



Benalla and District Inc. Newsletter - November 2016

P O Box 674, Benalla 3672
Editor: Freida Andrews 5765 2476
fmandrews46@gmail.com
Next newsletter deadline – midday **Monday 2nd January**
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President: Terry Case 5762 1700
case.terence@gmail.com
Secretary: Lorraine Knox 5762 1531
lorraine.knox@bigpond.com
Web site: <http://u3abenalla.weebly.com>

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

The November Meet & Mingle gave Dorothy’s Patchwork group and Joyce’s Singing for Fun group the opportunity to showcase their efforts. It was an enjoyable morning with over seventy members attending.



The 50 seater coach to take us to the Christmas lunch was fully booked, so some members arranged a car pool. It was another big turn out and a good way to celebrate the end of our year. Our thanks go to Noel Meagher for arranging a very enjoyable celebration to mark another successful year for Benalla U3A.

Next year we will again hold two Enrolment days, the first at the Cooina Hub on Monday 16th January, 9.30-11.30. Our second enrolment day will be held at the Seniors on Wednesday 18th, again 9.30-11.30. If you cannot attend send the attached Enrolment form together with your payment to the Secretary.

This newsletter contains the 2017 Course and Contacts listing. Other course information will be posted prior to Enrolment days and is available on the website. Classes resume in February next year.

My thanks to Freida who came to our rescue this year as our Newsletter editor. Welcome to Jane Parris who will be our new editor in 2017. I would also like to thank Terry Dillon for taking on the role of membership officer and creating a database for us. If you would like to get involved in a volunteer role, let one of the committee know. We have many tasks that require volunteers, not just as tutors.

Tutors please note that access to W4 will finish at the end of November and will resume in February next year. The security system will be on in December and January.

Terry Case, President

The Final Newsletter for 2016

I would like to thank all those who have forwarded information to me for inclusion in the Newsletter during 2016. The reports have been interesting and I often find that half the fun is reading them as I compile the Newsletter each month.

The Benalla U3A certainly has some highly motivated convenors who put together a stimulating program for those who attend and contribute. I look forward to reading more about the groups and their activities in the 2017 Newsletter.

All the best for Christmas and the New Year.

Freida

GROUP REPORTS

Armchair History: Invaders

Next year we will recommence with the Norman invasion in 1066 and possibly finish with the reign of Henry VIII. Religion will again play a prominent part in this history. English Kings in this period also ruled parts of France and Scotland so we will look beyond England to Europe and beyond. The literature of the period includes works by Chaucer and Shakespeare, it is a fascinating period to study.

The Friday afternoon times are 1.15 start, 3.15 finish. New members welcome!

Armchair Traveller

The last meeting of Armchair Traveller for 2016 was held in W4 on Tuesday 15th November.

Art Appreciation

On Monday the 7th of November the Art Group were treated to a lecture by Catherine Bennetts -Jones on an exhibition of paintings, masks, drawings and photos by a local artist, Jacqui Stockdale.

Jacqui has two large canvasses on display which she uses as a backdrop to her photographs. These canvasses are done in the colonial style - indeed one is a blow up of a colonial age painting of Mount Wellington. Her photographs are recreations of possible situations both past and present - all seem to relate to historic local myths. The Kelly Family and their relatives are both either on display or referred to. Particular reference is made in a general sense to the role of women in these widely held local myths.

The exhibition as a whole is quite thought provoking. Bravo Jacqui.

In the Simpson Gallery there is an exhibition of Pastel works by Jennifer Paul. These are drawings of a high standard and well worth a viewing.

Editor's note: Subject to confirmation, Jennifer Paul may be the presenter at the final Art Appreciation session for 2016, Benalla Art Gallery, Monday 5th December 2016.

Astronomy

November saw our last Astronomy session for the year, with a report and discussion on the recent

'Supermoon'. The Moon was at its closest orbit to Earth since 1948. Many people watched it rising from the clear aspect of the Benalla airport. We won't see the Moon as close to Earth again until 2034.

