do you enjoy writing poetry? You are most welcome to join 'As Time Goes By' to share poetry inspired by our monthly topics, something which one of our members often does to great effect.

Bev Lee

### Be Connected Drop In

Over 40 members and friends of U3A attended our Pizza night held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February in the U3A room. We all enjoyed pizza and the delicious salads as well as the chocolate cake which followed. The evening was sponsored by the Be Connected program which is run for the Federal Government.

During the evening we took the opportunity to tell our members about the Be Connected Drop In program which commenced in February 2020 with sessions on the first and third Monday mornings at 10am. The members who have attended these sessions are interested in expanding their computer skills to keep pace with the many communications that are available on the internet. People who have few computer skills are also encouraged to come along. U3A Benalla has a small number of mobile devices which are available to lend to members to get them started if they do not have a tablet or iPad of their own.



We are using the Be Connected modules as a guide to help our learners. Following the Pizza night, we had a session on Safety first which included safe passwords and paying safely online. Everyone seemed to appreciate the excellent words of advice that the module provided. The module is available under the Topic Library on [www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au](http://www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au) for those who would like to look it up.

The next session of Be Connected will be on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 10am. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

### Bird Watching

The birdwatching group will meet for 3 outings in semester 1, 2020. These will run in March, April and May. Our first birdwatching outing will be a morning walk at Lake Benalla on **Thursday 12 March 2020**. For most of our outings we meet at the car park behind the Seniors Community Building, but for this one please meet at the edge of the lake behind the library, at 9.30am.

If you have binoculars, please bring them. You should also wear sturdy walking shoes and a hat. Bring a water bottle and any food you require for the morning.

Please note that if it is a day of Total Fire Ban, the activity will automatically be cancelled

Kathy Costello

## Brain Games

In our first session we fired new neural pathways with finger exercise, body writing and pine-cone sketching before seeing word links, working out number pyramids and trying a couple of logic puzzles and finished with a web throw to exercise our brain/eye/hand dexterity. I hope that in our March session we'll be joined by a few people who were not on my early roll and thus missed the reminder of the February start.

Elspeth Maconachie

## Bushwalking

### Easy Walks

Coming up on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April, the group will walk the One Mile Creek Trail from the City of Wangaratta towards the King Valley. The walk will start at the Scout Park in Vincent Road and follow the One Mile Creek towards the King Valley for 6 to 8 kilometres. Meet at 10 am in the Seniors Community Centre Car Park. For further information, contact Wendy Sturgess on 0403 226 649. Please let Wendy know at least three days beforehand (29 March) if you will be attending.

Wendy Sturgess

### Mid-Week Walks

#### Wednesday February 12<sup>th</sup> - MT BUFFALO - Leader: John Boehm



This month's Mid-Week Walk, ably led by John Boehm, was held in a favourite Park: Mount Buffalo. In refreshing Alpine summer weather, 9 walkers began the 8km trek at Lake Catani Picnic Ground, then branched off onto the Underground River track. This track included



several taxing sections of steep rocky steps! We stopped for a brief rest and (for some brave souls) an inspection of the Underground River's entrance cave, before climbing the steep steps up to The Chalet Picnic Ground. From there, several short walks to viewing points enabled us to enjoy a bird's eye view of the misty, fertile Ovens Valley far below. After a welcome lunch break and a circuit of the Grand Old lady, The Chalet, we retraced our steps to the cars, diverting briefly to observe the micro hydro-electric generator, providing power to Lake Catani Campground. Afternoon tea at the picnic ground replenished our energy for the drive home. We all agreed it was a wonderful day out. We hope to see the two new participants, John Lane and Lyn Hawken, on future walks.

Bev Thornell

#### Coming up:

##### Wednesday 11 March 2020 MT BULLER S-3-3

Walk up to the Summit & return, then the family trail circuit around the village perimeter. About 7 km in all.

Meet at the Tennis Courts Barkly St (behind Aldi)

Meet 7.45am Leave Benalla 8 am

Leader: John Boehm 0428 254801

##### Wednesday 8 April 2020 MT GLENROWAN S-3 -3

A steepish climb up to the ridge thereafter an easy walk to Mt Glenrowan to enjoy the view.

