



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – December 2020

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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Please send all newsletter items for the newsletter to newsletter@u3abenalla.com by 25 Dec 2020

President's Report

As Dorothy our President goes through the process of moving house, I am happy to give her report this month. Our sympathy to Rupe Cheetham and family on the passing of Gwen. Gwen will be missed very much in U3A. Hopefully, all those who have been unwell are feeling much better as restrictions begin to lift and the future looks brighter.

Many of our members are enquiring about the possibility of resuming our activities in the near future. The negotiations with Council and venues such as the Bowls Club are continuing. The Benalla Bowls Club have been very helpful, but as they run their rooms as a business we have to fit around their ongoing commitments. It is a real possibility we will be using their facilities for some of 2021. Council still cannot give us a definite answer as to when we can use our room at the Seniors complex, but we continue to talk with them.

The committee have had another Zoom meeting and are confident of having a real face meeting next week, as timetables and venues for 2021 need to be finalised. The committee moved that enrolment fees for existing members in 2021 will be waived, new members will still have to pay enrolment fees.

Some of the smaller groups are looking forward to having a reunion before Christmas, in the form of lunch or a gathering in the gardens. We are also holding an informal pre-Christmas social gathering for all U3A members under the trees near the Benalla Art Gallery on Wednesday 16 December from 10 to 11.30 am – bring your own chair, beverages and morning tea.

A newsletter with further information and an Enrolment Form will be sent out in January informing everyone of our movements for the first semester.

Have a Happy Christmas everyone and may 2021 be a much better year all round.

Geraldine McCorkell

Secretary

Christmas 'Meet and Mingle' in the Benalla Gardens!

A chance to catch up with U3A friends in the beautiful gardens next to the Art Gallery before Christmas!

Wednesday 16 December from 10.00 to 11.30 am.

'BYO' morning tea; tea/coffee/beverages, cups, chair, cushion and 'decoration'.

Covid-19 regulations and weather permitting!

Group Reports

A Different History of Germany

The history of Germany can be classed as controversial on several levels. For instance - when did Germany come into existence. We all have our own view on history but can we say with confidence - who was German? We will be looking into such subjects over several weeks.

Before our Covid hiatus we had one session on the German connection with the UK Royal Family.

The conventional history of Germany can be split into a number of periods.

1. The pre Empire.
2. The Empire period
3. The Weimar period.
4. The Nazi period.
5. The German Democratic Republic period.

We will be concentrating on the evolution of German Culture and certain aspects consistent with all periods.

Neville Gibb

Armchair Traveller

The continuance of this group is dependent on contributions by members. I realise that due to Covid there will have been no recent travelling but just the same we are looking for contributions which are always of interest, and the travel may have been taken some years ago.

I, personally, have no recent travels of interest and would appreciate the co-operation of attendees.

Furthermore, I have no talent with technology, so it is an absolute must that I receive assistance with the presentation of Videos etc.

I trust that next year will be a more fulfilling year and wish you all the very best.

Ray O'Shannessy

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

Our afternoon tea meeting at 'The Northo' on Monday 23 November was splendid! It was wonderful to be together again, although there was a tinge of awkwardness at first. It seemed odd to feel 'uncaged', to believe that our shackles had been lifted. Before long we relaxed, shared news of our lives, then moved on to share stories on November theme "Triggers". Stories were shared titled 'Aprons', 'Swagmen', 'Mr. Gilmartin's Store'; 'I've Played at Royal Melbourne'; 'Slowing Down' and 'Summertime', while Ray shared an earlier 'Back in the day' story about owning a Benalla laundromat, triggering a number of us to think about laundromats we have known! Other stories shared on the website have been based on triggers relating to 'Renovations', 'Marriage', and 'Challenges'. A beautiful story by Helen Duggin on the theme 'This Life' has also been added to the website.

Holiday topics to share at our first meeting in late February (or earlier if you would like to add them to your webpage):

'One Moment, This Year' "Looking back on 2020, what single moment stands out for you? Whether it be loss, love, discovery or disappointment, share your unforgettable moment."

'A Love Letter to Travel' "Write a love letter to travel about one place in the world that is special to you. It can be a popular tourist destination, or a place that's largely overlooked. You might inspire someone else to go there one day, or to reconsider their assumptions, or to spark their inquisitiveness about a new piece of the world — all the empowering things that travel brings to our lives. (Some additional prompts to help you: How did this place change your perception about something? What do you wish more people understood about this destination? Did you have an experience there that couldn't have happened anywhere else? What would you miss most if you couldn't visit this place for a long time).

