



Benalla and District Inc.

## Newsletter – April 2020

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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### A Message from the President

Because of the situation with Corona virus and the latest spatial requirements, on March 21<sup>st</sup> the Executive of the Committee decided to shut down all U3A Benalla courses and activities. Emails were sent out to convenors and members at the time to inform them, along with notices on the website and Facebook.

We will review this decision at the end of Semester 1. This decision includes all off-site Groups.

We hope that when we resume you are all fit and healthy. Stay safe.

Dorothy Webber

President

### President's Report to the Annual General Meeting

*Dorothy Webber delivered her report at the AGM/Meet and Mingle Meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

"It is with great pleasure that I make my report for the last year.

We have had many social events this year:

A Benalla Rural City Sponsored Morning Tea at which the Recorder Group entertained us, was held in October.

On the same day we followed on with a Be Connected sponsored BBQ lunch, a busy day as both events had to be held that week.

The November Meet and Mingle was once again entertained by the Singing for Fun Group and the display of the work of the Patchwork Group

Our first evening event was held in February. Were a good time was enjoyed by all with tasty Pizzas and a cake to celebrate Benalla's involvement with Be Connected.

We continue with our meetings, with Council and other users of the building.

Looking to the future we were asked to put forward our suggestions for the redesign of the interior of the building. We await what that decision will be.

My thanks go to Margaret Jenkins who put a very professional design together.

With a view to utilising the space more efficiently the Thursday mornings Singing for Fun and Community Singing now meet in the auditorium.

The success of U3A Benalla is largely due to the wonderful Convenors who continually put themselves forward to lead sessions, and my wonderful Committee who have worked so hard for you this year.

The growth of the Benalla retirement community sees our membership growing.

Currently we have 341 members 246 Ladies and 95 Gentlemen. This is an increase of 66 from what we had last year.

Considering that we had 60 new members last year and 68 so far this year that is incredible growth.

First Semester we have 48 courses on offer.

The future of Benalla U3A is looking very positive as we continue to grow our membership and courses.

Once again, I have kept close relationship with the Network by attending the Regional Meetings.

A two-day meeting was held here in Benalla at BPACC in April and a one -day meeting was held In Seymour in September.

Having myself and members of our committee attending and networking is beneficial to us and all U3As across our region.

Geraldine McCorkell is our rep who regularly attends the meetings at the Network in Melbourne and keeps us updated. My thanks to Geraldine for this service.

Once again my thanks to the Committee who have helped me no end over the last year."

Dorothy Webber, President

## A message from the Newsletter Editor

As we are all aware by now, U3A Benalla has closed its classes due to the current Corona Virus-19 restrictions currently in place.

It is proposed to commence classes in June, but as you will all be aware this will be dependent on Government restrictions and the current state of health of all residents in Australia.

Now that there is closure of so many daily activities we participate in, we are able to stop and relax somewhat and there will be many hours of solitude for each of us. What are we going to do to fill in our day???

A concern with the current isolation restrictions is that U3A members will miss their monthly reading of the Newsletter and the ability to keep in touch with each other during this period.

Following a number of requests, it is proposed to send out a Newsletter each month, though perhaps not in the current format of monthly reports.

If Convenors wish to give an update on their courses, if members have information of books they have read, have any tips on the growing of vegetable/plants, a 'funny thing happened...' story, or info of how they are coping with the isolation which may help other members, all will be welcome.

I will start this off with something that happened to me during our compulsory isolation:

*"On 30<sup>th</sup> March my Granddaughter, Brooke, turned 18 which she was unable to celebrate with her friends. Her older brother, Callum, had returned to Melbourne from University in Carolina, USA the week before, hence the family being in isolation.*

*I received a Facetime call at 8.00pm and ran over to her other grandmother Rae, who happens to live opposite me, and we joined our family in singing Happy Birthday to Brooke. We were so thrilled to be included in her celebrations. The wonders of the modern world and Mobile phones".*

If you have anything you wish to share please send it to me at [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com) and where possible I will try to include it in our Newsletter.

Heather Wallace, Newsletter Editor

## Group Reports

### A Different History of Germany

Unfortunately, we will not be able to meet and discuss Germany's History for the foreseeable future due to COVID-19 regulations. However, when we return, we will be even keener to take part in U3A activities. It is worth noting that the Berlin Wall has now been down longer than it was up. I have opened up my slide boxes and discovered some slides that show the wall in 1970.



We will see them when we return. In modern Berlin little evidence of the Wall exists. In the tour groups that we went on I was the only person old enough to have seen both sides of the wall. Not that anyone was impressed. Especially the tour guides.

When we return, we will be spending a full day on East Berlin. I hope everyone is looking forward to it.

Neville Gibb

## A Taste of Art

The first session of "A Taste of Art" on Wednesday 11 March was attended by eight U3A members Barbara, Alice, Dorothy, Kim, Wendy, Julie, Heather and Neville.

I started the afternoon by introducing the members of Broken River Painters who were going to assist me - John, Norah, Jan, Mike, Berni, Beth and Maria. These artists work in all mediums - Carol, Norah and John use watercolour, Carol also uses oil, Jan and Beth use pastel, Mike works in watercolour and ink, Berni uses a variety called mixed media and Maria uses watercolour and acrylic. Each artist had brought along one of their paintings to show what can be achieved in any of these mediums.

