



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – March 2025

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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Please send reports for the newsletter to newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com by 26th March, 2025

President’s Report

2025 has begun well for U3A Benalla. Congratulations to Deidre Clarke for being the 400th member enrolled for 2025. Among these 400 members we have 66 members who have enrolled for the first time with U3A Benalla. So, we really are a growing organisation.

Due to excellent enrolment of members, we now have Wait Lists for three courses: Mahjong, Colour Mixing and Watercolour Technique – Botanical and Family Research--Getting Started. In each case there is a limit to how many members each Convenor can comfortably impart knowledge to, and it is better for those in the group to come to understand fully what the course is about, than to only get partial knowledge.

U3A Benalla are pleased to offer their members a meeting with Inland Rail on Tuesday 4th March at 10am in Room 1. Inland Rail are planning on commencing the Benalla Station Redevelopment in mid-2025 and wish to share their recent designs of the redevelopment with the Benalla community. The presentation team which are coming to U3A will include a member from John Holland, the contractor. The community is being invited to have their input on seating, landscaping, lift shaft decoration design and the position of the signal box. Please come along and ask any questions you may have about the redevelopment.

Our **Annual General Meeting will be held at 10am on Wednesday 19th March 2025 in the Auditorium of the Benalla Seniors Community Centre.** Guest speaker will be Bill Sykes who is going to talk about Agriculture in Northern India. There will also be election of U3A Office Bearers and the U3A Committee for the 2025-2026 year. Members may nominate for any of these positions and a nomination form is included at the end of this Newsletter. Information related to roles on the committee is available on p 19.

U3A Benalla are doing a presentation to Benalla Rural City Council Councillors on Wednesday 2nd April 2025. Accommodation at the Benalla Seniors Community Centre is extremely tight this year. U3A hope to inform all Councillors about U3A and see if the space at the Seniors Centre can be better utilised.

On Thursday 20th February I was the guest speaker at the Rose City Probus group who meet at the Benalla Bowls Club. The topic they suggested was “my life experiences” which naturally included a good segment on U3A Benalla. My thanks to Bev Lee for her assistance with the slides for this presentation.

Finally, U3A Benalla have been thinking about succession planning for our growing organisation. We are looking for someone to be a “back-up” for our Newsletter Editor, Heather Wallace, and also a “back-up” for our Website Manager, Bev Lee. If you are interested in knowing what either backup position would entail, please contact Heather on 0418 353 244 or Bev on 0478 607 838.

Margaret Jenkins, President



Group Reports

A Taste of Art

Our first session on Wednesday 5 February was well attended with three new members joining us. Five returned from last year with one lady coming from Wangaratta again. Unfortunately, four couldn't come due to other engagements.

The three new people tried watercolour for the first time, painting clouds, learning to apply watercolour in washes, how much water to use and colour mixing. They achieved some interesting results and were happy with what they had done.

Five members who were returning from last year continued on with their chosen medium, either watercolour or acrylic. They all like the relaxed atmosphere that our club provides.

Eight members attended our second session on Wednesday 19 February and are getting to know one another. There is quite a lot of interaction on which subjects to try and which medium to use.

Carol Perry

American History

In the introductory session of this study, we initially covered some fundamental elements of the study of history as a discipline. Historians gather together known facts, similar to what journalists do, and then try to work how and why things happened, why people acted or spoke in a certain way, and their impact.

Historical analysis can be influenced by a number of factors, including bias (conscious or unconscious), and we need to be mindful of this when we formulate our own understandings and opinions of events, actions and spoken words.

Excerpts from a Don Watson article were read and briefly discussed, providing food for thought as we learn more about what made USA and some of its current challenges.

A brief talk on very early Native Americans was followed by two short You Tube videos, one about the Serpent Mound in Ohio and the second giving an overview of the nation's history.

The next session (Tuesday March 4th at 2pm) will focus on the time of exploration and some events that occurred in the early colonies. Some reference will be made to prominent individuals and influential ideas.

Barbara Rogers

Art Appreciation

At 'First Mondays' on Monday 3 March at 10 am, Benalla Art Gallery welcomes Danny Lacy who will talk about his background, the line-up for 2025 at Shepparton Art Museum and their Hermannsburg works that Benalla Art Gallery will borrow for an upcoming exhibition in June.

Join U3A Art Appreciation members at the Gallery for Danny's presentation and, if you can, stay on to enjoy a coffee and chat at the Munro and Sargent Café

Neville Gibb

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

This is the eleventh year of 'As Time Goes By' and, ten years on, we revisited the importance of reflecting on the impact of our experiences when writing memoir.

We began by honouring founding 'As Time Goes By' class member Carole Marple, noting the way in which [Carole's stories](#) on the website each capture "a meaningful slice of life - a memory, a lesson, or an experience that stands out". Carole's story, *'My Other Life'*, in which she reflects on her life as a politician, was read in class to celebrate Carole's life. Vale Carole.

Other stories shared included Carmyl's story of the sense of loss she experienced after the closing of a favourite cafe discovered when *'New in Town'* and, for *'I Was There'*, Jan's reflections on The Beatles visit to Melbourne in 1964; Joan's memories of the Tall Ships visit to Melbourne in 1988; Ray's recollections of the bushfires of 1951; and Neville's childhood memories of observing life 'before indoor plumbing'.

'This (.....) Life' stories also captivated, including *'This (Pit Village) Life'* about June's childhood in northern England during the severe winter of 1963; *'This (Uncomplicated) Life'* about James' idyllic rural boyhood in New Zealand, and Delfina's *'This (Serendipitous) Life'* about a childhood interest in archaeology leading, by a circuitous route, to her studying Librarianship and becoming a bookseller.

Barry shared a catchup story about an interview which led him to reflect on valued parts of his life, while Bev reflected on memories of the Melbourne Cup over the years triggered by last year's Melbourne Cup. We have one or two new stories waiting to be shared when members return to class; and several members still to dip their toes into the water!

It was delightful to begin to learn about the lives and memories of our new members during the session, and wonderful to be back sharing treasured moments in a welcoming, supportive environment with others who are also telling their stories.

Our topic suggestions for new members in March are '*Failure*' or '*Success*'; and, for returning members, '*Covid 5 years on*' or, for this year's International Women's Day topic, '*Sisters*'. Details are included in the '[As Time Goes By](#)' Topic List for 2025

Bev Lee

Australian Shares & Stock Market

We welcomed Jeanette for her first meeting and thank all our members who phoned in their selections before the meeting. We now have 20 members of our group for 2025.

We began with excerpts from a Commsec video on the outlook for 2025 that gave a mildly positive outlook that would not see any huge variations. That said AI could still create some surprises along with Donald Trump executive orders that no one can foresee what MAGA (Make America Great Again) will cause to global economies and markets.

We had a quick review of a Watchlist of 2024 noting stocks such as EVN, GNG, QAN, RRL and SIG (Sigma) all had capital gains of more than 50% with Sigma gaining 160%. I will start a new listing for 2025 from member selections handed out and returned on our meeting day. A listing awaits members who were absent at our first meeting to complete a selection of 2 stocks, so we have a full coverage across the 11 sectors of the ASX.

Don't forget we will have a guest speaker - Declan Cassidy from BGC - Fixed Income Solutions for our meeting on Monday 3 March. Declan will present information on all types of "Bonds" as a form of investment and retirement income. The presentation will include handouts and on-screen information and time for questions starting at 2pm. This will likely run for 60 minutes. After 3pm we will review our selections on the Long Term, Monthly and Real Time Trading lists.