This topic was suggested recently by the New York Times... "while the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted global travel in unprecedented ways ...and we can't know what lies ahead, we can still share the places we've loved, and continue to inspire curiosity, open-mindedness and awe for the wider world."

If you are thinking of joining 'As Time Goes By' next year, feel free to start writing on these topics ready for our first meeting in late February. All welcome.

Bev Lee

Bird Watching

Our final activity for 2020 was held on Thursday 12 November, when our group of 6 visited the Broken River Natural Features Reserve for a morning walk. This small reserve close to Benalla supports a good variety of native birds. The vegetation is a mix of large Grey Box trees, River Red Gums, understorey shrubs, plus grassland and of course the Broken River.

We had good views of White-throated Treecreepers and a Varied Sittella. Both these birds probe the bark on eucalypt tree for insects. The treecreepers usually work their way up the tree trunk, while the smaller sittellas start high and work down the tree. The raucous screeches of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos made it hard to hear other birds. We did see Australian King-Parrot, plus Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, and had good views of several Olive-backed Orioles, a new bird for our list for this reserve. Also seen were Brown-headed Honeyeater, Striated Pardalote, a male Rufous Whistler singing from a high branch, and a Black Duck which flew out of a hollow in a River Red Gum. We recorded 33 bird species for the morning. Our bird list can be viewed on eBird.



White-throated Treecreeper – Andie Stevenson

<https://ebird.org/australia/checklist/S76173519>

Andie pointed out a patch of native Blue Devil plants (*Eryngium ovinum*) which are easily mistaken for thistles.

We had no luck tracking down any Scarlet Honeyeaters which are rare spring visitors to northern Victoria. But one of members had a very brief visit of a Regent Honeyeater to her bird bath several weeks ago. That's an even rarer bird in Benalla.

Our morning walk was followed by a most enjoyable morning tea at Green n Grow Garden Centre.

On a sad note, our thoughts are with Rupe Cheetham on the recent loss of his wife Gwen after a long illness. Rupe has been a regular member of the Birdwatching group since it started.

Kathy Costello

Bushwalking – Easy Walks

Wednesday 4 November – Myrtleford Mosaic Trail

"Amblers"

Well, this was an adventure....

After meeting together in Rotary Park, we "Amblers" parted from the "Ramblers" and headed along Barwidgee Creek to our first stop under the Great Alpine Road bridge. We were in search of ceramic tiles made by two ladies of the town and whimsically placed on trees and rocks (and the underside of this bridge!) all along the footpath. Here there was a collection of ducks and frogs and all manner of under-bridge dwellers. Walking on a well-made track along the banks of the Ovens River - which was gloriously full and flowing vigorously - we found wallabies and ants, echidnas and birds, snakes and abstract arts and even little doors at the base of some trees. All ceramics of course. Many of the trees had bird boxes on their trunks and there were occasional glimpses across the paddocks back to town and forward to the high country ahead. What a



delight for visitors young and old alike. The natural peace and quiet of our river walk was occasionally enlivened with bird song and dog walkers and lunchtime joggers, all very welcome, and of course, the sounds of cheerful chatter within our group. About 2km along the track, at Apex Park, we met up briefly with the Ramblers before they charged off again and we turned around and headed back at an even more leisurely pace than before to our lunch stop beside the historic log tobacco kiln in Rotary Park. A splendid day's outing.

Ian Maver

"Ramblers"

As the "Amblers" turned right to study the mosaics under the Barwidgee Creek bridge, the "Ramblers" bounced across the swing bridge and set off on the 2km track along the Ovens, enjoying the sounds of the birds and the rushing water, and keeping an eye out for mosaics hidden on rocks and tree routes. At Apex Park we stopped for a morning tea break and admired the painted walls of the amenities-birds, mountains and trees covered every wall. But we needed to move on before the Amblers caught up, so set off to connect with the Rail Trail and do a circuit of the town. Along the way, we found mosaic balloons floating up an old brick wall, and spent some time studying the Big Tree, an ancient red gum, and the Phoenix tree. With about 5km under our belts we returned under the Barwidgee Bridge for more mosaics, and enjoyed lunch under the trees with the Amblers. The rain kindly held off all day.