We discussed what class members would like to achieve with their art, then began, drawing in pencil and charcoal still life objects such as a goblet, a pumpkin, onion, pomegranate, some bananas and other fruit. Group members were very enthusiastic and turned out some promising work. A couple were confident enough to try painting their choice of subject in watercolour, with some success.

Unfortunately, our second session in March couldn't go ahead. We were looking forward to going to the lake for some outdoor drawing and painting.

Carol Perry

## Armchair History – Tudors

I am going to miss our meetings and book recommendations. If you find something good, please consider, sharing it via our newsletter by sending it to Heather at [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com).

Terry Case

## Armchair Traveller



David Palmer entertained us in March with details of a walk on the Camino Way in Spain accompanied by his son Ollie. They commenced their trek at San Sebastian, walking 250 kilometres to Santander. There were many chapels on the way in which to reflect on the walks of the Apostles. A great father/son bonding experience.

Ray O'Shannessy

## Art Appreciation

In early March we were fortunate to be able to listen to and question Phillip Edwards who an exhibition of water colour/mixed media paintings showing the ecology and geography of Mount Buffalo entitled '[The Mountain's Quiet Heart](#)' on display. Mount Buffalo in the winter has its own special attractions and beauty and Phillip has managed to capture the ecology quite well. These water colours have been skillfully produced and do not look like normal water colours. Most are painted with wide brushes and thick paint.

The colours are realistic rather than romantic. Phillip told us something of his private life - how he currently finances his art - and his previous career and history. This exhibition was well worth seeing. Unfortunately, the gallery is closed until further notice, however [a virtual tour of 'The Mountain's Quiet Heart'](#) is currently available on Benalla Art Gallery's website.

We thank Eric Nash for organising our meeting.



Neville Gibb

## 'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

With our 'As Time Goes By' memoir writing group meeting late in March and new COVID-19 Regulations being released daily, it soon became obvious that we would be unable to proceed with our March meeting. However, we have developed a plan! Having shared stories online in the past through the website on 'Our Stories' and with even more time to write, we're trialling a system of sharing our monthly stories on line through the website. Early this week the first six stories for our March topic, 'Making Waves', were shared on-line. Currently password protected as members have the chance to read, comment on and even add additional stories, the plan is to make most if not all 'Making Waves' stories available for all members to read on the website in coming weeks.

We have three topics for April - choose any or all - with a submission date of Monday April 27th.

The first topic, suggested by Barry O'Connor as our class follows two days later, is '*Anzac Day*'. A chance to reminisce about memories of Anzac Day (or Days) which have stayed with us over time.

The second topic is inspired by this month's story by Margaret Nelson's story '*Do you remember the polio epidemic*' (see below). Has the current COVID-19 '*Pandemic*' triggered memories for you relating to infectious diseases, whether local, epidemic or pandemic?

The third topic, as set on our list of topics for the first four months, is '*Winging It*' or '*Taking the Plunge*' - Do you have a story about taking a risk and winging it?

U3A members who enjoy writing and are finding themselves with more time on their hands are welcome to join with us in sharing stories on-line. All you need to do is to email [bevlee47@gmail.com](mailto:bevlee47@gmail.com) - you can write the story in the body of the email or attach it as a word or pdf document. The suggested, but not heavily policed, word limit is 500 words.

Bev Lee

### COVID19 - Do you remember the polio epidemic?



“Do you remember the polio epidemic in 1949—50, or previous flu epidemics before vaccinations were available? They were worrying at the time, but nothing compared to the present pandemic, made even more frightening because of the frequent TV updates, and no available vaccine.

I clearly remember the polio epidemic—most people knew of someone who caught the disease and become crippled, or worse, ended up in an iron lung to enable breathing, or even died. The people were advised to avoid crowds.

My most vivid memory is of my first day at Benalla High School. Our family had just returned from a beach holiday on the Saturday for the start of school on the Tuesday.

I duly went off on the Violet Town school bus with my local state school friends who started that day, decked out in my new uniform and hat.

When the bell rang, we assembled in the quadrangle, and it was announced that anyone who had not been at their residence in the last two weeks had to stay away from school for the next two weeks. This was scary to a shy little country girl! There were a few others from Violet Town and we had to fill in the day wandering the street and gardens till bus time at 3.30, then go back on the bus with the other children. So much for isolating us from the others

Another two weeks at home! Fortunately, the local headmaster felt sorry for me and set some maths and English for me so I wouldn't get too far behind. Eventually I restarted at Benalla High School, but the others had had their intelligence test and were allocated their form and their sports houses.

Not an ideal start, but I got going.

It was much later before a vaccine was produced. Salk, an injection, and later perfected to a syrup, Sabin, which was successful".

Hopefully a vaccine for COVID19 will soon be available.'

Margaret Nelson, March 2020

## Be Connected – Drop In

During the first Be Connected session for March we introduced our members to the Be Connected website at [www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au](http://www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au) In particular we went to the Topic Library where all the various modules of the Be Connected program are outlined.

As there had recently been an eSafety Day for Be Connected we concentrated on the Safety First Module which included Safe Passwords and Paying Safely on line.

The benefit of this Drop-In session is that members who come to this session often get one on one support for whatever problem they are having with their device.

In the second session Dorothy Webber showed participants how to use Online shopping as well as helping with keeping contact lists for phone contacts.

From 21 March 2020 due to COVID-19 U3A Benalla groups will not be meeting until the second Semester. You will all receive Email notification when groups can recommence.