A Cosmic News reel reviewing the latter half of 2016 showed us NASA's time lapse film of Titan, a moon of Saturn, revealing hydrocarbon lakes and seas and summer clouds of methane in the atmosphere. (Yes, moons of other planets have seasons too!) Also vision of the space craft Rosetta's plunge to the surface of Comet 67/P as recorded by the Kepler space telescope and the final close up photos of the comet taken by Rosetta as it was deliberately crashed at the end of its mission. Then we reviewed some of the findings of the two year mission.

The James Webb Space Telescope has been completed in the U.S. and is ready for assembly and testing. Launching is in 2018 and if all goes well we will see images of the really early Universe.

We finished our year with chocolate cake and a discussion on the increased size and power required for a Space X rocket to propel a spacecraft for interplanetary travel, to actually land people on Mars. With the excitement of the Supermoon over and the approach of Christmas we reviewed our program for next year and decided that a change was overdue.

Next year we are presenting a new course titled, "Exploring the Universe."

U3A Astronomy has had ten successful years, but the scope of the course we are able to cover is much broader now. With publicity of new discoveries in space and up to date information on the internet via International Space Agencies and so many other sources, we feel it is time to upgrade the name to reflect not just on planets and stars, but all these exciting current and past space discoveries that are being found with wonderful new innovative equipment.

We will still be offering basic astronomy but covering so much more. There are so many extra facets associated with Astronomy. Advanced technologies are giving us a whole new perspective of the Universe.

Powerful telescopes with cameras return brilliant images, revealing billions of galaxies, star breeding clouds of gas, weird new planets, some in the habitable

zones, allowing us to look back as the Universe is unfolding."

Today the sky is not the limit; we reach beyond the known stars, going back in time to try to discover the origins of the Universe and the building blocks of life. When you present all this, discussions inevitably follow.

Have you ever wondered "what's out there?" Why not join us? Beginners, intermediates, anyone; the only requirements are an enquiring mind and enthusiasm.

We wish everyone a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and all the very best for the New Year.

Bird Watching

The group's final outing for the year was to the Molyullah district about 30 km south of Benalla. On Thursday 10 November eight of us travelled along O'Dea Road to the intersection with Schulz Road, where bushland meets farmland in the pretty Sams Creek Valley. A lot of birds were calling as we walked along the road. A female Rufous Whistler flew onto her partially-completed nest in a dead mistletoe just above us while the male watched from a nearby tree. We also saw the delicate nest of the Grey Fantail.

Two White-throated Treecreepers landed on a nearby trunk, while a Sacred Kingfisher and a Kookaburra were also seen. A number of honeyeaters were calling, and we had a good view of two of them, the Yellow-faced and the White-naped Honeyeater. The plain-looking Fuscous Honeyeaters were difficult to identify high in the trees, and although we could hear a number of White-throated Gerygones calling quite close to us, it was frustrating that we did not get a look at this beautiful little bird.

Near our parked cars, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike was spotted low in a nearby tree, and on a farm dam over the road was a pair of Australasian Grebe and an Australian Wood Duck with 5 small ducklings. Our bird list can be viewed on eBird at <http://ebird.org/ebird/australia/view/checklist/S32646622>

We then drove to a nearby property, where we ate our sandwiches while admiring the view over the valley. While the Superb Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens, King Parrots, Noisy Friarbirds, Mistletoebirds and Silvereyes fossicked around the

garden, owners John and Janette answered our many questions about their beautiful property.



After lunch they then took us to several spectacular waterfalls not far from the house. Thank you to both of them for their generosity and time. We loved the place.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the birdwatching program this year. U3A Birdwatching will continue next year, with 3 sessions in April, May and June.

Kathy Costello, Convenor

Brain Games

We began with a warm-up of "otherhand" drawing, then checked our 8T on an O puzzle (eight tentacles on an octopus), tested our world geography and tried some number problems which required a mix of maths skills and lateral thinking. Finally we watched a program on adult brain changes and learnt a few things about ways of staying brain-fit.

Next year we may try more frequent sessions but with a winter recess. Meanwhile research recommends you try juggling, learning another language or a musical instrument and of course staying physically and enjoyably active.