The Myrtleford Mosaic Trail has both an active Facebook page, and a website, myrtlefordmosaictrail.com.au. It is a great way of adding interest to a walk for young and old.

Julie McNeill

Wednesday 18 November – Australian Botanic Gardens at Shepparton

"Amblers"

On this, the occasion of our last walk for the year, we Amblers were indistinguishable from the sprightly Ramblers as we all assembled at the site of the Australian Botanic Gardens in Shepparton. Here on a fine sunny day we enjoyed a "new generation botanical experience". Roused by encouraging words from our fearless leaders we set out for the very summit of Honeysuckle Rise. The views across the Goulburn Valley and on towards the distant ranges from this lookout were well worth the effort and we were treated to the themed Residence and Refugee Gardens as we passed along the way. Workers could be seen developing the Terrace Garden site at the far end of Honeysuckle Rise. No oxygen was required during the ascent. From here the groups began to scatter going down the zig zag path towards the billabong, the Goulburn River, the wetlands and the surrounding native forest. My path took me past the Weaving Garden along the Billabong Walk and out to the delightful Children's Garden with its splendid abstract metal structures and a curious little hut. It is inspiring to be able to meander within such a peaceful area, previously a landfill tip, that now celebrates the glories of nature and the ambitions of a caring mankind. Lunch at the Billabong Garden Complex and Kitchen Café was a splendid conclusion to the day's outing.

Ian Maver

"Ramblers"

Wednesday November 18th saw the walking group set off early for a visit to the Australian Botanic Gardens at Shepparton, with a rest break at Victoria Lake to regroup and check our directions. The Gardens, regenerated from the old Kialla landfill, are an amazing insight into the use of previously waste land, owing their design and planting in part to auspicing by the Australian Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne, and also to an active Friends group.

There were a variety of walking trails both on the flat and towards the summit, and both the Amblers and Ramblers tackled the challenge of the lookout, being rewarded with 360° views across the Goulburn Valley. Intriguing formal themed gardens, well stocked with indigenous plants, cascade down to the billabong and the Weaving and Children's gardens. After spending over an hour exploring, our group of 14 retreated to lunch under the wisteria at the locally run Billabong cafe and nursery.

The Friends' Facebook page, Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton, is a great introduction to the activities and sights at the Gardens.

Julie McNeill

With two wonderful walks in November, each with 'Amblers' and 'Ramblers' groups, lots of photographs were taken. Andi Stevenson added a post to U3A Benalla's Facebook page which contains many photographs complete with commentary, while many other photos – taken by group members including Ian, Fujiie, Tomoko, Wendy, Andi and Margaret - are included on the website.

Easy Walks End of Year Gathering

U3A Benalla Easy Walkers - End of Year Gathering

Baileys' Winery, Glenrowan

Friday 4 December 2020

Meet at the Seniors Community Centre Car Park at 11 am.

'News Flash'

We welcome the Convenors for 2021, Julie McNeill and Glen Chessells and the keen walks committee who are planning an interesting program for next year. We will recommence walks on Wednesday, 3 March 2021 ... watch this space!

Margaret Walshe and Wendy Sturgess

Bush Walking - Mid-Week Walks

REPORT

Wednesday 11 November 2020 MT TIMBERTOP



Wednesday November 11th's Benalla Bushwalking Club mid-week bushwalk, led by John Boehm, was at Mt. Timbertop, near Sheeppark Flat. A steeply rising track, which challenged most of us, zigzagged through dense forest, followed by a short but difficult (for short-legged walkers!) rock scramble up to the Plateau, where we took a well-earned break for lunch.

The colourful Spring wildflowers increased in number as we ascended, much to the delight of keen photographers.

Three different smart? phone apps registered three different distances walked. The consensus was 5.5 (approx.). Luckily, we avoided the predicted late storms, so were able to enjoy warm weather, but not the haze impairing panoramic views of the valley below.

Despite misgivings, the descent was less slippery and a lot quicker than the ascent: the sooner to tuck into our habitual afternoon tea, shared in the car park picnic ground.

Bev Thornell

*P.S. Yes, our group did pause at 11 am for the One Minute Silence.