Margaret Jenkins & Bill Parris

## Bird Watching

24 people attended our birdwatching outing on Thursday 12 March 2020. The group enjoyed a morning stroll around the southern section of Lake Benalla. We set out from the library towards Jaycee Island and returned via the main bridge in town. We saw several Australasian Darters on our walk, and it was interesting to compare these waterbirds with the Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants which were also present on the lake. Andi Stevenson took a lovely photo of a darter drying its wings.



The group also had good views of the two treecreepers found in the woodland area, the White-throated and the Brown Treecreeper. A number of Grey Fantails were seen well as they flitted above our heads, catching insects among the wattles and red gums. The Western Gerygone remained hidden from view, although its beautiful song was oh so close. Our lake continues to be a treasure for birdwatching. We recorded 32 bird species for the morning. Details can be viewed on this link to our list on the eBird website. <https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S66153812>

Although U3A activities have ceased until further notice, birdwatching is an enjoyable pursuit which I hope some in the group will be able to continue, without an organised outing.

Kathy Costello

## Brain Games

In our March session we had a visitor, Peter, who'd misread the calendar but joined in the shape, word and number puzzles, tried a drawing and contributed to solving the rebus-riddles.

Please remember that such solitary pursuits as drawing and juggling are excellent ways to retain brain fitness and even sitting at a different place at the dinner table or tying the other shoelace first helps keep the attitude adaptable.

Elsbeth Maconachie

## Bushwalking

### Easy Walks

On Wednesday 4 March fifteen intrepid walkers arrived in light rain at the Yarrawonga Weir on 4 March to walk over the Weir then downstream of the Murray River to Gorman Park NSW. We heard and sighted numerous water and land birds; several curious kangaroos and the marvelled at the spectacular bark on the ancient gum trees.

As steady rain had set in, we lunched under cover by Lake Mulwala and made the unanimous decision to cancel the afternoon walk due to inclement weather. Not to be deterred, we proceeded to Rich Glen Cafe for coffee and cake plus the purchase of olive oil and other products. Not entirely a day we had planned but we all welcomed the substantial rain.

On Wednesday March 18th, Benalla U3A asked Convenors to make a decision on future programs. U3A Easy Walks Convenors, Wendy Sturgess and Margaret Walshe decided to postpone scheduled Easy Walks due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. This is a precautionary measure as we cannot ensure we can fully comply with the recommended protocols. It has meant the postponement of two walks already advertised – the first on April 1 along One Mile Creek in Wangaratta, the second on May 6 to see Beechworth's Mayday Hills and Lake Sambell in autumn splendour. We hope this will be a short-term situation, that walks can resume on our interesting walking tracks.

Take care and stay safe.



Wendy Sturgess/Margaret Walshe

### Mid Week Walks

**Wednesday 11 March MT BULLER Leader: John Boehm**



Another Month, Another Mountain To Tackle, this time Mount Buller. Fourteen Mountain Climbers...sorry...Bushwalkers, again ably led by John Boehm, gathered in the town square of the Ski Resort, site of a lot of new construction under way. A steady trudge up the first part of the steep 5km. return Summit Track, soon spread out our group. The track then levelled out, through clumps of gnarled Snowgums and wildflower meadows, where lived a few strange (unidentified)

insects. Once upon the Summit, where the Fire Spotting Tower proudly stood, we all agreed the spectacular 360° view made our efforts worthwhile. The ABC lunchtime radio serial "Blue Hills" sprang to mind. Time was getting on, so hunger (or was it the mention of "Blue Hills"?) prompted a lunch break in welcome sunshine. The descent proved quicker than the ascent! Another short break in the Town Square and we were ready for the 3km. "Village Family Walk", a gentle stroll through the town, past the iconic ski lodges where cashed up Victorians spend their winters. Afternoon tea was shared on the town's picnic tables. One of our party discovered a Café open for business, but he forgot to take our orders too! Another beautiful Alpine summer's day, spectacular scenery and convivial company equalled a splendid day out. Thank you JB! Welcome to new walkers, Deb and Ian, from Swanpool. We enjoyed your company and hope to see you again.

Bev Thornell

### Coin Collectors

We were able to have our meeting on the 18th March with 12 members attending. Again, we had quite a variety of coins medallions and catalogues, which led to interesting discussions There was good advice on

collecting ancient Chinese and Roman coins with some very large catalogues of information and values on the coins. There was a Krugerland (South Africa) 1oz. gold coin, a Mexican \$1 coin of one ounce pure silver, an Australian 1977 silver jubilee medallion for the Queen's visit, a Lighthouse medallion, 1984 English proof coin set, 5gm gold nugget 2.5 gm of gold bullion, 1945-1995 medallion, 1966 round 50cent piece and 1967 NZ 50 cent piece. Four small albums of American coins, including American \$1 coins. Girl Guide commemorative coins and various paper cuttings and clips re early coins, pre-decimal pennies and halfpennies. Pre decimal florin commemorating the opening of Parliament House Canberra in 1927, a 20cent decimal commemorating the Centenary of Canberra in 2013.

With the Coronavirus pandemic now taking hold we are now in recess until the end of June. So, everybody please take care and stay well and with time at home we can get a lot of coins sorted.

Alex Adkins

## Collectors

The theme for the March meeting was metal and 12 people brought an interesting variety of items.

Jacquie brought a solid copper vase which was possibly an example of trench art, Japanese tile and metal trivets and two J S & S Sankey copper hot water jugs in a lizard skin finish.