Meet at the Tennis Courts Barkly St (behind Aldi)

Meet 9.15am Leave Benalla 9.30 am

Leader: John Boehm 0428254801

John Boehm

## Chat n' Chew

February Chat 'n' Chew was held at the Royal Hotel and was well attended. March's Chat n' Chew will be held at the Benalla Bowling Club on Friday 20 March from 11.45am. It is important to 'RSVP' each month if

you are going to attend or have a booking you would like to cancel. Please contact Lorraine Knox on 5762 1531 by Tuesday 17 March for bookings or cancellation.

Lorraine Knox

## Coin Collectors

Our first session for 2020 was held on the February 19<sup>th</sup>. It was very pleasing to welcome five new members which has increased our numbers significantly. Unfortunately I was only able to be there for a short period, however, by all reports there was enjoyable discussion around the various items brought by the members, which included ancient Chinese and Roman coinage, a story of one family's brush with 1930 penny, a 1919 uncirculated United Kingdom Coin set which included 5 commemorative coins, tokens commemorating the opening of the Australian Parliament in 1901 and the opening of Parliament House Canberra in 1927.

It was felt that at the next meeting we do something similar, so we should bring along a coin/coins, notes, medallions as subjects for discussion. Looking forward to the 18th March.

Alex Adkins

## Collectors

The first 2020 meeting of Collectors drew 16 people, most of whom brought along some of their favourite items. They included Dorothy's diminutive Peter Pan sewing machine and very old ivory elephant, Robyn's Carlton ware, Wilma's teapots and linen tea towels, Helen's family lace collection and Shirly's commemorative English royal family books and a handmade coronation procession skirt.

Judith brought her pride and joy, a fuchsia Royal Winton Grimwades dish, while Jenny brought a coloured handle Wiltshire cutlery set, won by someone in a 1964 golf competition.

Wendy had an elegant art deco, chalk ware figurine of a dancing couple and a replica anointment spoon from Edward's coronation and Jennifer brought a Carlton Ware cup and saucer and a Royal Staffordshire strawberry dish.

Jacque showed an ammonite fossil of a coiled shell from either the Jurassic or Cretaceous period, ammonites being a squid like creature.

Heather and Alan both had unusual objects.

Heather's were stress squeeze toys in various shapes including one which held special meaning for her. The stress squeeze police car was a lasting reminder of the 1986 Russell Street police headquarters bombing and the man who pushed her and others through a back door to safety. Not employed by Victoria Police, Heather had been doing work in the records office for another company on that day, which killed one policewoman and injured 22 people.

Alan, a collector of shells for 70 years, said he had not chosen his most valuable object, but decided to bring two common garden snails, one of which was an oddity.

Shells are usually sinistral with their aperture on the right but one of the snails he had stumbled across had its shell opening on the left.

It was decided Collectors' next meeting would be on Labour Day, Monday, March 9 from 10am and the theme would be metal.

Jacque Schwind

## Creative Writing

Our first 2020 Creative Writing class welcomed some new members, and it was good to hear from all the class around their interest in writing.

It was pleasing that most people accepted the challenge for the first class, even the new members were able to contribute. The challenge was to write a story meeting the criteria for the Australian Writers Centre Furious Fiction competition. The criteria were:

Your story must include a character who's a GUARD.

Your story must include the words NARROW, GOLDEN, LEATHERY and GLOSSY.

Your story's first and last sentences must each contain just TWO WORDS

The items ranged from a guard on a train, a prison guard, the guard at the "Pearly Gate" – not St Peter – and even a mother "guarding" her teenage daughter. It just shows how a single word can mean so many

different things. Although it was not part of the assignment, many decided to submit their story. It will be interesting to see if any of them make the long list/short list/wins!

Even for those who did not submit their piece, it seems that it was an enjoyable exercise.

The topics to select from for our 9 March class are:

The incessant wind kept blowing all night. It got quite violent at times, as we could hear branches being torn from trees and tin banging on the old shed

They had been best friends for ever.