Bushwalking

Easy walk – November 2 – Reef Hills

The Reef Hills have turned blue with the best display of Chocolate Lilies I have seen for years!! Four walkers had morning tea at the picnic ground before starting down Four Mile road and crossing the ridge to walk about half a kilometre down the Reef Hills road. We crossed the creek and headed northwards to visit a mining site. Returning to the creek, we noticed blue stains on our pants from walking through the lilies (they wash out OK). The next track runs parallel to the Reef Hills road and rises gently to the picnic ground. After lunch we drove down Double Gates road to find some

Tiger Orchids. On the way out we picked up some rubbish for disposal. The only adverse items for the day were the ever-present mosquitoes!



Mining site at Reef Hills

Mid-week walk – November 9 – Mount Buffalo

Another of our esteemed bush walking members, Nigel Lacey, has passed away. His funeral in Melbourne coincided with this walk, so we dedicated the walk to him.

We started from the Reservoir on Mount Buffalo and walked the Mac's Point track. This track leaves the Rocky Creek 4WD track after crossing the creek and heads south, with an interesting, well sign-posted route. You then turn right at a junction (with the other track leading to the "Giant's Causeway"). The path follows the western side of the ridge and then climbs to the lookout. There are good views to the East where the Cathedral, the Hump and the Horn are all visible. During lunch we drank a toast to Nigel (which Marion had carried in her back pack).



Mac's Point Mt Buffalo

The return track branches to the left about 250m from the top, and leads to the Rocky Creek Track and back to the start. A very pleasant day with six walkers. The walk was about 6.7km.

Collectors

Collectors will recommence in February 2017.

E Book Group

E Book Group meets again on December 6th at the Library at 10am. Please bring something festive for morning tea, and those with Kindles, please bring them.

Film and Literature

This month we watched *12 Angry Men*, based on a play by Reginald Rose. It was wonderful to have members from the Play Reading Group join us as this is the play planned for the February Play Reading. This added extra richness to the discussion after the movie. At the end of a murder trial in New York City, the twelve jurors retire to consider the verdict. The man in the dock is a young Puerto Rican accused of killing his abusive father. The opening scene shows the judge instructing the jury about their responsibilities, looking bored and perhaps assuming the jury would quickly find the young man guilty. Eleven of the twelve jurors do not hesitate in finding him guilty. The twelfth, played by Henry Fonda, is reluctant to condemn the young man to death without debate. No names were shared – they were known only by their number.

This is not an action movie. The setting is predominantly the jury room. There is some dramatic music as the jury left the courtroom, but no music at any other stage in the movie. It is hot and stifling in the jury room – reflecting the heat of the arguments to come. Representative of the era in which the movie was filmed, the jury members are all male; the majority are smoking. Gradually the split moves towards not guilty. When the count moves to equal guilty/not guilty, a change in the weather heralds a change in the room – rain starts, the light is switched on, the fan starts working, the atmosphere starts to cool down.

Our discussion noted how easy it could be to convict or acquit based on prejudice, or interpretation of evidence, even though the role of the jury is to decide on guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt". Everyone agreed that the movie was riveting.

It was interesting to see the development of the various characters and relationships. Many points were brought up showing that the claims of innocence by the young man could possibly be correct, and that the statements from the witnesses were possible flawed. All the characters brought different perspective to the

discussion, but the standout characters apart from juror 8, the part played by Henry Fonda, were jurors 3, 9 and 10. **Juror 9, Joseph Sweeney**, was observant and logical, not getting caught up in the "heat" of the arguments. **Juror 10, Ed Begley**, displayed his prejudice against the Puerto Ricans, calling them all liars, not caring about lives, killing recklessly when they felt like it. Eventually after a rant about this, all the other jurors turned their backs on him – symbolic of the realisation that possibly his guilty judgement was based on his prejudice. It took **Juror 3, Lee J Cobb**, longer to realise his prejudice – not based on race, but on his experience with his own son. It was only as he tore up a photo of his son he perhaps realised he was judging on the age of the accused, and failed father/son relationships.

I am in the process of planning our early sessions for 2017. Ideas include some of the classics which are shorter than some of the more recent films, and fit comfortably in the time we have available while we are meeting in W4. I hope some confirmed ideas will be available at registration in January.