Malcolm Sanders

Be Connected – Android

Welcome to our past and new participants. It has been great getting to know one another.

In February we learnt how to connect to different Wi Fi and to 'Be Connected' which will be the source of our information for this course. We watched a very informative YouTube video on checking settings on our devices to ensure we are getting the best use of them. We particularly checked the permissions settings on our apps and removed any that were unnecessary and could cause us harm.

Next month we will use the 'Be Connected' website to learn more about notifications and also discover all the different apps that Google has available for us.

We continue to encourage class members to suggest topics and issues they would like help with.

Ruth Jelliff

Be Connected – Tech Advice

A reminder to members experiencing problems using their devices that one-to-one problem-solving appointments are available with Robyn Lukey M 0403 164 931 (Android Devices) and Jenny Sawyer M 0409 545 182 (Apple devices). Convenors and members volunteering in the community can book time with Bev Lee M 0478 607 838 for support in developing resources to assist with their courses or community work. Appointments are usually held in the small classroom (Room 2).

Robyn Lukey/Jenny Sawyer/Bev Lee

Birdwatching

Outing to Seven Creeks Walk at Euroa on Thursday 13 March

Our first meeting for 2025 will be held on Thursday 13th March. I like to start a bit earlier in the warmer months so we will **meet at 9am**, in the car park behind the Benalla Seniors Community Centre, and carpool for the drive to Euroa.

We will walk the southern section of the track along Seven Creeks, where there is shade along much of the walk. We should see a good range of birdlife, as the water is a great attraction in this hot dry summer. If we complete the circuit, we will have walked just under 4km. Please wear comfortable walking shoes, a hat and bring a water bottle. If you have binoculars, bring them along for a much better view of the birds around the track.

Note that outings are automatically cancelled on days of Total Fire Ban.

Kathy Costello (Mobile 0447 625755)

Brain Games

Quite a group gathered to exercise the brain cells. Some puzzles drew groans, and some caused foreheads to furrow, but new challenges are as useful as strength training for brain health.

The variety included rebus riddles, number pyramids, drawing mirror images, finding the shape or number that continues a sequence and even the physical challenge of touching the nose tip with one hand and the opposite shoulder with the other ... how quickly can you continue to swap hand positions before you forget which is which, or end up slapping yourself?

Elsbeth Maconachie

Bushwalking – Easy Walks

Wednesday March 5th: Euroa - Seven Creeks and Arboretum

Our first walk for 2025 will be a lovely stroll around Seven Creeks Circuit Trail (6.81km) in Euroa. After an early lunch, we will head off to the Euroa Arboretum for two short circuit walks (1.60km) to explore the park and discover the important work it is doing. BYO lunch, drinks etc.

Meet at the Seniors' carpark, Fawckner Drive, **at the earlier time of 9 am** to facilitate signing in at our first session of the year and arrange car-pooling.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting by phone (text preferred) or email to Bev at least 3 days before the day, on 0447193244

*Car sharing is usually available for a small contribution.

Wednesday April 2nd: Nagambie - Tahbilk Winery Walkabout

Glen Chessells will be leading April's outing in the grounds of Tahbilk Winery in Nagambie. This will be a pleasant walk along 6km of trails and boardwalks, past billabongs and river flats. The Wetlands support a wide variety of flora and fauna.

*A gold coin donation is requested at the entrance. Enclosed footwear must be worn. Bring water, headwear and binoculars (optional).

Lunch will take place at an eatery in Nagambie.

Meet at the U3A Car Park at 9:15am, for a 9:30am start.

*Notify walk leader Glen Chessells on 0431201077 of your attendance at least 3 days beforehand.

Beverly Thornell

Cards '500'

We welcomed back for our first game in February our players from the 2024 cohort and the new players joining us for 2025. We have increased our members number now to 32 players.

We have been fortunate to have been allocated Room 2 to accommodate any overflow. My thanks to Len Jeffers for that.

The game is traditionally played with 4 players but can accommodate combinations up to 6 players.

Room 1 gets a little squashy and noisy with five tables of 4 players. I am conscious of the Bridge players playing in the auditorium next door, so ask all our players to please keep the door closed and contain our excitement within Room 1.

Talking of excitement there was plenty of it at both our February meetings. Cards is all about fun and edging out that competitive spirit that resides in all of us. We have welcomed 11 new members this year including several husband/wife couples. I thank those members who have helped new members to understand the rules and how to play the game.

I ask you all too please advise me if you will be an apology to any of our two monthly games. As you can see, knowing the numbers affects how the room/s are set up.

Keep shuffling

Doug Smith

Car Torque

The first session of our new course Car Torque was held on Thursday 27 February with 16 enrolments and 11 attending.

And what a session it was with much discussion and laughter. It's amazing what blokes with cars get up to. The initial discussion was structured around what participants wanted from the Car Toques sessions. Responses included being with likeminded people, looking at unique cars and reminiscing about old cars like Holden and Ford.

Several members volunteered to speak about the best car they had owned.

Brent spoke about his 1978 Lancia that had a problem. It went too fast and after two accidents ended up a write off.

David spoke of the 30 plus cars he had owned; his favourites were a 1961 125 Fiat and a 2008 V6 Quattro Audi.

Ross told us of his 2012 Honda Civic, Alfa Romeo Giulietta, 308 GTI Peugeot and his latest love a 3.0L manual twin turbo Mk 2 BMW.

It was then time to inspect the feature car of the month parked under the U3A entrance portico.

The car is a 1957 two door left hand drive Chevrolet Bel Air Sport coupe owned by Car Torque member Colin McPhee. Colin gave a commentary on the car's history and answered members' questions.

This segment (Feature Car of the Month) will be a regular feature of our monthly meetings where members can have hands on viewing of these magnificent cars that live in garages around Benalla. Considerable discussion followed on the Victorian road toll and why it is still so high after the safety technology installed in modern cars.



A further discussion topic was the age of car tyres and how they deteriorate from oxidization causing rubber hardening. You can check the age of your tyres. Look for a 4-digit number on the external tyre wall - eg 3921 means manufactured on 39th week of 2021.

Keep revving those engines.

Doug Smith

PS: if you know of a special car in Benalla, please let me know!

Chat n' Chew

We had a great *Chat 'n Chew* at **The Royal** in February, well attended. It was wonderful to meet up with members attending for the first time, to catch up with the regulars and to share some of the latest gossip!

Our next *Chat 'n Chew* will be at the **Benalla Bowls Club** in Arundel Street on Friday 14 March, arriving at 11.45 for a 12 midday start. I

If you wish to attend, please contact me on 0427 376 991 by Tuesday 11th March.

Please keep ringing to let me know you are planning to attend, on my mobile for preference. Also, a reminder to include your name in the message, not just your phone number.

Lorraine Knox

Coin Collectors

Our first meeting for 2025 was held on 24th February with 11 members attending from an enrolment of 14. This is an increase on our 2024 membership.



A highlight of our meeting and of particular significance in the numismatic world was a well-known author and coin dealer joining our membership ranks. Greg McDonald has published 29 books on coins and banknotes.

The theme of the February meeting was for members to bring along their favourite coin and speak on why they chose this coin and how it was acquired.

The group was presented with a wide array of beautiful coins, some coloured, some in lovely presentation cases and many minted to celebrate significant events in history.