The rail line stretched into the distance until meeting in a point at the horizon

Joy Shirley

## Demystifying Psychology

Demystifying Psychology got off to an excellent start on Friday 21 February. 36 energetic, curious and engaged minds took part in the inaugural information packed session. Foundation concepts took up the first hour. Discussions focused on what is psychology, its history (which extends back to Plato), the various schools of psychological thought, ethics (and some pretty dastardly historical examples), the importance of measurement and the psychologist/psychiatrists "bible" – the Diagnostic Statistical Manual. Then after a well-earned cuppa we settled into the next hour and the first topic - "Personalities and Coping Styles".

As a U3A "newbie" I really appreciated (as I'm sure those who participated would also) the kindness of members who helped set up the room (Joy and Pat) and oriented me to the IT and photocopier equipment (Bev). Thank you for your help and warm welcome to U3A.

You'll find the course content plan and Session #1 PowerPoint on the U3A website soon. The program runs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month (2-4pm) up to and including 15/6/2020. Looking forward to Session #2 on 20 March.

Jane Rushworth

## Exercises for Fun

What a wonderful group of people we have attending the Exercise class. We have many new faces, and it's very encouraging to see everyone so enthusiastic to become a little more active and improve their fitness. Keep up the good work.

Exercising does not stop for Labour Day. It will be held as usual in the Seniors Hall. See you Mondays 9.30am in Seniors hall. Have fun!

Helen Jeffree

## Exploring the Universe

The Vastness of Space and the Pale Blue Dot.

In 1996 scientists pointed the Hubble telescope at a seemingly empty patch of sky for 10 days. They were amazed to find over 3,000 galaxies and the images became famous as the Hubble Deep field. This film gives us a 3D concept of the vastness of space as we enter our program for 2020.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAVjF\\_7ensg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAVjF_7ensg)

30 years ago, the Voyager 1 spacecraft was speeding out of our Solar System heading for Interstellar Space. For years Scientist Carl Sagan had been asking NASA to turn the spacecraft around to take a picture of Earth. 34 minutes before the cameras were turned off Voyager turned and took the now famous image of the Pale Blue Dot. NASA has put out a commemorative film of the event.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKFkR9yfRoY>

The Star Betelgeuse has caused excitement in the press lately. The red supergiant in the constellation of Orion is near the end of its life and its light has been dimming. Is it about to explode and become a supernova whose light we will see during the day for weeks? Scientists think not. Betelgeuse may already have burned up all its fuel and exploded. As its light takes about 700 years to reach us, we may have to wait a long time to see it.

The "Solar Orbiter" a new spacecraft that will orbit the Sun's poles and aid in predictions of space weather was launched recently. It is expected to take stunning images of the Sun. On launch from Cape Canaveral a

camera on the rocket returned brilliant film of the manmade rocket beside the Earth against the blackness of space. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4GO3ggli3Q>

After studying the Solar Orbiter, we viewed the 'Solar Dynamics Observatory 10-year highlights' to see our star in action. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvPH\\_gDMarw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvPH_gDMarw)

Bev Morton

## Film as Literature

We welcomed some new members to our first 2020 Film as Literature class. It is always good to have some different perspectives on the various films we watch.

Between us we had seen a range of different films over the Summer break – “Little Women”, “Jumanji”, “Bombshell”, and some of the great oldies such as “On Golden Pond”. And while most people enjoy a range of different genre of film, it seems that Science Fiction was the least favoured. Maybe there is an opportunity to challenge those who are not in favour of these to attend one and then contribute an alternative view to the discussion.

We also had a brief discussion about the role of language in films, with many not liking the tendency for bad language that seems to be the fashion in some current films. It was suggested though that in some cases it can be appropriate to the story or character.

Overall, a great start to the new U3A year.

The film we chose for our March class (11 March) is “JoJo Rabbit” – a satire set during the Second World War. The full March program listing the screening times for “JoJo Rabbit” should be available soon, at <http://bpacc.com.au/benalla-cinema/#coming-soon>.

Looking forward to our next class on 11 March.

Joy Shirley

## Games

The first Monday of the month at 1:30. We had such a great time with one of our new games, so much laughter we all left feeling on top of the world.