NEXT WALK

Wednesday 9th December 2020 MT GLENROWAN S- 3 -3

The walk is on the ridge track starting from the Taminick Gap road and begins with a steepish climb up onto the ridge thereafter an easy walk to Mt Glenrowan to enjoy the view. About 10 km.

Meet 9.15 am at the Tennis Courts Barkly St (behind Aldi)

Leave Benalla 9.30 am

Leader: John Boehm Mobile: 0428254801

John Boehm

Collectors

I haven't been able to part with Garfield yet.

With the exception of my childhood 1960s teddy bear and my late sister's 1950s battered and well-hugged teddy, he's the only soft toy I own.

Garfield was bought in 1988 at Surfers Paradise where I stayed while visiting World Expo 88 in Brisbane. You might remember the over \$600 million, six month long event with 100 pavilions, 36 participating countries and 18 million visitors.

Garfield began in 1976 as an American comic strip called Jon after Garfield's owner, Jon Arbuckle, and was created by cartoonist Jim Davis. Garfield's name and personality came from Jim's cantankerous grandfather, James A Garfield Davis.

The strip became Garfield in 1978 and in 2013 it took the Guinness World Record for the most widely syndicated comic strip.

Known for his laziness, sarcasm and eating, Garfield hates Mondays, diets and any exertion. His favorite food is lasagna but, over the years, he has slimmed down gradually and now walks on two feet instead of four.



Call me naive, but I recently learned *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* was only created in 1939 for an American store, Montgomery Ward, by copy writer, Robert May. The other reindeer of Santa Claus are from the 1823 poem, *A Visit From St Nicholas* by Clement Clarke Moore, which we know as *The Night Before Christmas*.

Rudolph began life as a free Montgomery Ward colouring-in book for children at Christmas time and singing cowboy, Gene Autry, recorded the now famous song in 1949.

Wishing Collectors' members and the wider Benalla U3A community a very bright Christmas and New Year.

Jacquie Schwind

Creative Writing

Our Creative Writing class has continued with members selecting from a list of topics to write a story and then share with the class. After reading the stories, the members are providing feedback to the authors.

The topics for our November class were:

- **(We) walked slowly down to the edge of the trees.**
- **She turned an excited gaze upon me**
- **At eight (Edwina) brought (me) a cup of tea**

The stories this month were much more “upbeat”. There were happy endings, parties, a group of “little people” dancing under a Morton Bay Fig tree, a treat for an elderly relative. And as an extra contribution not using the prompts, we had an ancient Druid meeting up with a modern tourist at Stonehenge.

Our next class is scheduled for **14 December**, so stories are due before then so we can share feedback around the date of our next class. The choices are:

- **By half past eight they had all arrived**
- **This was a new light on...**
- **Who's that woman in the photo?**

This is also the date for our pre-Christmas catch up at a local café. I am still collecting names for participants. And we have decided to keep writing over the Christmas break, so there will be some new

prompts for sharing in January. If anyone else would like to write on any of these topics, please send them to me at jshirley@internode.on.net and I will forward to the class, and also share the stories from the class with you.

Joy Shirley

Demystifying Psychology

Is time flying by oddly quickly during Covid for you? Or does time seem slower than a wet week in winter?

I am sure Xmas was only 4 months ago. Yet here we go again. My mind is struggling to make sense of the pace of time this Covid year. I am certain the Xmas decorations on display are leftovers from Xmas 2019. Familiar?

On the other hand, you may have experienced 2020 time as “slower than a wet winter”.

Either way, the following article might interest you. The author confirms what many are reporting – time warping.

Is time flying by oddly quickly during Covid 19? Here's why you may feel that way. (Rachel Schnalzer, Audience Engagement Editor. Los Angeles Times. May 1, 2020.

A few weeks ago (it seems) in April, the Demystifying Psychology group ran an experiment to find out how zoom could work for us as a “meeting” tool. In May about 12 U3A members and guests began fortnightly “meetings”. Mastering Zoom was fun – “Unmute ... can't hear you.” “Move the screen. Love your fridge, but we want to see you”. We picked up most of our skills from experience held within the group, pulled up our sleeves and started exploring, discussing, and having fun.

I am indebted to participants for generating an enticing menu of discussion topics. This year we have researched and discussed:

Forensic Psychology including stalking, psychopathy, sociopathy, forensic interviewing, eyewitness reports, how to spot a liar, and theories of crime.