These included

- Princess Diana 1999 UK 5 pound (called a Cartwheel)
- St George 1797 Penny
- Paul McCartney 2024 UK 5 Pound
- Bronze Roman coin 4 AD
- Edward 7 Coronation 1902 UK commemorative coin
- English Groat 1843 - equivalent 4 pence: nicknamed a Joey
- Royal Australian Mint 1966 proof set – first proof set of decimal currency
- Perth Mint – famous battles of Australian history 1966 set of 5 cased coins
- Cartwheels - 1797 copper UK 2 pence and one pence:

What followed was a Q&A session with Greg where we learnt :-

- The 2 pence English Cartwheel coin unscrews to form two 1 pence pieces each weighing 1 oz. These coins are very unique. Eight of these placed end to end equals 1 foot.
- Peter Craft of Prospect Coins Blacktown NSW is a go to coin dealer for purchasing bulk coins.
- YouTube coin videos of interest include Purple Penny, Heritage Coins and Matt Thompson.

Keep noodling.

Doug Smith

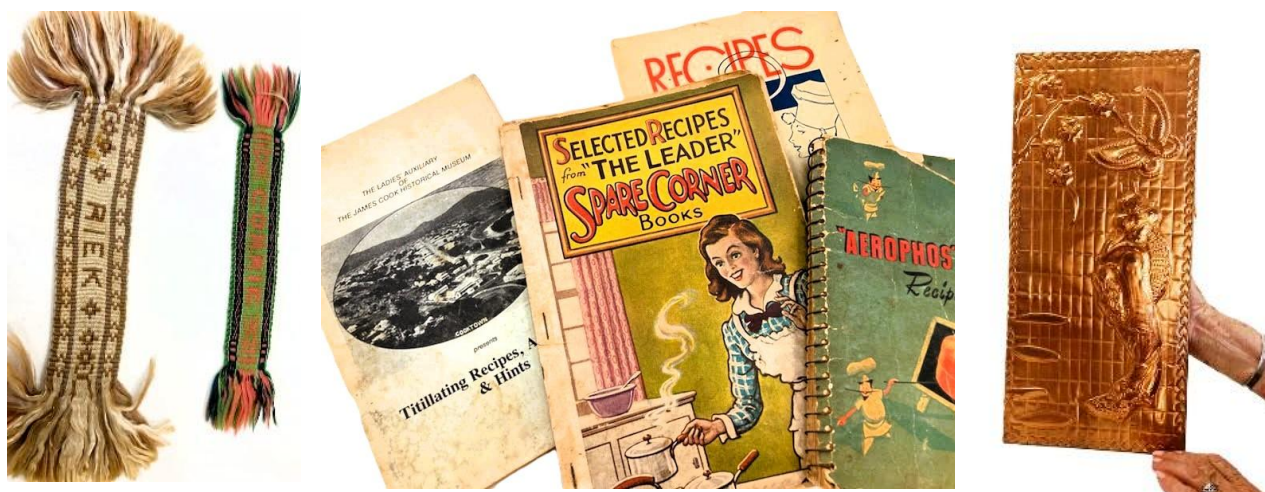
Collectors

After a recess in 2024, *Collectors* started again on February 11 with 13 collectors in attendance. Dorothy gave an overview of past topics with the theme for today being “*Something Special*”. Participants were asked to bring along something that was special to them. An eclectic display was amassed with fascinating stories about the items.

There was a copper work plaque made by a mother in the late 50’s – an intricate design. A small clear glass jug and a small, depression glass jug evoked memories of homemade mint sauce served with the Sunday roast – a tradition still carried on today in one household.

There was a collection of very old handmade bookmarks made by relatives. Two teapots were displayed – one in the shape of a tiger and the other an old English cottage (which had a matching toast rack). Two porcelain doll statues – one from Santa 70 years ago and another purchased in West Germany about 40 years ago. A brass camel with fine features; a pottery camel carrying salt and pepper shakers.

There were plenty of books including 1910's Sunday School prizes; "Black Beauty" with memories of being read by an aunt; a New Testament given to British school children in 1953 on the occasion of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; a collection of poems and writings of a late sister; and numerous very old cookery books. One intriguing title "Titillating Recipes, Anecdotes & Hints" compiled by The Ladies Auxiliary of The James Cook Historical Museum.



Please come and join us. We meet again on Tuesday, March 11 at 2.00pm. The theme is "Baby Photos"

Janet Gourley

Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques – Botanical

The first two classes in this new course have been amazing. Attendees are happy and enjoying exploring a new colour theory.



I'm looking forward to unique, great outcomes as the course progresses.

Stay Cool!

Margaret Zaal

Community Singing

A delightful morning of singing was made even better by a group of Coinda residents and staff joining us. It's such a great opportunity when they are so close and can walk down to the Hub. Always talented and enthusiastic, Kieran Smith was our leader and Brian Greed our musician. Thank you both.

Carmyl Winkler

Come and Learn Croquet

Our short course 'Come and Learn Croquet', commenced on Tuesday 25 February. We look forward to reading Convenor Judy Amery's report on this new 4-session program in our April newsletter!

Creative Writing

We had a great start to our new year of writing, with new authors also joining the class. As part of introducing the class, I always share two statements:

“You don’t have to be great to start. But you have to start to be great.” – Zig Ziglar

Everyone has a story in them; it is up to each of us to find our story and write it down.

Our challenge: Our challenge was not very easy but followed on from the second statement above. Everyone was asked to write down two ideas for a story. These may be used as prompts in the future, but the goal was to reinforce that we all have multiple stories we could write.

Discussion: One of the issues we all have is finding time to write. I shared some information from Isabel Allende. She has written 21 books. When she is ready to write a new book, she always starts on 8 January. There was also an idea from the Australian Writers’ Centre to think about the “to not do” list that takes our time away from writing. Out of this I suggested that we should allocate a specific day and time in the week to write. **Nothing** will be allowed to prevent writing at this time.

Some of our Stories: It was great to catch up on all the new stories. These are just a few of them.

Not to be Budged: Two budgies planning an escape which did not happen because it was too hot

Pie in the Sky: An elderly couple on a trip discover a quaint café and end up buying it

Pumpkins: A powerful story about the conflict between the mind and the physical capability for an elderly lady who could not do anything for herself.

Prompts: Our prompts for our March class are:

- Henry looked guilty.
- Bill looked up at the flag to check the wind.
- Helena reined her horse back to a walk. She needed time to think

Joy Shirley

Demystifying Psychology – Perception

We had a great discussion today about **perception**—how it influences the way we see the world, make decisions, and interact with others. We unpacked how a few of **our experiences, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds shape our views**, sometimes without us even realizing it.

A big focus was on how perceptions play out in social and professional settings—whether it’s hiring decisions, leadership roles, or everyday interactions. We talked about biases, snap judgments, and how easily perception can lead us astray.

We also looked at ways to challenge those biases, from being more self-aware to encouraging open conversations and using facts rather than assumptions.

Next session we’ll hear Dr. Shawn Andrews’ take on gender bias in leadership. This is sure to lead to more lively and interesting chat.

Regarding AI and Perceptions content - This course was designed by the convener and refined using AI. This report is the (almost) unedited result of asking AI to complete two tasks using the (convener designed) session powerpoint as a reference point. What do you think?

Jane Rushworth

Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group

Great news! The **Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group** has dropped its pre-requisites—now, everyone is welcome to join our lively conversations.

Born in 2021 amidst the early days of COVID-19, Zoom's rise, and a collective desire to stay connected during unprecedented isolation, our group began as a spontaneous experiment. Since then, it's flourished into a dynamic forum where we discuss whatever piques our interest since our last meeting.