Garden Appreciation

February 23rd 2017

Meet at Flexible Learning Car Park 10.00 a.m. We will be going to 322 Goudie Road Chesney Vale to view *Belvedere Garden* which has spectacular views of Winton Wetlands and sculptures.

Please bring morning tea to share and your own cup. Coffee, tea hot water will be provided. Lunch at Winton Wetlands café.

March 23rd

Coach trip to *Bishopcourt Garden-House* in Clarendon Street, East Melbourne and a visit to Fitzroy Gardens. Meet at Benalla Rose Garden near the Royal Hotel at 7 a.m. Morning tea on arrival at 10.00 a.m. Tour of house and garden.

Bishopcourt is the residence of the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne. Facing the Fitzroy Gardens, it has a beautiful English garden. Concluding at approximately midday we will lunch at the Pavilion Café in the Fitzroy Gardens.

Please register early as we can only take 30 to *Bishopscourt*. Cost is \$46 for coach and morning tea, tour of house and garden. Lunch at own cost. **We will need payment by February or before. Phone Gwen 0438 627 010 or 5762 7017**

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

Garden Team

We completed the year's labour with a well attended prune-in at Bill and Jane's. It is always a rewarding and pleasant gathering and we look forward to re-convening at Tulip St in mid February!

Investment

We welcomed a visitor, Angie Ellis from Melbourne to the November meeting of Investment which was our last for 2016. We congratulated the winners of our two competitions: Peter Simpson who won the monthly share selection and Graham Mitchell who won the yearly share selection.

During the meeting our members spoke to the group about a share which had interested them during 2016. We also looked at The Good, The Bad and the Ugly in shares during 2016.

We wish all our members an enjoyable break and hope to see them again in 2017.

Let's Talk Books

Our last gathering for 2016 is on 6th December, 2 – 4pm, at the Benalla Library.

Lifeball

We had another great Lifeball day at the end of October at Wangaratta, where we had 6 players participating, and having a thoroughly good time!! This was our final "away" game for this year, but our own Fun and Friendship day will be in March next year, and we have to try to avoid both Easter and the school holidays to ensure a maximum turn up of visiting teams.

During this year, Val Vella has been coming to us regularly from Mansfield, sometimes with a fellow player, as the Mansfield numbers seem to be dwindling, however our numbers seem to be growing which is wonderful. We are ranging from 10 to about 16 or 17 on Mondays. We will be having our breakup luncheon after our game on the second Monday in December and we expect most players to attend. As usual, it will also be a fun day.

We resume playing on the first Monday in February next year.

Our Coach, Rupert Cheetham, is recovering brilliantly after his horrendous accident in April. With the addition of a new pacemaker and some minor adjustments to his leg, he will be ready to throw away the crutches and play next year. Even with his crutches, he has been umpiring regularly, both at home and away. An amazing person!!

His wife Gwen, who was also badly injured, will be playing soon when she recovers from further surgery to her injured collarbone. We are SO thankful they survived a torrid time, and can't wait till they are back in the mix again next year playing LAUGHBALL!!

We have enjoyed a great year, and with our timetable stable now, we look forward to another happy and fulfilling year in 2017. The invitation is always open for visitors to have a look, every Monday morning at 9.45 am at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre in Ackerly Avenue. If you like what you see hop in and have a game with us - I promise you won't be disappointed.

Every best wish to all for the forthcoming festive season. Marg Merriman - 5762 1404 or 0438 509 121.

Meet and Mingle

The last Meet and Mingle for 2016 was held at The Senior Citizens Centre on November 16th. The meeting went well with a display of quilts and patchwork by members of the Patchwork group and entertainment provided by the Singing for Fun group.



Music Appreciation

28th October, 2016

Neville presented the session which consisted of selections from Mozart on You Tube, featuring the world famous soprano Kiri Te Kanawa with the Welsh National Opera Orchestra.

11th November, 2016

Joan presented the session, which consisted of the following:

1. Maxim Vengerov (born 1974), Russian Violinist, who will be playing with the MSO in Melbourne, February next year. We listened to Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.
2. Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856) Piano Concerto - German Romantic Composer.
3. Alexander Borodin (1833 – 1887) Selections from the Opera 'Prince Igor' - Russian Composer.
4. Charles-Marie Widor (1844 – 1937) Toccata from Organ Symphony No.5 – French Organist.