Jennie had a little pineapple shaped pill box with tiny tongs. They were popular in the 1800s, being made for the Russian czars, but she was told this one was a copy, made in the 1930s.

Wendy's items included a Dubarry by Paramount silver coffee pot with bakelite handle from the 1930s, Judith had a brass compote, Indian oil burner and brass candle holders while Janet's items included an English silver tea set with a water irises and cranes pattern.

Margaret brought a reproduction of a medieval thimble from Ireland and a gold and turquoise brooch over 100 years old with the gold said to have come from a Bendigo mine.

Shirlie, who lived in India for some time, had some interesting items from that country's roadside sellers. There were brass and copper receptacles pilgrims used to bring back holy water from the Ganges and a paan box. Paan is a preparation of betel leaf and areca nut, chewed and then spat out or swallowed, used for its stimulant and euphoric effects.

Heather brought some tins including one of the Australian Red Ensign flag in the Anzac series, Sandie had wire model cars, reminiscent of her travels in Africa where children ran along the streets, towing the cars behind them while Alan showed a silver florin, Australia's first commemorative coin for the 1927 opening of Parliament House, Canberra.



Both Wilma and Robyn's items included a military theme. Robyn brought memorabilia from her grandfather's service on a World War 1 mine sweeper while Wilma brought jewellery fashioned from mother of pearl and the silver of two, shilling pieces, made by her father while serving in the airforce in New Guinea during World War 11.

Jacquie Schwind

## Creative Writing

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

- *The incessant wind kept blowing all night. It got quite violent at times, as we could hear branches being torn from trees and tin banging on the old shed*
- *They had been best friends for ever.*
- *The rail line stretched into the distance until meeting in a point at the horizon*

As usual we had a wide range of interpretations around use of the different topics. The favourite topic seemed to be "They had been best friends for ever", with others using the storm scene. The stories ranged from an attempted kidnapping of a dog after a relationship break down, best friends getting back together and forming a family, concern about telling a best friend about a wayward husband, and a holiday with a best friend. The storms covered a missing wife and another kidnapping.

We have tried something new for our classes in 2020. This month we workshopped Andrew's story about best friends in more detail. The story told of two ideas being sent to a planet as "humans" to try to save

the planet, giving them opposite appearance, skills and personalities. There was discussion about whether the story was Science Fiction or Supernatural, and whether there is any difference. Andrew found the feedback on his story very valuable, and we will explore how to continue the option for deeper workshopping a story in future classes.

Some of the class also prepared a story covering the March Furious Fiction competition criteria:

- *The story had to take place in a park*
- *The story had to include a mirror*
- *The story had to have someone in a disguise*

For our next class the topics are:

- *There was a secret meeting in the morning and she had to be there.*
- *For months I had been crying myself to sleep every night.*
- *It came in the mail*

To keep us writing while we are unable to meet, let's do the following:

- *Send your story to the rest of the class BEFORE the scheduled time for our next class on 13 April (so need to send the story by 12 April)*
- *Spend the scheduled time on 13 April reading the stories*
- *Share your feedback with the class on 13 April*
- *On 14 April I will send out a new set of topics for a "May" class.*

I have suggested using our scheduled class times to provide a bit of discipline as well as certainty as to when to expect the stories and the feedback.

Joy Shirley

## Demystifying Psychology

Having got off to such a great start we've been side-lined by a tiny microbe with a very loud message.

Perhaps like you, my focus has been my "tribe" – my three children and their families. Fears and changes rolled over us daily. Some incomes have gone, staff have been put off, businesses closed, or models changed (three times in one week for a cafe). Now we're relatively "settled" as well as respectful, intrigued and appreciative of the emerging new "normal".

So, what happened from psychosocial and economic perspectives? In a chat with a wise friend it was apparent my tribes had bunkered down to secure physiological (air, water, food, shelter, clothing) and safety needs, eg. income, health, security). You'll recognize this as Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. With physiological and safety needs secure (relative to this surreal time) my tribe is talking more about maintaining family and friend contacts in Stage 3 guidelines.



Had we at been meeting at U3A we might have been discussing:

- What theoretical perspectives describe your recent experiences?
- How has your preferred coping style varied? How might others have seen these changes?
- How are you nurturing yourselves? What are your daily self-kindnesses?
- Recent political and economic decisions reflect Maslow's theory. How?

Some interesting links at this time of considerable change.

1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs <https://youtu.be/wx3qR3gLh60>
2. Social distancing - "The Gruffalo" and Social Distancing <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-52149055>
3. Alice Springs News Online: Getting the crisis psychology right <https://www.alicespringsnews.com.au/2020/04/03/getting-the-crisis-psychology-right>
4. Mental Health Wellness Tips for Quarantine <https://www.facebook.com/margie.donlon.1/posts/10221877604477126>
5. Nona's Tips for Difficult times <https://www.facebook.com/maria.ratti.54/posts/2834792616603996>



6. Keeping up with family and friends. Social networking apps – Zoom, HouseParty, etc. Search your AppStore in Apple or Android. Learn! Ask a grandchild.

Stay connected and curious.

Jane Rushworth

## Exploring the Universe

### Scientists Discover A New Jupiter

At our March session we viewed “Jupiter. The Journey”, a three-part film that was custom made for us from many NASA films. (They are not copyright.)

Shrouded in coloured bands of swirling cloud, Jupiter fifth planet from the Sun has long been a mysterious giant. Composed of a deep outer atmosphere of gasses and a core of liquid metal hydrogen, a living creature would not survive there for one second.