While we've previously gathered at spots like the Northo Hotel and Ruby Blue Café, we now convene in **U3A Room 1**, a favourite venue in the bustling U3A calendar.

Please note, this isn't a therapy group—unless, of course, you find sharing great ideas therapeutic!

Come for the conversation, stay for the camaraderie. We look forward to welcoming you!

This month's discussion opener was an invitation to fill the gaps in the sentence “I thought/felt ... until ... happened, and now I think/feel ... “. However, in true discussion group style, we covered these topics instead:

- Women as perpetrators of violence
- Social Learning Theory - <https://www.mytutor.co.uk/answers/1864/A-Level/Psychology/How-does-the-social-learning-theory-explain-aggressive-behaviour/>
- Characteristics and impacts of “gaslighting” - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaslighting>
- Observations about “change” – being the only constant - over the last 60-90 years.
- The use of AI in, for example, ChatGPT in developing the course content for Demystifying Psychology – “Perceptions”.

Someone suggested that next month we discuss relationships and how to avoid the messy ones.

It remains to be seen what we actually do discuss .. no matter, it will be fun and insightful.

Jane Rushworth

Exercises for Fun

It is really encouraging to see so many of us with the intention of including Exercise into our lives.

Exercise is so beneficial to our health and well-being, and helps improve our fitness and strength, but most importantly, reduces the risk of falls.

Hope to see you every Monday, 9.30am start. Have fun.

Helen Jeffree

Exploring the Universe

How do we Explore the Universe at U3A?

On registration day I was continually asked that question. With some very welcome new members in February, it formed the basis of our first session.

The answer: We ‘explore’ with scientific text and videos that are mostly from International Space Agencies. They share their scientific discoveries through outreach programs, with material that is easily understood. It has already passed peer reviews and been published in scientific magazines. The science journalists rewrite astronomy, cosmology and astrophysics, so that we can understand them. We only use reliable material.

From the Oxford dictionary, the definition of Astronomy is: The branch of science which deals with celestial objects, space and the physical universe as a whole.

First, we have to understand the nature of light and colour. The secret is, ‘light moves.’ It travels at 300,000 kms /second. The light from the nearest star takes four years to reach us. Our nearest galactic neighbour is Andromeda. Its light has travelled 2.5 million years to reach Earth. We watched, ‘A Celestial Tour. The journey of light.’

When we look through a telescope we are looking back into the past. Observatories with powerful telescopes, including those in space, can see back to almost the beginning of the universe as we know it. But our eyes have evolved to see only the colour from our sunlight. There are forms of light other than the visible light we see. Infrared telescopes can see through dust and gas and bring us information of the universe.

‘How the JWST sees back in time.’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeRtcJi3V38>

The next item is spectroscopy. Every natural element in the universe has a characteristic fingerprint of light and colour that can tell us the properties of stars, planets and interstellar gasses, their mass, temperature and distance. Modern astronomy is built on the observations of spectroscopy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1mpHBAXh1c

Here at U3A, we also add some space engineering! A few rockets, spacecraft and our wonderful telescopes to add to our understanding

Bev Morton

Exploring Writing Children’s Books

The U3A Writing Children's Books group gathered on Friday, the 7th, to begin an exciting new year of creativity and storytelling. The key focus of the session was the sharing of ideas for each member's individual project. This open discussion provided an opportunity for valuable feedback, fresh inspiration, and encouragement as members developed their unique story concepts.

In addition to idea sharing, the session covered essential storytelling techniques. Participants engaged in brainstorming exercises to generate compelling story ideas and explored the fundamentals of character development. A key part of this discussion was character profile writing, which helps bring depth and

personality to fictional characters. The group also examined story development techniques and discussed how storyboards can be a useful tool in structuring and planning narratives. Each member was provided with practical tools and strategies to help organise and refine their story ideas.

For this month's project, participants will focus on developing a detailed character profile and completing a storyboard to map out their story structure. These exercises will help bring their ideas to life and set a strong foundation for writing.

Looking ahead, the next session will explore the process of generating book illustrations, adding a visual dimension to these exciting new stories.

Peter Thompson

Family Research – Getting Started

Our first group session for the year was well attended. It was a great opportunity to meet other family tree enthusiasts and learn how they became interested in researching their family.

We discussed some of the online resources that can be useful tools when researching. After setting up a pedigree chart on paper, we explored some of the available options for creating family trees online. Group members were keen to book their one-on-one session to help them get started on their family trees.

Our group session on March 17th will be divided into two parts, with time allocated for members to try out new skills on their own device (laptop, iPad or phone).

The first part will be learning how to search the Births, Deaths and Marriages websites. We will explore the information that can be discovered when you purchase these certificates and how you can gather extra family information when searching online.

The second part of the session will focus on helpful skills when using ancestry.com.au. In March we will be focusing on using and verifying Hints.

Deb Saunders

Film Discussion Group

A new year and new films to discuss. We spent time talking about what type of films we enjoy. This was varied, but the least popular was Science Fiction. There were a few films that stood out either as worth seeing or not recommended.

Conclave: When Cardinal Lawrence is tasked with leading one of the world's most secretive and ancient events, selecting a new Pope, he finds himself at the centre of a conspiracy that could shake the very foundation of the Catholic Church. An interesting film that gave a picture of the process for electing a new pope. It also showed there are no organisations clear of factions and politics. There were scenes that showed the differences in the roles of the nuns compared to that of the cardinals brought together for the election of the new pope. Good performances and interesting settings. We rated it as 4.5/5.

We Live in Time: A talented chef and a recent divorcée fall in love and build the home and family they've always dreamed of, until a painful truth puts their love story to the test. They met when he is knocked over by Almut crossing the road. She is the chef and has won competitions. When she is diagnosed with a return of cancer, she wants to enter the top European competition before she dies. The end is quite poignant with a gentler coverage of her departure than the traditional bed side farewell. This was rated as 3.5/5.

Another film discussed was not rated very highly. **Companion:** Two couples visit the property of a Russian billionaire along with his mistress. His death sets off a chain of events for Iris and her friends during the weekend trip to his lakeside estate. It appears during the film that Iris and Patrick are in fact robots whose personality, actions and memories can be controlled by a phone app. During the film everyone is killed except for Iris. Sophie Thatcher as Iris does a good job of mixing robotic and human actions and emotions. Otherwise, a film that may be more for people interested in the technologies of robotics and Artificial Intelligence. This was rated as 2.5/5.

Joy Shirley

French at the Table

We held our first session on Saturday 1st March. I hope those who attended enjoyed the session, where we discussed how, where and when we had learnt French; our holidays and our time spent in France. We also drooled over thoughts of French patisseries and foods at the abundant markets all over France.

We will consider, on approval from U3A, moving back to a 12.30pm lunchtime spot and using the smaller room. This may mean running two sessions, one on the first Saturday and one on the third Saturday with half the group at each time slot. This will allow us to share a sandwich, a simple lunch or a decadent cake!! I am happy to do both sessions with a smaller group. I'll alert each one who has enrolled and hopefully by April we can slot in a fixed time. Merci,

Carole Ruta

Garden Appreciation

What a lovely morning we had in late February at Lyn Tanner's Garden, with 53 attendees! We enjoyed a beautiful morning tea in a peaceful garden setting, surrounded by stunning views over the lake and large, shady trees. It was so cool and relaxing—we could have stayed there all morning!