Dorothy Webber

## Garden Appreciation

### Thursday March 26th

Meet at U3A car park at 9.30 a.m.

We are travelling to Shepparton to visit two nurseries

1. **Billabong Garden Centre and Café.** 295 Numurkah Road Shepparton.  
We can buy morning tea here and browse the nursery.

2. **Riverside Garden Centre**

7715 Goulburn Valley Highway Kialla. Lunch will be at the café next door.

Numbers are needed for lunch. Please phone Gwen on 5762 7017 or 0438627010, also any dietary requirements needed.

**Thursday April 23<sup>rd</sup> - yet to be announced.**

**Thursday May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Coach trip with Benalla Coach Lines to **Botanical Gardens Cranbourne.**

\$40 per person includes coach, travel and morning tea. Lunch at own cost at Café in Gardens.

Please book early. **Pay by April 23<sup>rd</sup> or before.**

These gardens are well worth the visit. For those who have trouble walking a ride around the gardens in a motorised vehicle is available.

Gwen Turner

## Garden Team

We put in a good effort with minimal grumbling about the humidity and were well rewarded with an ample spread on a cool verandah. It was lovely to add Ellen to our task force. We will take a long weekend break and gather at Kathy's on the fifth Monday in March, the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Elsbeth Maconachie

## German – Conversation

*Report on German Language 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020*

The topic for the first conversation group of the year was the weather. Starting with ordinary day to day conversation and a quick review of the pronunciation of the German ABC, the dialogue did move into more extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall, floods and storms, followed finally with a German to English translation exercise.

*Report on German Language 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020*

Starting with ordinary day to day German conversation, the topic for the day was writing a postcard in German to each other. Every postcard was read by the writer and positively improved and corrected, much to the delight of the members. I enjoy the group work.

Horst Gunther

## German - Elementary

This is the second year I have presented German language at the beginner level and an even greater emphasis is being placed on pronunciation. Students are two-thirds of the way through speaking and singing through the German phonetic alphabet. Listening skills are being honed so they can reproduce the sounds correctly in speech and writing. Spelling has started using German sounds.

The sessions this year are an hour and a half long and we romp through the time. The first session was devoted to verbs in the present tense and adverbs. At home, students have made their own little books of German verbs and are learning to decline verbs from memory with increasing speed.

The next lesson was spent looking at nouns. Unlike English which has no genders, German has 3. We explored nouns looking at which gender category into which they fell.

In German 'the' changes across these genders and also depending on what position (or case) it has in the sentence. There is no such equivalent in English and it is arguably one of the major challenges for learners. We made a start in looking at this, as well as pronoun changes in the sentence.

Overall, students have a vocabulary of close to two hundred words already.

Pauline Bailey

## Investment

At the first meeting of Investment for 2020 we welcomed three new members to our group.

We discussed how the widespread bushfires and the Corona virus which had emanated in China were affecting the Australian economy and some Australian listed shares.

We also mentioned the small Neo banks such as Xinja bank which were making an impact on the market against the big four banks and the fact that they were 100% digital and had no bricks and mortar branches.

Being the beginning of a new decade, we looked at the ASX Top 50 companies and how their total return had performed against the ASX 200 benchmark. We found that only 17 out of these 50 companies had outperformed the ASX 200 over that ten-year period.

Finally, we looked at both the large cap and medium cap shares in both the Health Sector and the Consumer Staples sector. Both these sectors had shown better than seven per cent growth in the past month, this increase being more pronounced in some shares than others.

The next meeting of Investment will be on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm in our U3A room.