In August 2016 a NASA spacecraft named Juno was launched on a journey of discovery, travelling 813 million kilometres to orbit Jupiter closer than any spacecraft ever has. The scientific aim is to unlock the secrets of the evolution of the Solar System.

When the data from Juno arrived back on Earth astronomers were amazed to find that all their previous theories about Jupiter were wrong. Though this latest study we are learning about a whole new Jupiter.

Part one of the film was the planning and preparation. Scientists and engineers explained their part in the project.

Part two “The Journey” was actual images and film from the spacecraft’s cameras, real video of the moon revolving around Earth. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzBISXgzqI>

Four moons revolving around Jupiter, first seen by Galileo in 1609.

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

Then graphs and sound of Juno crossing into the immense magnetic field with the bow shock similar to breaking the sound barrier on Earth. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CT\\_txWEo5I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CT_txWEo5I) Juno crossing the magnetosphere, the boundary between the Sun's magnetic field and Jupiter's.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKknp\\_wKBZc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKknp_wKBZc)

After a journey of five years Juno went into orbit around the planet. Juno is still orbiting close to Jupiter and sending back data and amazing images.

Part three. “The science”. Amongst other films contained: New Science from Jupiter.

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

NASA's Dr Steve Levin: The findings. It's a whole new Jupiter! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDKv-TZZL8E>

NASA has made its supercomputer available for research into COVID- 19.

We look forward to resuming Exploring the Universe. In the meantime, take care.

Bev Morton

We have just passed the equinox. These words were written by a ranger at Olympic National Park, Washington U.S.

“19 March at 14:28 ·

And then this happened.

Today is the vernal equinox.

The sun is crossing the sky along the celestial equator, directly above Earth's equator. Both of Earth's hemispheres are receiving the sun's rays equally. Here in the Northern hemisphere, days will start to be longer than the nights.

In the midst of global crisis, it feels strange - sometimes comforting, sometimes deeply surreal - that the rhythms of the natural world proceed as usual.

It's so very moving to be reminded that we all share this one beautiful world, and we are all in this together. I like the symbolism of this moment, with the sun shining equally on both halves of the Earth, for our common dreams, vulnerabilities, love for our families, and striving to care for one another."

Ranger Eliza, Olympic National Park, Washington USA

## Film as Literature

Our film for March was "Jojo Rabbit", a World War II satire that follows a lonely German boy whose world view is turned upside down when he discovers his single mother is hiding a young Jewish girl in their attic. Aided only by his idiotic imaginary friend, Adolf Hitler (played by Taika Waititi who wrote the screenplay and directed the film), Jojo must confront his blind nationalism. It was based on the book "Caging Skies" by Christine Leunens.

All members of the class agreed that the film was clever, with comments on the excellent usage of music. This was not an easy film, and some did not enjoy it, while acknowledging it as a great film. Others felt it was the best film they had seen this year. There was some humour which perhaps helped relieve the blackness of the storyline. It won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay.

The performance by Roman Griffin Davis as Jojo was extremely good. He showed the impact of the brainwashing of children, but also how meeting with the young Jewish girl, Elsa, changed his perception of those who he had been taught were "alien". One line stands out. At Jojo's request, Elsa draws a picture of where the Jews come from – it is a picture of Jojo's head. When Jojo questions this, she agrees – it is where they come from, in his head. We were alerted to how myths and rumours can impact on how people think. Another line worth noting is Elsa's comment: "You're not a Nazi, Jojo. You're a 10-year-old kid who likes dressing up in a funny uniform and wants to be part of a club".

Other comments were around the performance by Jojo's friend Yoriki, played by Archie Yates, Americanisation of some of the dialogue, and some great one-liners from Rebel Wilson's character. Shoes played an interesting role in the film, used in one of the most challenging scenes when Jojo finds his mother has been hanged by first seeing her shoes, and later with Jojo, previously unable to tie his own shoe-laces, able to tie Elsa's.

We felt that a younger audience may not have recognised some of the subtlety, although at one session some young people certainly appeared to enjoy the comedic aspects. We rated this as 4 out of 5, even those who had not actually enjoyed the film, acknowledging the cleverness and performances.

To keep us in touch while we are unable to meet let's do the following:

- *Watch a film before 8 April (our scheduled class time). This can be any film of your choice, from any source available to you*
- *On 8 April (our scheduled class time) write some comments on the film to share with the class.*
- *Send your comments to the whole of the class.*

Joy Shirley

## Garden Appreciation

We missed our trip to Shepparton in March, but we look forward to seeing some beautiful Spring gardens later in the year. In the meantime, keep gardening and enjoying our own little plot of dirt.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Garden Team

Our break for the long weekend has grown fearfully long but please remember that gardening is good for mood as well as weed control.

Stay safe.

Elsbeth Maconachie

## German – Conversation

The first class for the month fell on the public holiday. Undeterred, those who were not otherwise committed travelled to view musical shows at a member's home theatre in great comfort. Thank you, Horst for the

invitation and drinks, also Lin and Judy for the food. We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and will think of our last time together longingly, even as we look forward to repeating the experience at the end of the year. The second class was abruptly cancelled due to the U3A directive. We have quickly set ourselves up for many months of distance learning. Firstly, there is a 'phone a friend' set-up to speak German on a weekly basis to a different person month by month. Secondly, we have a different 'pen pal' every month with whom to practice our written communication weekly by email. Thirdly, a written piece will be circulated weekly to expand our comprehension, vocabulary and pronunciation. Perhaps our most ambitious project is to study a 4-act play, so that we can do a play reading at the end of the year when we are together again. The main challenge is how to get the material to everyone. We will also have a perpetual sentence, in which everyone will contribute. At the end of our confinement, we will have a story to tell. Lastly, several members will be individually tutored.