Next, we visited Tony Smith's front garden, which featured beautiful trees and plants. Our third stop was Kathie and Brian Wragg's garden. This lovely, spacious garden had fantastic views of the lake, plenty of trees, and well-maintained garden beds.

A big thank you to all the Mitchell Street garden owners for sharing their beautiful spaces with us!



We wrapped up the day with an enjoyable lunch at the Royal Hotel, where the conversation continued. It was wonderful to meet our new members and welcome back familiar faces—a great way to start the year with happy company!

Bus Trip to Blue Lotus Water Gardens Our bus trip to the Blue Lotus Water Gardens on Thursday 27th March costs \$74, which includes bus travel, entry, lunch, tea, and coffee.

Payment is due before March 12th. Money can be left at RedB4 Bookshop (next to Hide Bakery in Bridge Street). Please place it in an envelope marked "U3A Garden Appreciation" with your name and phone number.

We meet at Benalla Rose Garden (near the Royal Hotel, Benalla) at 7:45 AM. Our numbers are a bit low, so if you know anyone who may like to attend, please let me know.

Gwen Turner 0438 627 010 (Text) or gwenturner243@gmail.com.

Garden Team

After such a swelter of steamy heat, Garden Team called off the February 10th session. Despite the relative cool of a 31° day, we decided we'd concentrate on watering the home patch and gather our energy for a heartier start in March.

Elsbeth Maconachie

German

The German group has settled in well. We started with the basics to review our learning over the last few years. Next month we will delve a little more into the intricacies of the German language

Horst Gunther

Let's Talk Books

It was great to see everyone back to *Let's Talk Books* for 2025. A big welcome to Rex Nankervis and Val Harris with Dianne McKinlay returning to our ranks.

We began with *The Benevolent Society of ill Mannered Ladies* by Alison Goodman, a High society Regency London feminist historical mystery series, recommended to our reader and quite enjoyed. *Mr. Lear, a Life of Art and Nonsense* by Jenny Uglow, a biography of renowned English artist, musician, author and poet best known for his poem 'The Owl and the Pussycat'. Richard Osman's latest offering 'We Solve Murders' takes a different path to his previous books, you either like his writing or you don't. Our reader and several others have enjoyed *Arcadia* by Di Morrissey, we commented on how well she researches her stories. A new author to our group *Faye Lockwood*, wrote *A Sister's Deception* - tragedy strikes a family and loyalties betrayed. Her second book *Heavens Homestead – The Body Under Barooga Bridge* was set in and around Cobram/Barooga. *The Rust Red Land* by Robin Bishop brings to life the injustices faced by women in the 1800 and 1900's. Two books enjoyed were *Dark Tides* by Phillipa Gregory and *The Station Master's Cottage* by Phillipa Nefrie Clark, who gave an author's talk at the Benalla Library. A fossick through a secondhand bookshop found two books with the same title - *In the Margins* by Gail Holmes is a historical novel set in 1647 telling the story of book collector Frances Wolfreston, the second book *In the Margins: On the Pleasures of Reading and Writing* by Elena Ferrante, the well-known Italian author. This is a book of essays published by Elena based on a series of lectures presented in the University of Bologna in 2011. Enjoyed was *Framed* by John Grisham and Jim McCloskey. A DVD *The Professor and the Mad Man* by Simon Winchester a tale of madness and genius at the heart of the Oxford Dictionary. *The Last Life Boat* by Hazel Gaynor was inspired by the true story of a boatload of children torpedoed by a Nazi U-boat taking them to safety in Canada and Australia. *Lives of the Wives: 5 Literary Marriages* by Carmela Ciuraru; speaks for itself, *Blue Ribbons Bitter Bread, the Life of Joice Nankivell Loch* by Susanna DeVries, an historical novel. Also enjoyed was *The Children Who Fought Hitler*, a true documentary of a heroic battle fought by children of the British Memorial School. *The Hidden Beauty* by Lucinda Edmonds, before she became Lucinda Ryly. Author John Safran wrote *Squat* of his time squatting in the house of American Kanye West. *Truly, Madly Guilty* by Liane Moriarty was enjoyed. Sharing a table over a coffee, our reader held a conversation with first time author Clayton Dealy, who has written and published *Timber Floats*, a portrayal of a year in the life of two emotionally displaced individuals. He then presented her with a copy of his book. *Agatha Christie: A very Elusive Woman* by Lucy Worsley was intriguing, as was *Three Times a Countess: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Raine Spencer* by Tina Gaudion. What an extraordinary woman! Also enjoyed over the holiday period, *The Charleston Scandal* by Pamela Hart; *The Golden Thread* by Tea Cooper; *Out of Nowhere* by Fleur McDonald and *Her Father's Daughter* by Bonnie Henderson. What a vast range of topics and books we have read. See you all next month

Geraldine McCorkell

Life Ball

Members who selected Lifeball as a program for 2025 will be disappointed to hear that we are having to defer Lifeball until further notice due to the lack of a convenor. It will not commence on Monday 3rd March. We extend our apologies for the situation. On Enrolment Day we were hopeful that a Convenor would be found. However, no one has volunteered to be the Convenor of Lifeball, so unfortunately it cannot go ahead.

U3A Program Committee

Mahjong



Mahjong is a word in Chinese that is very close to sparrow. As we "Twitter" the tiles (mix them up), that is just what the sound makes.

With 31 participants we have made amazing progress after just a brief start.

I am very grateful to Margaret Jenkins and Anne Nelson for their assistance in getting the course underway.

My thanks to Heather Rogers and Jane Rushworth for their support.

Janice Ellis' contribution to the booklets for everyone is really appreciated too. My thanks to Jenny Monger and the use of the small tables.

I am looking forward to lots of fun as everyone relaxes into the game.



Kaye Blore

Meet and Mingle

At our first Meet and Mingle for 2025, *President Margaret Jenkins* presented an update on U3A activities including enrolments for 2025. The latest figures have reached 400 and are very likely to surpass the 2024 record of 420. This included 66 people registering for the first time. However, accommodation is very tight at the Benalla Seniors Community Centre. Investigations are underway to see if this can be improved.

Margaret said our membership is growing steadily, particularly with the offer this year of nine new courses including American History, Car Torque, Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques - Botanical, Come and Learn Croquet, Exploring Writing Children's Books, French at the Table, Mahjong and Train.

The Inland Rail Project will be visiting U3A on Tuesday 4th March at 10.00am to update members on the progress of the Project.

Margaret introduced Benalla Council visitors to the meeting who spoke about the upcoming 2026/2029 Strategic Council Plan and the L to P program.

Jane Archbold from Council and *Ford Davis* of 90 Mile Consulting spoke about encouraging input from the community on what they would like to include in the Council Plan. Jane said The Council Plan is the foundation for everything we do. It is our four-year roadmap for shaping the future of Benalla Rural City. This plan identifies key priorities across areas like community wellbeing, liveability, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and strong leadership.

There was also much discussion on what had been achieved in the four-year life of the current plan. The session was very engaging with much audience input. Jane left several pamphlets and encouraged members to fill out a questionnaire either online or in hard copy.



Natalie Phillips and *Yvonne Barrow* from the Council spoke about their involvement in the L to P Program sponsored by TAC and managed by Benalla Council. Natalie said the Program had been running in Benalla for 15 years and allowed 230 people to receive a driving license. The Program has been very successful to date but relied on volunteer drivers to devote around 1 hour per week. There are currently 30 volunteer drivers, three L/P cars and a long waiting list of people wanting to join the Program to be able to get a license. One of our members spoke about the rewarding experience of being a volunteer driver for the Program. Natalie encouraged anyone interested to contact her at Council.