25th November, 2016

John presented the session as follows:

1. Selections from a CD of Maxim Vengerov (1974 -), Russian violinist.
2. Joaquin Rodrigo (1901-1999) – Guitar Concierto de Aranjuez.
3. Edouard Lalo (1823-1892), French Composer and Violinist, Cello Concerto in D.

As this was our final session for 2016, we enjoyed a very festive morning tea.

Opera – The Dark Side

We have finished our series of four operas for the year. A marvellous Rigoletto [Verdi] with Pavarotti as the evil Duke of Mantua outsung by the splendid Louis Quilico as the hunchback Riguleto, father of the beautiful Gilda. You can guess the rest. Gilda is kidnapped by the Duke's men and made captive in his palace. Riguleto tries to have the Duke assassinated in revenge but only succeeds in having Gilda murdered by mistake! Absolutely magnificent singing.

After this excitement La Traviatta [Verdi] seemed less savage but no less tragic. The lovely courtesan Violetta falls in love with Alfredo and gives up her life of pleasure in Paris to live with him in the country. His father visits her and pleads for her to give up his son as the relationship dishonours his family and prevents his daughter gaining a successful marriage. Violetta does so, but Alfredo has no idea why she has left him and spurns her viciously at a Paris party. Violetta is dying of consumption in Paris when Alfredo learns the truth and rushes to her side only to have the chance of singing one aria with her before she dies. This production by Zefferelli with Placido Domingo as Alfredo and Teresa Stratas as Violetta was outstanding.

Finally we viewed a modern interpretation of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* [Women are always like this]. This jolly story of two soldiers who swap their girlfriends by pretending to be Albanian noblemen explores the various things that can go wrong when you try to test your fiancés' loyalty in this way. The moral is "Don't try this!" Things are bound to go pear shaped. The two teenaged girls are no match for the cunning counts. Somehow everyone gets married to the right person at the end. This Netherlands Opera Production was beautifully filmed and almost made us believe this could happen in the 1960s.

Meg Dillon – Coordinator

Patchwork

Patchwork members were particularly busy in the lead up to November's display of quilts at Meet and Mingle. This display provided great incentive to complete quilts started during the year and included a number of 2016's project quilts. The Patchwork group celebrated the end of a busy year at their end-of-year lunch on Thursday 1st December.

Play Reading

The Play Reading group is meeting up to celebrate our first year at 10.30 am on Wednesday December 8th at Rustick Café. It will be fun to reminisce about our 2016 playbill which included 'Wives have their Uses', 'The Lady in the Van', 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll', 'An Ideal Husband', 'Winter Glory' and 'Dinkum Assorted'. Our 'productions' have involved a team effort – thanks so much to Keith Rodgers, Jenny Sawyer and Gwen Barnes for 'directing' our play readings, to Bev Lee for collecting the plays from the Victorian Drama League in Melbourne, to Judith for mailing them back, and of course to the talented cast of U3A thespians who read various roles with increasing levels of confidence during the year. Our first playreading for 2017 will be 'Twelve Angry Men', directed by the inimitable Keith Rogers.

Politics and Current Affairs

This year we had an election feast as we observed Council, Federal, US Primaries and the US Presidential election. 2017 brings us the Trump Presidency and the unpredictable arena of Australian politics. There will be much to ponder.

Singing for Fun

The Singing for Fun group entertained those at the final Meet and Mingle held on the 16th November.

Tech Savvy

Our November session featured Bill Parris's collection of watches. Bill began to buy quirky, inexpensive watches after a valuable watch he received for 30 years of service disappeared. We had great fun looking at Bill's Rolex, Gucci and other brand-named imitations. Bill also provided an overview of changing watch making technology over time and intrigued us with his collection of watch maker's repair tools bought inexpensively over the internet. Next step for Bill – a presentation at 'Collectors'!