Margaret Jenkins

## Let's Talk Books

Our first gathering for 2020 found our group keen to discuss books read over the holiday period. A glance at some of the books enjoyed included *Buckley's Chance* Garry Linnell about an escaped convict who lived with aboriginals for 32 years. *The Butterfly Room* Lucinda Riley continued the enjoyment of her books, *Four Fires* Bryce Courtney was once again read, *Boy Swallows the Universe* Trent Dalton earned a book of the year award and was worth the read, *War Flower* Mary Ann O'Connor set against the background of the Vietnam war and the sixties era received a tick. *Land of Golden Wattle* JH Fletcher took the reader through a history of Australia and seven generations of a pastoral family. *The Dutch House* Ann Patchett published

in 2019 is about a brother and sister over five decades, good reading. *Live a Little* Howard Jacobson a wicked novel about falling in love in your nineties and the family's reaction!! *The Happiest Refugee* Anh Do a feelgood book. Published in 2019 *In Darkness Visible* by Tony Jones about a prisoner of war in Croatia, good read. *Poum and Alexandre*, by Catherine de Saint Phoull set in Paris and how family define us this author also wrote *The Sea and Us*, written about a young man who returns to Australia and lives above a fish and chip shop in Brunswick Street. Lyn read a *History of the Channel Islands* during the War referred to as Hitler's British Isles, also enjoyed was *Working with Winston* the vast array of secretaries and female assistants needed to keep up with him. *Esther* a biography by Jessica North recounts how Esther was convicted in the Old Bailey and transported to Botany Bay and became the first Lady of the Colony. There were more books read, obviously the hot weather gave our group plenty of opportunity to read, we yearn for more reading time to have a look at some of these gems. See you all on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Meditation

Meditation is a wonderful tool to relieve the stress that is part of living in this fast-moving world. Spending time to understand oneself, to learn to live in the moment and remove the emotional baggage we carry with us is very important for our physical and mental health. Take time for yourself and come to this very special activity which is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month commencing at 4.00pm.

Caroline Sims

## Meet and Mingle

"S.O.S. Save Our Station". Suzie Pearce, spokesperson for Better Benalla Rail presented the reasons for opposition to Australian Rail Track Corporation's (ARTC) plans to increase the size on our railway overpass to enable 1.8km double-stacked freight trains transit Benalla. They seek support from us for their alternative plan to move the XPT track so that trains can travel straight through Benalla.

If you would like to keep track of their progress, check out the [Better Benalla Rail website](#); the [Better Rail for Benalla Facebook group](#) page or drop in to their newly opened Pop Up Shop at 81 Nunn Street.

Bill Parris

## Music Appreciation

What a great start to the year with enrolments up by nearly 100%. Our musical journey this year will see us honouring Ludwig van Beethoven and joining in the world-wide celebrations marking 250 years since his birth. Each of our fortnightly sessions throughout the year will contain at least one or part of one Beethoven composition. We are also tracking the 2020 programme of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra - who are also joining in the celebrations - and endeavouring to present a selection from whatever music is in their concert programmes in the same month.

For the month of February, we started out with Beethoven's 1<sup>st</sup> Symphony followed by works of Richard Strauss, Ravel, Elena Kats-Chernin, Bartok and concluded with Dvorak's New World Symphony.

Our second gathering involved Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata and a mandolin concerto plus works by Dvorak, Respighi, Khatchaturian; concluding with Mendelssohn's Scottish symphony. Programme notes and links to the various videos on YouTube for your enjoyment will be posted on the Music Appreciation page of our website.

Bill Squire

## Page Turners

Trent Dalton describes his own work, *Boy Swallows Universe* as a love story, and indeed, it is. All of the people that the young Eli loves are flawed: his mother and stepfather are drug addicts; his father abandoned him and his mute brother August when they were young, and his babysitter is a notorious ex con. However, he refuses to play the victim, and it's love that drives him to break into the Boggo Road jail to visit his mother on Xmas day, and to affect the ultimate miracle of bringing his family together again. Trent Dalton is such a fine writer that these scenarios are entirely credible, and we the readers are amazed and delighted that such happiness has resulted from Eli's childhood of brutality and neglect. Even August begins to speak again. Truly, this is a novel bursting with exuberance and vitality, all the more astonishing, considering it was based on the author's own life.

Helen Scheller



## Patchwork

The workshop with Vivienne is now Saturday March 14: 10 am - 5pm. Cost \$50

I will be collecting numbers and money so please let me know if you are attending 0412263071. We have the kaleidoscope quilt we will be making at our Patchwork Thursdays. You will need 21/2 mts of a large print and 2 mts plain for background.