The next Meet and Mingle is on **Wednesday 19th March** and will include our **Annual General Meeting**. **Guest speaker Bill Sykes** will talk on farming in Northern India.

Doug Smith, Acting Publicity Officer

Music Appreciation

“Never let truth get in the way of a good story”. So said Mark Twain, supposedly, whose writings often blurred the lines between truth and fiction. That axiom was well in vogue long before Mark Twain. The librettists for Verdi’s opera Nabucco and Rossini’s La Cenerentola both took liberties with the original story, embellishing or altering characters or circumstances to make their narratives more compelling or entertaining. Happily, in both cases their actions didn’t affect the overtures to either, which introduced each of our February sessions. Franz Schubert was also bitten by the same bug when he set to music a poem called “The Trout”. Although the poem is an analogy (of a fisherman using underhand tactics to capture a fish) warning young women to be wary of advances made by men; Schubert, having no time for such moralism, left out the all-important last verse making his song more about annoyance at the trickery used to catch the fish. Again, happily, the alteration of the story didn’t get in the way of the music when Schubert wrote his Quintet in A major for which his famous song “Die Forelle” (“The Trout”) became the inspiration. Prokofiev was tempted to make some modification to the Romeo and Juliet story, but, ultimately, thought the better of interfering with Shakespeare. Because, however, the premiere of his ballet of the play was delayed by intrigue and skullduggery, he extracted three suites from his composition each of which has the events of the story out of sequence. And even those suites vary today according to the whim or preference of orchestra conductors. No such liberties were taken by Elgar when he responded to a commission to compose a violin concerto. Although it was more than a bit long for a concerto, the work takes us on an extended tour of Elgar’s soul which has been described as “all pure, unaffected music”. “Music of the soul” is descriptive also of Brahms’ Horn Trio. Composed in the picturesque seclusion of Germany’s Black Forest as Brahms mourned the death of his mother, the work is a combination of adventure, nostalgia, and lament. Such was the music which opened our year 2025. Links to the notes and the recordings played are posted on our website page.

Bill Squire

Page Turners Book Group

Small Things Like These and **Grace Notes** were discussed at February’s gathering of page turners.

Small Things Like These is positive book about a coal vendor who rescued a young woman confined to a coal cellar in the local Magdalen Laundry run by catholic nuns. The punishments and cruelties of these institutions in the 1900s has been well documented in other books and TV exposés. Clair Keegan explored the compassion of one man who opposed this treatment of women and rescued the girl, taking her into his own family home. Well written and thought provoking.

Grace Notes by comparison was a joyous exploration of the lives of two teenagers during the covid lockdowns in Melbourne. Clare, a year 10 talented violinist and James Crux, a year 12 street artist, meet by chance when they sneak out to defy the monotonous boredom of lockdown. Karen Comer captures the aspirations, energy and speech of her characters as they negotiate aspects of their liberty with their parents and forge ahead to achieve their own dreams of their futures.

Both books are well worth a read.

Meg Dillon

Patchwork and Craft

It is good to be back together again for 2025 and to welcome new members to our group. Once again, lovely work on show. Some of you have been very productive over the holidays.

Many thanks to Corrie for storing our Fabric at her home and almost getting it down to an amount which will fit in our cupboard. Finally, well done, everyone, for all the charity work completed in the past 12 months!

Dorothy Webber

Photography

We had a great turnout for our first session of the year! We talked about the [Photography](#) page on the U3A website, where everyone can see what we’ve done over the past couple of years. Hopefully, it will be helpful for improving your photos.

We also discussed all the photos that were sent in—including one from me for a change! I wanted to show that you don’t need a fancy camera to do well in a photo competition. There were some interesting comments about the images submitted, which included:



I also gave a quick demo of some basic menu options in GIMP, a free photo editing app for PC. I recently learned it's also available for smartphones!

Apologies for running slightly over time today—I hope everyone learned something useful.

Just a reminder: I've had to cancel the March session due to personal commitments, but I'll see you all in April. I'll send out an email reminder before then.

Rene Martens

Play Reading

Another year of Play Reading and everyone was ready. It was a pleasure to welcome new members to the class.

Our play for February was *"Enchanted April"* by Matthew Barber (from a novel by Elizabeth Von Arnim). The novel has also been made into films.

Sweet-natured Lotty Wilton is suffering depression from the bleak London winter, and from an oppressive relationship with her pompous solicitor husband. When she sees an advertisement in the paper to rent a castle in Italy for the month of April, an idyllic spot "for those who appreciate wisteria and sunshine," she jumps at the chance to escape her downtrodden existence. Sensing an instant kinship with fellow housewife Rose Arnott, a severely angelic woman with sorrows of her own, Lotty persuades her along on the adventure. Seeking to reduce the costs, the two ladies find Caroline Bramble, a beautiful and exhausted socialite, and Mrs. Graves, an overbearing widow, to round out the party. As the month passes, sun-drenched San Salvatore works its magic on each sad and hardened heart, healing grief and bringing hope. And with the arrival of two chastened husbands and one attractive young artist, romance blooms again. This is a gentle and romantic comedy of manners, against the backdrop of a country still reeling from World War I.

With the play taking place in April, and the enchantment found, the title gives a good introduction to the play's plot. It addresses themes such as self-fulfilment, love, the intrinsic value of the natural world, and the texture of memory. The characters are all different. They are beautifully drawn, showing the contrasts but how the environment transforms each of them, particularly the overbearing Mrs Graves.

Looking at the play as a piece of literature, it meets many of the requirements – it provides an interesting start with a story about a walking stick growing into an acacia tree, introducing the era, provides a picture of how everyone grows but includes some backstory, and wraps up with the changes in everyone and a repeat of the walking stick story, coming full circle.

An enjoyable play with humour and romance as well as some serious points.

Our play for March is *The Odd Couple* (female version) by Neil Simon. There are two male roles (6 women and 2 men in the cast) so it should work well.

Joy Shirley

Politics and Current Affairs

There will be several interesting developments occurring this year. We will have a Federal Election, and we may have a State Election. The Benalla Council will be in session.

We will attempt over the next few months to examine each party's policies in detail. We will try and ascertain what differences there may be between the various parties and investigate policy applying to us in particular.

We spent time in February exploring Greens Policy on the Greens Website. The website is quite extensive and contains several points of intense interest. Some policies appear to be in contradiction with what could be perceived as local public opinion.

A lot of time is taken up with interesting conversation. This is always welcome.

Neville Gibb

Singing for Fun

Singing for Fun welcomed six new members in 2025 as well as our loyal members from last year.

During February we had Wendy as a Leader, and she has done an excellent job. The first week she chose songs from around the world, whilst on the second Thursday she chose songs with Love as a theme as it was the day before Valentine's Day. Well done Wendy.

We also had Kieran, Carmyl and Margaret as Leaders during February. We enjoyed the rounds Carmyl is keen on. What could be better than singing 'Kookaburra sits in an old gum tree' in four parts, and all ending at the same time!

Kieran introduced us to a new Irish song 'The fields of Athenry' which several members seemed to know. Thank you for printing out the words of this song Kieran and introducing it to us all.

Thank you to Gwen for playing the piano for us on the first two Thursdays, and for Deb for playing on the third Thursday.