U.S. President Donald Trump and his family of origin, his psychological profile, Trump supporters and why they support him.

Fake news including the main types of fake news, its role in U.S. elections and on-line dating, and how todays parents and teachers support children to evaluate real vs fake news.

Psychology of religion, theoretical perspectives, spiritualism, and religion as “social control”, “ritual”, “virus” and “mother”.

Bev Lee has been a wonderful support by loading the discussion group content on to the U3A website. (Thank you Bev). So, it is there if a topic piques your interest.

Back to “Covid Time” – given the range of topics covered it seems logical that Xmas 2019 was not 4 months ago! Still, emotionally time still seems to have warped. How have you experienced time in 2020?

Speaking of time, put aside **1 pm on Friday 18th December – our final Zoom session for 2020.** My place and yours! It will be ‘Christmassy’, quite irreverent, and hopefully lots of fun.

I hope this has been a valuable year for you. Perhaps we will “meet” in 2021 to discuss many more interesting topics in Demystifying Psychology?

Thanks everyone for your contributions to discussions. Stay safe, enjoy catching up with friends and family, and **Merry Xmas.**

Jane Rushworth

Exercises for Fun

Wow! What a year it has been, due to COVID 19! Hopefully you have all been able to do some kind of exercise over this period, and hopefully (like me) you are looking forward to the time when we can meet again to resume our exercise regime. Meantime, Mel & I wish you all a wonderful Christmas Season with family & friends, and with a bit of luck, we will see you all once again, in the New Year, when we can get fit together.

Best Christmas Wishes.

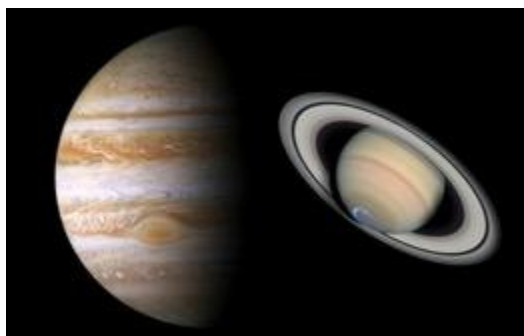
Helen Jeffree

Exploring the Universe

A rare Conjunction of Planets, Jupiter and Saturn

On December 21st 2020, the giant gas planet Jupiter and the beautiful ringed planet Saturn will appear to only be separated by 0.1 degree in the night sky. From our perspective, they will share the same celestial address and may appear as one bright star but should be able to be separated by the naked eye. Viewed through a telescope Jupiter and some of its moons will share the same eyepiece with Saturn and its spectacular rings.

(The astrologists are going crazy, but this event will have no bearing on your future whatsoever!)



A conjunction occurs when two or more objects or planets are located along the same line of sight from Earth.

The planets orbit the Sun anti clockwise on almost the same plane, known as the Ecliptic. Jupiter and Saturn are the 5th & 6th planets from the Sun so have longer orbits than the inner planets. The conjunction occurs every 20 years when Jupiter the inside runner catches up to Saturn. Saturn has completed 20 of its 30 years orbit and Jupiter has completed one 12-year orbit and 2/3 of its next orbit. Jupiter will pass Saturn and during the next decade draw away to the east in our night sky.

Most astronomers say this conjunction will be the closest since July 16 1623, although U.S. Rice University Professor of Astronomy Patrick Hartigan claims they were closer on March 4 1226. One thing for sure is that they won't appear to be as close together again in our night sky until 2080, so don't miss this one!

You can easily see bright Jupiter and the fainter Saturn close together in the western sky and watch their progress from now on. From December 16th they will appear to be separated by less than the diameter of the full Moon and gradually draw closer.

We measure vast distances in the Solar System in Astronomical Units (au) 150 million kms, the distance of Earth from the Sun. Jupiter is 5 au from Earth and Saturn 10 au from us.

References: Scitech Daily, Science Alert, Jamie Carter science writer.

We wish all members of U3A a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Bev Morton

Film as Literature

November was another month of watching and writing about films we have seen during the month.

The Sapphires (2012): a musical/comedy/drama telling the story of four Aboriginal girls from a mission who managed to sing their way to fame as the Sapphires who entertained American troops in Vietnam. This was fitting as our class was during NAIDOC week. Rated as 4/5. (one of the girls retired to Rumbalara, the Yorta Yorta co-op just out of Shepparton. She died a few years ago.)