Tech Savvy has been renamed '**Tech Savvy Talks**' in 2017 to distinguish it from other Tech Savvy groups. Monthly sessions will continue to commence with a TED talk on a topic of interest followed by a guest presentation and then time for our 'Mentors' and 'Tech Savvies' working groups to meet. In 2017 'Mentors' will support the Tech Savvy Beginners course, while the 'Tech Savvies' reading group will meet at a local cafe on the alternative fortnight to discuss the Internet of things (IoT) and other developments in computer and communications technology.

Tech Savvy Drop In/Google Apps

This semester we have explored Google Apps, briefly looking at the potential of each app. The pace has been cracking and has been a challenge. In the final session for 2016 we will establish which apps should be extended and in 2017 we will dig down into those apps and consolidate. As well, we will take a hands-on approach to connectivity by connecting Bluetooth and Wifi devices, including Bluetooth watch (and make calls Dick Tracey style), Bluetooth speakers, or other selected devices, set up Tethering and join Wifi networks. The 2017 course, code named **Tech Savvy Plus**, will be held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 1.30 to 3.30.

A companion course **Tech Savvy Beginners** will be conducted by Jenny Sawyer on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 1.30 to 3.30.

Towards a Sustainable Future

W4's resident greenies and sustainability wise old owls finished off the year very pleased to hear positive news from John about the momentum created out of the 'Renewable Energy for Benalla' community forum and the first meeting of the 'Renewable Energy for Benalla' working party. We will continue to monitor local developments and good news stories next year while retaining a focus on scientific evidence related to climate change through reading of well researched articles.

At our last class for the year we watched an excellent Catalyst program which asks whether we have entered a new geological era '[the Anthropocene](#)', with evidence of our existence visible millions of years later in the rocks of tomorrow. Concern about the impact of the election of climate denier Donald Trump arose and appears unclear – 'Given Trump's record of political flip flopping it remains an open question as to how far he will actually go to undo the diplomatic climate legacy of the Obama administration' (Robyn Eckersley, Univ of Melb, 'The Conversation' Nov 11 2016).

We continue to hope for a scientifically informed non-partisan approach to addressing climate change and to reflect on what we are doing ourselves at a personal level, with Gabija recently describing trialling solar devices while camping as a stage in making a transition to a solar powered future.

Wine Appreciation

What's in Store for 2017?

In our 20th year, the program for 2017 will aim to provide variety between the larger wineries and some newer venues.

Wednesday 22nd February

We will commence with a visit to a local vineyard at Warrenbayne offering a selection of wines. Lunch may well be at the Ellen Frances Hotel.

Wednesday 22nd March

A longer trip to Chateau Tabhilk at Nagambie with lunch in town is suggested as the Wetlands Café is not open Wednesdays. Details in the next newsletter. I suggest we continue to meet at the same car park.

For more information about Wine Appreciation, phone Noel Meagher (5762 3149) or Keith & Heather Rogers (5762 4086).

Writing Workshop

David Palmer gave an absorbing presentation titled 'Joanie delighted in rural history' in November, writing about his mother, writer Joan Palmer. Joan, or 'Joanie', wrote and edited books including 'From Plough to Porterhouse'; 'The Great Days of Wool'; 'William Moodie – a Pioneer of Western Victoria'; 'Goggles and God Help You'; 'Our Solo' (about a loved horse previously owned by the equestrian Roycroft family), and 'Memories of a Riverina Childhood', always drawing upon experiences living on farming properties in the western district, the Riverina and North East Victoria.

November's topic, 'Running with Scissors', provoked risk taking memories including contemplating redundancy and working in jobs involving responsibility for the wellbeing of others. Neville's writing on being 'bulletproof' in his youth was particularly gripping. Stories on 'The Sky's the Limit' and other topics were also shared and Joy Shirley congratulated on receiving 'Highly Commended' for her entry in Benalla Festival's 'The Sky's the Limit' writing competition.

Next year we will be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays. Don't forget, if it's 'too hot' to garden and there's 'nothing on TV' – there's always good reading on the 'Our Stories' page of the website

Our first meeting for 2017 will be on Monday 27th February at 1.30 in W4.