Dorothy Webber

## Play Reading

Our first gathering for the year was an opportunity to welcome new members and catch up with former participants. We commenced the session with a one act play "Bright Side", a light-hearted play which highlighted the many hiccups that occur when putting on a show and the complications and challenges that can be overcome by often desperate means! As a result of the shorter play we did have some time to discuss ideas for further plays and activities. It was decided in future, members contribute \$5 to assist with postage and hiring of plays, also discussed was the possibility of attending some plays in the region. Most were quite enthusiastic and as a result we decided to attend Wangaratta Players latest production "Songs for Nobodies", at the Sunday matinee. Six of our members journeyed to Wangaratta and were enthralled with such a brilliant and professional production.

Our next play reading will be a two act play "Separate Tables" by Terrence Rattigan.

Our thanks must also be extended to Keith Rogers who has decided to step down as convenor. Keith has directed the Play Reading group for some years and has enthusiastically encouraged us with his expertise and knowledge of theatre. Thank you, Keith, your involvement has been much appreciated and we hope to still see you at Play Reading.

Jenny McKenna

## Politics and Current Affairs

Politics did not take a break over the Christmas break, giving the group many topics to discuss at the first classes of the year. We touched on local and state politics, as well as the shenanigans of our Federal parties. Of course, USA politics, Brexit and its effects on the future of the United Kingdom and the European Union were discussed with enthusiasm by the group.

Terry Case

## Recorder Group

The Recorder Group welcomed two new players into the heady world of descant, alto and tenor recorders. By the time they had learnt/revised a few new notes and beat patterns Janet had them joining in as we revised some of the many songs in our repertoire. For our next session the newcomers will come in at 10:00 for some individual work with Janet, the more experienced players at 10:30.

Janet Douglas



## Saturday Games – '500'

The return of Saturday Games – '500' was welcomed by previous group members and they welcomed the new players who attended. Cards are held in the U3a Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday each month, commencing at 1.30pm. If you have an interest in playing or learning the card game 500, want to have lots of laughter, lollies and afternoon tea come along and join us, you will be most welcome.

Heather Wallace

## Singing for Fun

February 2020 saw us meeting in the main auditorium of the Senior's Centre as a trial to see if we were more comfortable in the larger space. We have had a few small problems. However, at the end of the third week we held a vote and there was a two thirds majority of Singing for Fun members in favour of continuing to meet in the main auditorium at 9.30am for both Singing for Fun and Harmony. There have been a variety of

comments including that the sound is much better, that we feel less constrained and more relaxed in the larger space.

We have been fortunate to have our three conductors offering to lead the group again this year. A big thank you to Faith Hicks, Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman for their preparation before the group meets each week in choosing songs, and then giving a list of what they want the group to sing to our pianist Gwen Barnes. Our thanks also to Gwen for her continued valued assistance on the piano.

We would also like to thank Gwen who over the holidays increased the size of the cover to fit the piano which was purchased eighteen months ago.

Due to illness Faith Hicks was unable to attend our last two sessions for February. In the last Singing for Fun session we welcomed Kieran Smith as a conductor to the group. Kieran was the soloist at our performances last year and brings a great deal of singing experience to our choir. We hope that he will be able to assist again in the future if needed.

On the fourth Thursday of each month this year we are having a Community Singing session starting at 10am organised by Brian Greed. Brian ran three very successful Community Singing sessions during January, and we thank him for offering to continue these relaxed sessions once a month during 2020.

Looking forward to seeing you at 9.30am in the Main Auditorium for the first three Thursdays of the month.

Margaret Jenkins

## Stock and Land

Prof Snow Barlow talked to the group in February, largely about climate change.

Apart from his academic role as foundation professor of horticulture and viticulture at the University of Melbourne, he and partner Winsome McCaughey, run a 30-acre vineyard near Strathbogie.

Snow said Australia was one of the only countries he knew of, which did not acknowledge climate change was happening. "The polarising debate here about climate change is unique," he said.

He said an anticipated climate change induced atmospheric temperature rise, of three degrees by 2060, seemed optimistic when the average rose 1.3 degrees last year. "I'm not certain it will get drier, but it will be hotter".