It's almost as if we were a group travelling down a road when this blockade set us another route, one by which we are travelling in different pairings. Our plan is to be so mentally busy doing our German that we get our minds off this coronavirus angst. Just keep well everyone!

Pauline Bailey

## German Elementary

There were no classes in March, due to the public holiday and then the sudden closure of all U3A. This means that there is a poor base on which to do any distance learning. Most students are going to work alone, with a few being tutored individually.

Pauline Bailey

## Let's Talk Books

What an about turn our life has taken recently. We were fortunate to have our gathering in early March at the Library before everything shut down and what a blessing it is to love reading as we do, it certainly fills in some time.

Our first book *Welcome to Country*, written by respected elder and author Professor Marcia Langdon is a new and inclusive guidebook to Indigenous Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, this book contains information on a wide range of subjects and made for very interesting reading.

Set in 1699 Melissa Ashley's latest book *The Bee and the Orange Tree* was a good read. Independent minded women in Paris came up against Louis XIV and the Catholic Church. Melissa also wrote *The Birdman's Wife* which some of our group had read. A Biography of John Howard was heavy going, whilst Carly Simon wrote of meeting Jacqueline Kennedy at a summer garden party, forming an unlikely friendship, Carly wrote of this in her book *Touched by the Sun*.

*Children of the Jacaranda Tree* by Sahar Delijani reveals secrets of post-revolutionary Iran, this book was a bit boring, but *The Girl from Munich* by Tania Blanchard, set in Germany in the closing years of WW2 inspired by the true story of a young German woman who fell in love was a popular read.

*The Mountbattens*, by Andrew Lownie, tells of Lord Louis being a major figure behind his nephew Phillip's marriage to Queen Elizabeth 11, if you are a history buff and a royalist this is a good read. *The Dutch House*, by Ann Patchett is very well written and enjoyed by several of our group.

*In Darkness Visible* by Tony Jones, an international political thriller set in Croatia in the 1990's. This is the second novel by this author whose first book *The Twentieth Man*, was well received. Enjoyed. Mention was made of the beautifully written books by Kent Haruf, he writes details of people's lives so well.

So, while we are confined to home, let's read many books and keep some details of what we read to discuss at our first meeting at the other end of this time of isolation. Keep well.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Investment

At the March meeting of Investment, we discussed the financial implications of COVID 19 to date, and how it could have a bigger impact on Australia than other countries because of our trade, international students and tourists from China. We noted that for the final week of February the all ordinaries was down 10.3% for the week as compared to the US market being down 12% for the same period.

We spoke about how the impact of COVID 19 had to an extent overshadowed the February 2020 Reporting Season. We looked at the charts of about 20 varied stocks and how their Net Profit after Tax and dividend to shareholders had impacted those charts.

We also discussed a new ASX All Technology Index and how it seemed to be a combination of two current indexes, namely the Information Technology Index and Consumer Services Index. We looked at their Top 10 Constituent stocks and found that they all fell into the large and medium cap stocks of the Information Technology Index and the Consumer Services Index.

Finally, we mentioned the share purchase plan available from Bendigo and Adelaide Bank which had had a successful Institutional Placement of \$250M and was now offering \$50M of new shares to retail investors. This offer closed on 13 March, and as the market fell substantially to this closing date, retail investors paid considerably less than the \$9.34 that Institutional investors had paid for each Bendigo share.

From 21 March 2020 U3A Benalla meetings have been suspended due to COVID-19 until the second semester.

You will all receive Email notification when we are allowed to recommence meetings.

Margaret Jenkins

## Meditation

By having to isolate ourselves, at last we will have an opportunity to slow down and take each moment as it happens. It is an ideal time to reflect on the 'now' and reflect on ourselves.

This is where meditation can help us all. Meditation is a process of 'letting go' our 'attachment' to our thoughts and feelings. We become mindful, that is, we become aware of our thoughts and become involved with our thinking. In meditation, we let go of our thinking and the thought falls away, though another thought may rise and if we don't 'attach to it, it will fall away.

If you find that life is getting a bit anxious, you are worrying about the current world-wide situation, sit for a while and use the tools that we have been given and meditate and be calm. We have the opportunity to stop and smell the roses - now is the time to do so.

Caroline Sims

## Music Appreciation

Continuing our celebration of "Beethoven 2020" and shadowing the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's line up of music for March, it was again a mixture of the old and the very new, perhaps stretching a little bit the "Appreciation" side of our musical presentations.

In one programme the very old was a Bach orchestral suite and the very new an excerpt from an Antarctic Symphony by Australian composer – Gordon Hamilton. In between - a Beethoven Piano Trio and the glorious Grieg Piano Concerto.

The second programme - enjoyed "remotely" - featured Beethoven's 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony, Kodaly's "Dances of Galanta", the finale to Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov, a movement from Schumann's 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony and an Excerpt from "Woven Song" by Australian composer – Deborah Cheetham.

You can read all about it and listen to the music by visiting the Music Appreciation page of the U3A website where you will find explanatory notes and the relevant video links.