Singing has a very caring group of people and thank you to those members who are bringing other members because of whatever reason. It gives so much joy to those whom you are bringing to participate in our singing.

The next Singing for Fun will be on Thursday 6th March at 10am in the Hub at Cooina.

Margaret Jenkins



Singing for Fun going strong after 20 years

At 94 years old, Benalla's Joyce Borschmann can still raise a note and sing her heart out. Joyce, a well-known Benalla local, is celebrating the 20th year of U3A's 'Singing for Fun' group.

The popular program now operates out of the Cooina Hub, but it wasn't always that way.

"Walking around the lake in early 2006, Margaret Walsh and I were discussing how U3A was flourishing in Benalla," Joyce said. "I said, but there's no singing group."

Margaret told Joyce she would look for a conductor, and asked Joyce if she would be willing to help out by organising the group.

The conductor that Margaret found was Charmaie Morley, and Joyce rang around her friends to see who could help.

"The Soroptimists donated \$150 for music," Joyce said. "The Rotarians donated \$2000 for an electric piano." Joyce arranged the music, found a venue at her friend Helen Mitchell's home, organised morning tea and arranged to collect \$3 a week from participants, to cover expenses.

She also arranged an ensemble of musicians including Gwen Barnes, Rae Washbrook and Enid Gipp.

Faith Hicks then came on board as a second conductor, sharing the role.

"Patsy Bollard was one of the first enthusiastic singers to sign up," Joyce said.

After a year at Helen's, the group moved to the CWA Hall, before relocating to the chapel at Cooina.

Later, the group would move to Benalla's Baptist church, at which point Margaret Merriman joined the leaders' team.

However, a little later, U3A received a grant with the proviso it moved into Room 1 at the Senior Citizens' Centre.

After 15 years, Joyce passed the torch to Margaret Jenkins.

Following COVID, the group moved back to Cooina, utilising its hub.

Singing for Fun has performed at Rotary, U3A events, at Bob Borschmann's funeral, and held concerts for aged care residents.

"This is all part of the joy of sharing Singing for Fun with the Benalla community," Joyce said.

Singing for Fun meets on the first, second and third Thursday of each month at 10am until noon at the Cooina Hub.

Founder of Benalla U3A group Singing for Fun, Joyce Borschmann. Photo: Contributed



It was wonderful to see this article in the Ensign this month. Based on a story written recently by Carmyl Winkler in collaboration with Joyce Borschmann and skilfully prepared for pre-publication by acting Publicity Officer Doug Smith, it led to lots of reminiscing and discussion in the 'Singing for Fun' community. If you would like to read the original story, 'The Wandering Minstrels', it's on the 'News' page on the website. Thank you to Carmyl, Joyce and Doug for your efforts in getting this story to press.

Bev Lee, 'As Time Goes By' Convenor/Website Manager

Spanish

What a pleasant surprise to arrive at a room full of fun and energetic people with lots of curiosity for both Spanish and my country, Columbia. It is a challenge to teach such a large group, however I see that the energy is also greater, inspiring me to make the class more enticing for a diverse audience. Today, for example, we learned about each other's professions – engineers, teachers, medical scientists, secretaries, paramedics, farmers, and more - but of course, todos retirados!

It's going to be a very interesting year; one I'm looking forward to.

Alejandro Diaz

Sustainability / Stock and Land

Sustainability got off to a good start at our first session in February, with much sustainability related news to catch up on after the summer break.

Neville facilitated the second session in my absence, starting with a discussion of the Los Angeles fires and the claims that water was not diverted from Northern California when it should have been. Much discussion ensued. Moving on to Australian matters, a recent investigation showing that, contrary to expectation Dingoes are still more or less purebred, also led to much discussion. It was thought that Dingo genes had

been diluted by wild dogs. Apparently not. This leads to the question - should we be culling dingoes? A 4-Corners programme concerning Wind Turbines and the problems getting the wider population to accept them also featured. Thanks, Neville, for reporting back on the session.

On Friday 7 March, Charlie is taking us on an excursion to Winton Wetlands to see the work going on towards rehabilitating the wetlands and consider how different environments are managed there. We will drive around a circuit not normally open to the public, looking at the different kinds of environments, different soils, and more. Anyone interested in farming should find it equally interesting. Meet in the car park at 10 am for car-pooling. Bring a water bottle and a hat.

With our joint coverage of *Stock and Land* this year, (we are holding the fort until a new convenor is found for *Stock and Land*), sessions and excursions which link sustainability and agriculture will feature. Looking forward –we have an excursion planned in May to the property 12 km south of Benalla managed by Mark Foletta. Mark received the 2023 Award for Excellence in Diversification and Sustainability. Keep an eye on upcoming newsletter reports for further details.

John Lane, Neville Gibb and Charlie Corser

Tech Talks

At our February meeting we discussed the potential impact of Chat GPT and how it virtually rewrote a short attempt at combining Quantum Theory with Nano Time and made it comprehensible. We started our meeting discussing a new addition to the AI world with the announcement that China has released a new AI app - DeepSeek. It is said to take less data to use than Chat GPT. When asked if any of the U3A members present would be using this new app from China no one put up their hand.

Staying on the topic of China, we watched a video of Jeremy Clarkson extolling the virtues of China's new road system. Clarkson is usually a cynical character with nothing much good to say about any country except the UK, but he appeared virtually gob smacked at the advances made in road transport in China and how it compares with the lack of Road Technology in the UK.

We brought ourselves up to date on the progress of Snowy Mountains Two. The scheme has had many problems and is both behind time and experiencing large cost increases - but thankfully is still progressing. When it is finished it will be worth whatever the cost because it will transform the renewable energy situation for the whole of Australia.

Lithium is an element crucial to the development and manufacture of Electric Batteries. Lithium is not an easy thing to mine. A massive area encompassing Chile Bolivia and Argentina is where most of the world's supply of Lithium comes from and it is rumoured that both China and Russia are interested in investing in the industry. Australia also mines Lithium and both South America and Australia share the same environmental problems mining in areas with an indigenous history.

We finished by watching a video predicting how different things will be in 50 years. This predicted a number of developments. Quantum computers should be able to transform problem solving. AI should be able to assist in diagnosing medical symptoms. AI will speed up genetic exploration. These are just a few. The possibilities are endless.

It is worth noting that the BBC made some 50-year predictions in the early 70's through their TV show *Tomorrows World*. These can be seen on YouTube. Unfortunately, most of these are well off the mark. We have progressed well in advance of what they predicted and the technologies they thought might eventuate are extremely unsophisticated by today's standards.

Neville Gibb

Train Buffs

Our new course, *Train Buffs*, had a great start last Friday, with 17 members attending the first session. It was nice to see a good mix of members, including several female 'train buffs', actively taking part in the discussions.

We began with introductions, where everyone shared their railway interests and backgrounds, and we gathered ideas for future activities.

The session ended with a short video on the steam-hauled *Spirit of Progress*, followed by a discussion.

Athol Graham

Ukes4Fun

The *Getting Started* group have achieved a lot in the short time they have been learning. Thank you, Trish Rogash, for your support with our beginning ukulele players.

The *Just Jamming* group, pictured in February, has continued where it left off in 2024. We're aiming to expand our repertoire and to practise more of our songs without music. Each week we include a new song suggested by a member - in the picture below we're playing Elvis's 'I just want to be your Teddy Bear'!



Heather Wallace

Wine Appreciation

The first outing for the year reminded Carolyn and I why we took on the role of Convenor. A positive and happy group of people always up for a chat and out to enjoy themselves.