On another tack, Snow said the herbicide Roundup was so far entrenched in Australian farming systems, that it would be impossible to ban its use without seriously harming food and fibre production.



Roundup ready seeds – they include soybeans, corn, canola, lucerne, cotton, and sorghum, with wheat under development – are immune to the herbicide while weeds in the crops are killed.

But Snow highlighted the difference in on-label instructions for use, between Roundup bought by farmers and the same product sold in supermarkets.

"While farmers and spray contractors are well covered, there is very little information provided to buyers of domestic quantities of the product," Snow said.

At the next Stock and Land session on Tuesday March 3, Geoff Lee and partner Maxine Gardiner from Molyullah, will talk about Harry Ferguson and his tractors and what local aficionados do to proclaim their love of the brand.

David Palmer

## Sustainability

Much of our first session for the year was dominated by discussion about the horrendous bush fires. A major point of discussion was the role that climate change had played in bringing about the conditions that resulted in such disastrous fires and loss of life and property. There was general concern about the lack of action from the Federal government and its refusal to talk about climate change.

During the second half of the session we looked at some more positive aspects. Professor Ross Garnaut has a positive vision for Australia if we rise to the challenge of climate change. In his new book, 'Superpower', he thinks that Australia "can emerge as a global superpower in energy, low-carbon industry and absorption of carbon in the landscape." Australia is more richly endowed with sun and wind than any other developed country and has great scope for "natural climate solutions" such as carbon farming. Garnaut also says that to

maximise our chances of benefitting from the move to a low-carbon world we have to get to zero net emissions sooner than the other rich countries.

Some more positive news was found in the results of a poll conducted by Ipsos Australia during January which showed that the environment now trumps the economy on Australian's list of biggest worries. "Cost of living" and "health care" ranked as the equal-second biggest concerns. Younger Australians are the most worried but concern among older people is catching up with 42 percent of Baby Boomers considering the environment a top issue. However, it appears that confidence in political parties' ability to solve environmental problems was low across the board.

Politics is a difficult topic to avoid when discussing climate change and it arose again in our second session when we discussed an article by Waleed Aly. He asks the question, "Has anything really changed in our political landscape after the fires, floods and extreme weather events?" Despite all the media activity and the headlines, the Coalition is still split on the issue of climate change and Labour continues to be spooked by the damage it sustained last election in coal mining seats. There was much discussion around this article and a general agreement with Waleed Aly's conclusion that there has been little change in "what really counts".

To finish our session in a more positive note we looked at an article which had "*Fifteen Tips to Lower Your Carbon Footprint.*"

An important aspect of this list was that the tips required minimal effort so there was really no excuse for not doing them. While many of the tips were probably known to group members the list was compiled in such a way that made it easy to understand.

Discussing the list raised the issue of 'How can small things by one person have an impact on climate change? The answer of course is that if very many people undertake to do these things the impact is significant.

If you are interested, the list of tips has been posted on the U3A website under the heading of Sustainability.

John Lloyd

## Tech Savvy - Community Projects

If you volunteer as a convenor at U3A or at a local community group, already have basic computer skills but need help with a new task or project, come along to Tech Savvy Community Projects on the third Monday from 1 to 4 pm. Contact Bev on 5762 8171 to arrange a time to discuss your project.

Bev Lee

## Tech Savvy - Family Research

Although the Tech Savvy Family Research class doesn't meet until after this month's newsletter deadline, we have been meeting with new members to develop an understanding of their goals, whether they have begun researching their family already and what computer skills they have. It is hoped new members will have at least a trial based ancestry.com tree at the first class and go on to use our fourth Thursday sessions to work on their family tree with our support and encouragement from class members.

Bev Lee and Wendy Sturgess

## Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Beginners

So far, we have had two sessions of Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Beginners.

During the first session we spent our time acquainting ourselves with all the buttons ports and camera lenses on iPads and the iPhone. Then we actually fired up our devices and explored inside the Settings App and each person could see how much GB they have on their device and how much they have used so far. Our largest capacity iPad in the group is 128 GB. We watched an 8-minute video about the history of Apple. Will Apple be able to keep up the tech innovations without Steve Jobs? - The iPhone being the first smart phone.