Bill Squire

## Page Turners

Due to the Coronavirus threat, and further restrictions being introduced, Page Turners will not be meeting until further notice. Should the situation change, I will be in touch. Happy reading in the meantime.

Helen Scheller

## Politics and Current Affairs

We came to an abrupt end but so did many other activities. If you'd like to share some short pieces please send them to Heather at [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com).

Here's my first contribution:-

"The virus was organized by the Democrats." D Trump

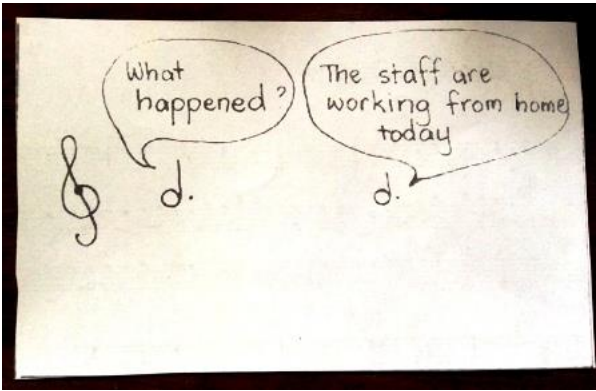
"The virus was a Chinese plot:" D. Trump

Has he found the plot or just lost it?

Let's wish our politicians clearer heads in their decision-making.

Terry Case

## Recorder



It feels like we hardly got started for the year and we have had to stop!

Music is playing an important role in the lockdown process, as it does all the time.

Keep practising!

Janet Douglas

## Singing for Fun

We have seen some changes to Singing during the month of March.

During the first week our pianist Gwen Barnes was not able to play for us due to ill health. We saw Faith Hicks playing the piano for Kieran Smith who did a great job introducing us to a medley of Australiana songs. Faith also played for Margaret Merriman, whilst Brian Greed organised and played for his section of the program. Harmony saw Gwen Barnes back playing the piano which was great.

The second Singing for Fun session for the month saw Faith away and Gwen playing for Kieran. As it was two days after St. Patrick's Day and Kieran coming from Ireland, we all enjoyed his session of Irish songs, most of which we knew quite well. Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman chose some old favourite songs for their sections of the program which were also enjoyed by all.

We are sorry to learn that one of our long-time members, Gwen Cheetham has been unwell and has been in Wangaratta hospital. We all signed a card for Gwen and hope to see her back with us soon.

During the latter part of March, we observed increased spacing of our choir due to the appearance of COVID-19 in Victoria.

On Saturday 21 March 2020 U3A Benalla suspended all groups until the end of the first Semester. Hence there will be no Singing for Fun, Harmony or Community Singing until we receive notification that groups such as ours may recommence.

Our Singing for Fun and Harmony members have been telling us that they would prefer to start at 9.45am instead of 9.30am. This will happen when we recommence in Semester 2.

Margaret Jenkins

## Stock and Land

As passionate members of the Harry Ferguson Tractor Club of Australia, Geoff Lee and Maxine Gardiner of Molyullah, spoke about the legendary little grey tractors at our March Stock and Land gathering.

Geoff said the club was dedicated to helping fellow members in their restoration and preservation of the tractors, associated implements and memorabilia.

He said one member had about 100 Fergys while he and Maxine owned 14. There are about 800 members Australia wide.

Key to the success of the tractors, was Harry's invention of three-point linkage hydraulics in 1932, enabling implements to be accurately and easily operated.

That was largely motivated by Henry Ford's Fordson tractors of the time, having a most disagreeable habit of rearing over backwards and killing the driver, if the attached trailed plough for example snagged a stump.

In 1948 the first Ferguson tractors in Australia, petrol TEA 20 models, sold for 650 to 680 pounds (\$1300 to \$1360)



Production finished in 1956 with 517,651 little grey tractors made in that time. There were petrol, diesel, kerosene and lamp oil models made for different markets.

Geoff said all parts, except engine blocks, are still made for the tractors.

Maxine told the group that members annually made substantial and rugged group trips on their tractors. In 2013, a memorable one involved 12 tractors driving from Cooktown to the tip of Cape York and that involved Geoff and Maxine towing a tractor 3000km, just to get to Cooktown. Others came from Tasmania and WA.

The Cape trip involved negotiating basic roads at 15km/hr and diesel tractors in the group, towing petrol models through numerous river crossings on the Laura, Coen, Weipa, Bamaga route.

David Palmer

## Sustainability

These are extraordinary times when we are all threatened by the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In our final session before the cancellation of our program we discussed the question, "Does more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere help plants grow?"

The scientific study we were discussing indicated that more carbon dioxide does make plants more efficient. This is because photosynthesis (the process essential for growth) relies on using the sun's energy to synthesise sugar out of CO<sub>2</sub> and water. Plants use this sugar as an energy source and the basic building blocks for growth. When the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air around the plant goes up, it can be taken up faster, supercharging the rate of photosynthesis.

We humans are producing more carbon dioxide which is causing more plant growth, however this does not mean that producing more CO<sub>2</sub> is a good thing. And it definitely does not mean that we should use the concept of carbon dioxide fertilisation to downplay the severity of climate change. While more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere does allow the landscape to absorb more CO<sub>2</sub> (a little over a quarter), almost half of our emissions remain in the atmosphere.

The authors say their research highlighted the capacity of plants to absorb a proportion of human emissions, slowing the rate of climate change. They point out that this underscores the urgency to protect and restore ecosystems like forests, savannas and grassland and secure their carbon stock.