Tinker Sailor Soldier Spy (2011): This is a drama, mystery and thriller, based on John le Carré's novel. In the bleak days of the Cold War, espionage veteran George Smiley is forced from semi-retirement to uncover a Soviet Agent within MI6. Rated as 3.5/5.

The Passionate Stranger (1957): This is a story within a story, with the real story shot in black-and-white and the imagined story shot in colour, to help keep you on track. A chauffeur gets the wrong idea when he reads his lady boss's erotic novel and believes the novel is telling a "real life" story and that she is in love with him. Rated as 3-3.5/5

A Beautiful Day In The Neighbourhood (2019): Based on the real life story of Fred Rogers it offers a message about acceptance and understanding, of a man living a story of kindness triumphing over cynicism. It was less interesting as it was based on the American children's TV presenter who was little known in Australia. Rated as 2.5/3.

63 Up (2020): Director Michael Apted revisits the same group of British-born adults he has been interviewing every seven years since they were 7 years old. They are now 63. The subjects are interviewed as to the changes that have occurred in their lives during the last seven years. Rated as 5/5 as it is a favourite series.

We are continuing with this approach for the class as the group is enjoying the variety of films and comments. We would welcome anyone who wishes to participate by sharing thoughts about films they have watched and interested in hearing comments about films others have watched. You can send me a message on jshirley@internode.on.net. Contributions are due by **9 December** for our next "class". We will continue this approach for 2021 until we are able access a film at BPACC

Joy Shirley

Garden Appreciation



What a year we have had, with only a February outing. It was lovely to meet new members then. Hopefully you will be back in 2021. To our (old) members, it will be great to see everyone again. Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year, stay safe.

Gwen Turner

Photos - "Early morning, Benalla" and "My Hollyhock hits the rooftop"



German

The German language group met 3 times within a 4 week period from late October to read the comedy 'Romulus the Great' by Swiss playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

The final activity for the year has been the collation of personal experiences about Covid-19. Contributors received two copies in their inbox: one containing the original contributions and, to help our learning, another edited version.

Looking back on the year, there has been plenty of German presented to members despite all the difficulties of isolation. This is due in no small part to the enthusiasm of co-convenors Janet Martens and Horst Gunther, as well as of members of the group. Danke schön.

Fröhliche Weihnachten und Fröhliches Neues Jahr!

Pauline Bailey

Investment

At our first meeting in November we looked at Stocks which showed a promising chart during 2020 compared to the four big Banks and Telstra. Most of these companies had shown considerable upside during 2020, with several also showing a healthy dividend yield.

At our second meeting we noted that the market had broken out of the tight trading range that had been the pattern since June 2020 with a 3.5% surge in one week in November. The outcome of the American elections indicated a Democrat President and a Republican Senate which some commentators deemed to be the most favourable outcome for the American market, and possibly our market also.

Our final meeting for 2020 will be held on Friday 4th December 2020 at 2pm by Zoom.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your participation in Investment during 2020 and to wish you a Happy Christmas and a distinctly different and more sociable 2021.

Margaret Jenkins

Let's Talk Books

I hope everyone has been busily reading over the last few weeks. If anyone has lent books to members of our group and would like them back before Christmas, please let me know as I have a number of books here from our first meetings this year.

Our group will continue in 2021, not quite sure where as yet, but that will be decided before we begin in February. Hope Christmas is a happy one for you and we look forward to a better year ahead.

Geraldine McCorkell

Meet and Mingle

On the Wednesday 16 December 2020, a "Meet and Mingle" will be held in the Benalla Gardens for U3A members who wish to attend. It will be the final opportunity for members to get together before Christmas. The activity will commence at 10am until 11.30am. As we have done previously, bring your own chair, beverages and morning tea. We will be able to meet without masks as long as we maintain our social distance.

Bill Parris

Music Appreciation

The final month of our U3A musical journeying has seen us staying close to Beethoven as his world-wide 250th anniversary celebrations draw to a close. There have been a couple of jumps ahead to the 20th century in the first session as we explored the 'jazziness' of George Gershwin's Concerto in F played with "pizzazz" by an 18yo soloist, before allowing ourselves to be wafted away by Debussy's Sonata for flute, viola and harp. But after that it was Beethoven all the way: his one and only Violin Concerto, the Waldstein Piano Sonata, a Bagatelle "Für Elise" (whoever she was), and finally the monumental 9th Symphony with its message of the universal brotherhood of mankind to wrap up both the year and our acknowledgement of the place Beethoven occupies in musical history.