Baileys provided a great setting with lots of history in February. Varley Bailey purchased the land in 1870 and produced the first wine in 1880, the year they hanged poor Ned. Some of the buildings date back to those early days and there are some interesting museum pieces in the Tasting area. Everyone seemed to enjoy the various wines on offer and several of the group left with boxes of wine in hand.



The venue at the Mokoan Hub is spacious with great views over Lake Mokoan. Everyone seemed to enjoy their meal and there was lots of conversation.

Our next outing is planned for Friday 28 March – note the change of date from the original schedule. We will be visiting **John Gehrig Wines** at Oxley, with wine tasting from about 11 am and a meal provided on site for \$20 per head. The venue is in a beautiful setting and lunch will be on the deck overlooking the gardens. The Menu offered is

Beef Lasagne *or* Mushroom & Leek Risotto
with two types of salad
Green Salad and Pumpkin and Pine Nut Spinach Salad
House made Bread

Carolyn and Garry Smith

Other news -

Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members

A reminder that our Annual General Meeting will be held at 10 am on Wednesday 19th March 2025 in the Auditorium of the Benalla Seniors Community Centre. Guest speaker will be Bill Sykes who is going to talk about Agriculture in Northern India.

There will be election of U3A Office Bearers and the U3A Committee for the 2025-2026 year. Members may nominate for any of these positions.

A **Nomination Form** is included with this Newsletter and available as a link on the website's [Our U3A](#) page. Members considering nominating may find the following information useful.

U3A Benalla, the Model Rules and Elected Positions and Committee Structure

Last AGM U3A Benalla changed from having a constitution to using [Model Rules for an Incorporated Association](#) as set out by Consumer Affairs Victoria using the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

There are 77 Regulations set out in these Model Rules.

In these Model Rules it says that the Composition of the Committee shall consist of a President and a Vice-President and a Secretary and a Treasurer and up to 8 ordinary members of the Committee elected by the Members. In the old Constitution there was a position reserved on the Committee for the immediate Past President. There is no such position on the Committee in the Model Rules.

There are certain members who have undertaken specific roles for the benefit of U3A Benalla, and it is beneficial for U3A Benalla for the people who are undertaking these specific roles to be on the Committee. Examples here are Publicity Officer, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Website Manager.

Which leaves us with four elected members on the U3A Benalla Committee. In past years we have seen Committee members who have stayed on the Committee for 5 years or more. But times are changing. U3A Benalla last year had 420 members, and each of these members has the opportunity to nominate for either President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or a committee position if they wish to do so.

If current members of the Committee wish to nominate for the position of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or for the Committee, they have the right to do so. There are provisions if there are more nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or for the Committee than there are positions available that elections can and will be held at the AGM.

If you wish to discuss any of the above, contact me at 0424 454 313 margaretjenkins@bigpond.com.

Margaret Jenkins

Office Volunteer Thanks

Thank you to the volunteers who kept the office open on Wednesday mornings for late enrolments to 26th February, including Heather Wallace and our amazing Membership Officer, Len Jeffers.



Please note that enrolments are accepted throughout the year – for information go to the [Join Us](#) page on the website - <https://u3abenalla.weebly.com/join-us.html>

WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

Saturday, 1 March

- 12:00 Spanish
- 14:30 French at the Table

Monday, 3 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Art Appreciation - Danny Lacy
- 10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
- 11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 Australian Stocks and Share Market - 'Bonds'
- 14:00 Let's Talk Books

Tuesday, 4 March

- 09:00 Come and Learn Croquet
- 10:00 Benalla Railway Station Design Update
- 10:00 Page Turners - 'Feast' by Emily O'Grady
- 12:15 German
- 14:00 American History

Wednesday, 5 March

- 09:00 Easywalks - Seven Creeks Walk and Arboretum
- 09:30 Play Reading – 'The Odd Couple' by Neil Simon
- 13:30 A Taste of Art
- 14:00 Cards '500'

Thursday, 6 March

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Be Connected - Android
- 13:00 Patchwork and Craft

Friday, 7 March

- 10:00 Sustainability - Winton Wetlands Excursion
- 14:00 Exploring Writing Children's Books

Saturday, 8 March

- 12:00 Spanish

Monday, 10 March – to be confirmed

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
- 11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 Creative Writing
- 14:00 Garden Team

Tuesday, 11 March

- 09:00 Come and Learn Croquet
- 10:00 Politics and Current Affairs
- 10:00 Helen Haines MP --Meeting with Committee
- 11:00 Politics - Guest Helen Haines, Member for Indi
- 12:15 German
- 14:00 Collectors - 'Baby Photos'
- 14:00 Tech Talks (Room 2)

Wednesday, 12 March

- 10:00 Colour Mixing & Watercolour Techniques #1
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 13:00 Colour Mixing & Watercolour Techniques #2
- 14:00 Film Discussion Group

Thursday, 13 March

- 09:00 Birdwatching - Seven Creeks Walk, Euroa
- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Be Connected - Android

Friday, 14 March

- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 11:45 Chat 'n Chew - Benalla Bowls Club
- 13:00 Ukes4Fun - Drop In
- 14:30 Convenors' Afternoon Tea

Saturday, 15 March

- 12:00 Spanish

Monday, 17 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
- 11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 13:30 Family Research - Getting Started (Rm 2)
- 14:00 As Time Goes By - Memoir Writing

Tuesday, 18 March

- 09:00 Come and Learn Croquet
- 10:00 Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group
- 12:15 German
- 14:00 Exploring the Universe

Wednesday, 19 March

- 10:00 AGM/Meet & Mingle - Speaker - Bill Sykes
- 13:30 A Taste of Art
- 14:00 Cards '500'

Thursday, 20 March

- 10:00 Demystifying Psychology - Perception
- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 13:00 Patchwork and Craft

Friday, 21 March

- 10:00 Sustainability/Stock and Land
- 14:00 Train Buffs

Saturday, 22 March

- 12:00 Spanish

Monday, 24 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
- 11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 13:00 Family Research - Getting Started Appts (Rm 2)
- 14:00 Coin Collectors

Tuesday, 25 March

- 10:00 Politics & Current Affairs
- 12:15 German
- 13:00 Family Research - Getting Started Appts (Rm 2)
- 14:00 Brain Games

Wednesday, 26 March – Newsletter Reports Due

- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 10:00 Colour Mixing & Watercolour Techniques #1
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 13:00 Colour Mixing & Watercolour Techniques #2

Thursday, 27 March

- 07:45 Garden Appr'n--Blue Lotus Water Gardens
- 10:00 Community Singing
- 14:00 Car Torque

Friday, 28 March

- 10:00 Wine Appreciation - John Gehrig Wines, Oxley
- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 13:00 Ukes4Fun - Drop In

Saturday, 28 March

- 12:00 Spanish

Monday, 31 March

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
- 11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 14:00 Garden Team



BENALLA
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

U3A Benalla Inc A0036654P

Nomination Form
2025 Executive Positions & Committee

Person Nominated _____

Proposed Role _____
(President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Committee Member)

Proposer's Name _____

Signature _____

Secunder's Name _____

Signature _____

Nominee I am currently a financial member of U3A Benalla Inc. and accept nomination for this position.

Address _____

Telephone _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Return to the Secretary, U3A Benalla Inc. P O Box 674, Benalla, 3672 or
Red B4 Bookshop (next to Hide's Bakery) by Thursday 13th March 2025.