The authors also conducted research into how different aged forests around the world take up carbon. They found that young forests, often regrowing on abandoned agricultural land, draw down even more carbon dioxide than old-growth forests. In a mature forest, the death of old trees balances the amount of wood grown each year. A regrowing forest, on the other hand, is still accumulating wood, and that means it can act as a considerable sink for carbon until it reaches maturity.

Adding this age effect to the carbon dioxide fertilisation effect make young forests potentially very strong carbon sinks and so reforestation should be encouraged to enlarge the area of regrowing forests.

While our U3A sessions are shut down I will be providing class members some articles to read so that we all stay well informed. One interesting link I provided to them was to a [climate change tracker](#), where after entering the year you were born, you can see how temperatures have changed over our lifetimes, and how we can mitigate future impacts if we all work to lower our emissions.

John Lloyd

## Tech Savvy Projects: Family Research

We had a promising start to the year! Individual interviews with most new members were followed by a hardworking session using both the U3A meeting room and office. New and old members quickly became immersed in working on their family trees, setting the scene for the coming months. The grim reality of the corona virus pandemic was yet to set in...

As COVID-19 guidelines began to be released, we realised it would be hard to maintain the required social distance when mentoring class members using [ancestry.com](#). We were just about send out emails cancelling upcoming classes when the Executive decided to cease all courses and activities until further notice.

We are planning to make contact with members over the coming month to talk about how we can continue to provide them with support during their family history journey.

Beverley Lee and Wendy Sturgess

## Tech Savvy Apple Devices – Beginners

This month we revised researching the internet through the Safari App. Two of the best links in helping you with operating your device are:



Stating the problem in the Google search bar and then choosing a site.

Be Connected - Topic Library

We revised entering events into the Calendar App and discovered that birthdays were automatically listed from your Contacts List. But the birth date has first to be entered in the Contact List. Mickey Mouse was our practice contact-

He is going to turn 92 on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

A great discovery was being able to put the U3A Benalla website directly onto the home screen of an iPad or iPhone. It really was very easy!

We all had great fun discovering many of the features in the Camera App. This is a 10 second time lapse photo of the group taken with the 'front camera'.

And our last session was spent looking at the Email App focussing on writing, attaching photos and sending.



Jenny Sawyer

## Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Intermediate



Finally, the Apple TV was all set up; attached to the U3A TV and ready to use. The Intermediate group were the first group to experience the device. (In the weeks since practice is making perfect.) The Apple TV enables a presenter to screen mirror their device onto the TV. So navigating functions on an iPad can be demonstrated on the big screen. We looked at bookmarking internet sites. We put the Benalla U3A website on to the home screen. We had a great play with the Camera App and made a Tech Savvy Folder to keep the 'experimental' photos in. This is a 10 second time lapse photo taken of the group with the front camera.

Jenny Sawyer

## Tech Savvy Talks

On Wednesday 11th March Tech Savvy Talks watched a comprehensive survey on approximately 20 Electric Vehicles of various makes spread across America, Europe and China. Electric Vehicles are starting to insert themselves into the motoring culture in these 3 continents and the vehicles were loaned to people who belonged to the socio-economic strata of society that would be likely to purchase Electric Vehicles. The purpose of the survey was to assess the suitability of Electric Vehicles by people who would use them.

The broad outcome of the survey was that while the cars were extremely comfortable to drive there was a certain anxiety regarding the range of each vehicle. The range of all vehicles was under 200 miles and not all countries as yet have satisfactory facilities for recharging etc. This proved a definite minus to most people. Also, in the USA in winter heating the car draws on power and lessens the range. Some people had to spend longer than what was convenient recharging their car. Some had trouble finding recharge facilities. All these issues led most people in the USA say they would stay with Petrol Cars for the time being. People in China and Europe fared much better as facilities are much better in these countries.

Because of the vast distances involved in travel in Australia a certain amount of infrastructure will have to be installed before Electric Vehicles are suitable for Australia.

We also viewed how a Hydrogen powered car works. A Hydrogen Car is powered by hydrogen panels producing electric current that drives an electric motor. This is quite a complicated system but there has been a lot of development and Hydrogen Cars are something for the future. There is no pollution as only water comes out the exhaust pipe. The cost of Hydrogen is competitive with Petroleum and there is no problem with range.

As a total change of subject in the second hour we viewed the building of a new Quantum Computer and listened to the explanation of how the properties of Quantum Theory are made use of.

Neville Gibb

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## U3A Newsletter and Website during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Convenors** - please continue to send in **reports** if you have made alternative arrangements for your groups to continue (eg writing groups) or if you have things to report on (for example, an overview of what is happening in 'Investments'; events occurring when 'Exploring the Universe', and so on.)

**Members** – please send in your **thoughts, ideas, stories** – for example Terry Case has suggested historical book recommendations for 'Armchair History', or short pieces on politics/current affairs (see Terry's contribution in 'Politics'); Heather has suggested sending in items on how technology is helping you cope during social distancing (see A Message from the Newsletter Editor on page 2) – or **photos** of you in your study during social distancing and isolation; or of patchwork projects you have finished, and more.

Please send items to [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com) by 25<sup>th</sup> April, May, June.

For more information contact Heather 0418 353 244 or Bev 0478 607 838.

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## This Time Last Year!

What was happening at U3A Benalla in April 2019?

Link here to the [April 2019 Newsletter!](#)

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