Media Team News

- We apologise if you received a mail out of the October newsletter with missing pages. If you would like another October newsletter posted, please contact Bev on 5762 8171.
- A newsletter including our 2017 Program of Courses and Activities will be posted in early January. Group reports from activities held after November's newsletter deadline and information about upcoming meetings can be included. The deadline is on **Monday 2nd January** at midday.
- The deadline for the first full newsletter for 2017 is on **Monday 27th February** at midday.

*Freida Andrews, Newsletter Editor
Bev Lee, Website Manager*

Our thanks go to Steph Ryan MP and the staff at her Benalla Office for printing this newsletter.

U3A BENALLA and DISTRICT COURSE/ACTIVITY AND CONTACT LIST – SEMESTER 1 2017

President: Terry Case 5762 1700 0427621700 case.terence@gmail.com (to March)
 Vice President: Dorothy Webber 5762 2116 rebbew98@bigpond.com
 Secretary: Lorraine Knox 5762 1531 lorrain.knox@bigpond.com
 Treasurer: Bill Parris 0417329278 parris.benalla@gmail.com
 Publicity: Judith Borthwick 5762 3442 jlborhwick@bigpond.com
 Newsletter: Jane Parris 5762 6912 jane.parris@hotmail.com

Group/Activity	Convenor	Phone	E-mail contact address
Armchair History	Terry Case	5762 1700	case.terence@gmail.com
Armchair Traveller	John Avery	5762 1818	jcavery@bigpond.net.au
Art Appreciation	Carol & Godfrey Marple	5762 6165	gcmarple@bigpond.com
Bird Watching	Kathy Costello	5762 5755 0447625755	coskoy@bigpond.com
Brain Games	Elspeth Maconachie	5762 1700	elspethm1@gmail.com
Bush Walking	Vaughan Cowan	5762 1980	vmcowan@mcmedia.com.au
Chat 'n Chew	Shirley Kearney	5762 6768	sgk3762@gmail.com
Collectors	Judith Borthwick	5762 3442	jlborhwick@bigpond.com
E Book Group	Helen Scheller Meg Dillon	5762 3937 5762 6558	helen.scheller@gmail.com meg@greygypsies.com.au
Easy Walks	Vaughan Cowan	5762 1980	vmcowan@mcmedia.com.au
Exploring the Universe	Jan Andrews Bev Morton	0438624036 5764 1245	janhike2@bigpond.com bevmorton@bigpond.com
Film and Literature	Joy Shirley	0417065351	jshirley@internode.on.net
Garden Appreciation	Gwen Turner	5762 7017	gwenturner243@gmail.com
Garden Team	Elspeth Maconachie	0418621764	elspethm1@gmail.com
In the mood for opera	Meg Dillon	5762 6558	meg@greygypsies.com.au
Investment	Margaret Jenkins	5762 6944	margaretjenkins@bigpond.com
Let's Talk Books	Geraldine McCorkell	5762 2134	gmcorkell@activ8.net.au
Lifeball	Marg Merriman	5762 1404	margaret.merriman@yahoo.com.au
Meet and Mingle	Dorothy Webber Lorraine Knox	5762 2116 5762 1531	rebbew98@bigpond.com lorrain.knox@bigpond.com
Music Appreciation	John Avery	5762 1818	jcavery@bigpond.net.au
Patchwork	Dorothy Webber	5762 2116	rebbew98@bigpond.com
Play Reading	Keith Rogers	5762 4086	jollyrogers@iinet.net.au
Politics	Terry Case	5762 1700	case.terence@gmail.com
Singing for Fun	Joyce Borschmann	5762 5013	najlasoeg@gmail.com
Tech Savvy Beginners	Jenny Sawyer	5763 3279	jennysawyer55@gmail.com
Tech Savvy Plus	Terry Dillon	0419343129	terry@greygypsies.com.au
Tech Savvy Talks	Bev Lee Les Rodgers	5762 8171 5762 7600	bevlee47@gmail.com lesrodgers@bigpond.com
Towards a Sustainable Future	John Lloyd	5765 2476	andrewslloyd@iinet.net.au
Wine Appreciation	Noel Meagher Keith & Heather Rogers	5762 3149 5762 4086	enmar@westnet.com.au jollyrogers@iinet.net.au
Writing Workshop	Bev Lee	5762 8171	bevlee47@gmail.com