The next session was devoted to searching the Internet. What a great website Benalla U3A is. Lots and lots of information accompanied by fabulous photos. In our searching I found out that there is a bus service from



# What's On

## Monday, 2 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 09:45 Life Ball
- 10:00 Be Connected Drop In
- 10:00 Art Appreciation
- 13:30 Games
- 16:00 Meditation

## Tuesday, 3 March

- 10:00 Page Turners
- 10:00 Stock and Land – Geoff Lee
- 14:00 Armchair Traveller – Walking the Camino
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books
- 19:00 Bridge Lessons - Session 5 of 6

## Wednesday, 4 March

- 09:00 Easy Walks - Murray River, Mulwala, Yarrawonga
- 09:30 Play Reading – 'Separate Tables'
- 14:00 Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Intermediate

## Thursday, 5 March

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 13:00 Patchwork

## Friday, 6 March

- 09:30 Sustainability
- 14:00 Investment

## Saturday, 7 March

- 13:30 Saturday Games - '500'

## Monday 9 March - Public Holiday – Groups in action

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 09:45 Life Ball
- 10:00 Collectors – theme 'Metal'
- 14:00 Creative Writing

## Tuesday, 10 March

- 10:00 Politics & Current Affairs
- 14:00 Brain Games
- 19:00 Bridge Lessons - Session 6 of 6

## Wednesday, 11 March

- 09:00 Recorder Group
- 07:45 Bush Walking - Mid Week Walks – Mt Buller
- 11:00 Tech Savvy Talks
- 13:00 'A Taste of Art' with Broken River Painters
- 13:30 Film as Literature – 'Jo Jo Rabbit'
- 14:00 Tech Savvy Apple Devices – Beginners

## Thursday, 12 March

- 09:30 Birdwatching – Lake Benalla
- 10:00 Singing for Fun - Harmony Group
- 13:30 Executive Committee Meeting

## Friday, 13 March

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

## Saturday, 14 March

- 10:00 Patchwork Workshop with Vivienne (all day)

## Monday, 16 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 09:45 Life Ball
- 10:00 Be Connected Drop In

- 13:00 Tech Savvy Community Projects
- 16:00 Meditation

## Tuesday, 17 March

- 10:00 The News - Fact or Fiction?
- 14:00 Exploring the Universe

## Wednesday, 18 March

- 10:00 Meet & Mingle - U3A Benalla AGM
- 12:15 Coin Collectors
- 14:00 Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Beginners

## Thursday, 19 March

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 13:00 Patchwork

## Friday, 20 March

- 09:30 Sustainability
- 11:45 Chat 'n Chew – Benalla Bowling Club
- 14:00 Demystifying Psychology

## Saturday, 21 March

- 13:30 Saturday Games - '500'

## Monday, 23 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 09:45 Life Ball
- 10:00 German - Elementary
- 12:00 German - Conversation
- 14:00 As Time Goes By - 'Making Waves'

## Tuesday, 24 March

- 10:00 Politics & Current Affairs
- 14:00 A Different History of Germany

## Wednesday, 25 March

- 10:00 Wine Appreciation – Lake Moodemere Estate, Rutherglen
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 13:00 'A Taste of Art' with Broken River Painters
- 14:00 Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Beginners

## Thursday, 26 March

- 09:30 Garden Appreciation – Billabong & Riverside Garden Centres, Shepparton
- 10:00 Community Singing
- 13:00 Tech Savvy Family Research

## Friday, 27 March

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

## Monday, 30 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 09:45 Life Ball
- 14:00 Garden Team – Kathy's

## Wednesday, 1 April

- 09:30 Play Reading
- 10:00 Easy Walks – One Mile Creek Trail, Wangaratta
- 14:00 Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Intermediate

## Thursday, 2 April

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 13:00 Patchwork

## Friday, 3 April

- 09:30 Sustainability
- 14:00 Investment

## Saturday, 4 April

- 13:30 Saturday Games - '500'