To say that we have explored Beethoven in depth would be to stretch the truth, but amongst the many of his compositions we have featured, we at least have included all of the "Top 20" as voted by the listening public in the ABC Classic FM Beethoven Top 100" survey.

You can check out all of our twice-monthly sessions on the Music Appreciation page of the U3A website and, if you like what you see, why not enrol with us for 2021? You would be most welcome.

Bill Squire

Patchwork

Thank you to patchworkers who submitted photos for the on-line exhibition of work completed during the Covid break. 'The Covid Collection' was launched online in the third week of November in lieu of the annual 'Meet and Mingle' exhibition of work at the Seniors Community Centre, and features the work of Maxine Costello, Elaine Cotton, Janet Gourley, Shirlee Gilmour, Helen Jeffree, Judy Merkel, Heather Sloan and Corrie Witlox. It's not too late to have work included in the exhibition! Quilts commenced during the Covid break (defined as when the group is unable to meet together physically because of Covid restrictions) can still be added to the online exhibition. Just send photographs to Dorothy.

Dorothy Webber

Politics and Current Affairs

Where to begin after another eventful month in politics? Of course, by the time we eventually re-start classes politics will have become mundane and I will be scratching around for topics.

During the recent S.A. shut-down the Premier took a swipe at hotel quarantine as being a major problem. Federal colleagues did not criticize him as they had Dan Andrews, was the difference that S.A. is a Liberal Government?

S.A. wants Quarantine stations to be opened, will the Feds support such a move to deal with the large numbers that Morrison wants to return home for home for Christmas? Of course not, but we cannot risk

another outbreak from hotel quarantine, so what is being done to improve the system? Dan's practical suggestion for security guards to have adequate pay and sick leave might make quarantine safer.

The people of S.A. were relieved to be out of their brief lock-down, but refugees remain in indefinite detention, yet have not been charged with any crime, what hope have they been offered?

Robo-debt was solved on the morning of the scheduled biggest class action trial in Australian history. This came after months of blocking, the government agreed to pay \$112 million in compensation and legal costs, too late for those who suicided as they became overwhelmed with the harassment to repay debts they had not incurred. The \$112 million was money well spent to save the P.M. having to give evidence about a program he was responsible for as a Minister, and as PM. Was it coincidence he flew out that day to Japan and avoided questions from the press?

Continuing legal topics, Palmer lost his border challenge against Western Australia. If he had won, it would have created a constitutional crisis and possibly dented the W.A. budget.

The American Presidential election saw Kamala Harris become the first woman to become a Vice President, a huge step for American democracy. Despite fears of a mass rebellion there was little violence and this morning I heard Trump had cleared the charges against Mike Flynn, another sign he has capitulated.

We will re-start classes in 2021. There will probably be timetable changes, so do check the newsletter.

Terry Case

Singing for Fun

During November we were saddened to learn of the passing of Gwen Cheetham.

Gwen was one of the original 12 members of Singing for Fun which was started by Joyce Borschmann and held their first meetings in the home of the late Helen Mitchell.

Gwen had a beautiful pure soprano voice and a great love for music. She was a valued member of the Sopranos in both the Singing for Fun and Harmony groups. It was a known fact that other members of the group liked to sit near Gwen because she would always hit the right notes.

Several members of the Singing Group gathered at the Benalla Cemetery on 24th November to say farewell to Gwen. Our sincere condolences to Rupe at this time.

We have also learnt during the month that Patsy Bollard had a fall at home and needed attention in Benalla Health. Whilst Patsy was relatively cheerful when I visited, she obviously had done considerable damage to her knee, and had a lot of bruising as well. Patsy is now home and progressing well.

We are having a Singing for Fun lunch to celebrate the end of 2020 on Friday 11th December at 12.15pm at the Benalla Golf Club. Could you please let me know by Wednesday 9th December if you would like to come.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for 2021. We hope to see you in the New Year. Please watch the Website for more news about what is happening in the New Year.

Margaret Jenkins

Tech Savvy Community Projects

A focus this year has been working with Judith Borthwick towards the completion of a project which Judith commenced in 2012 with John Avery's 'Local History' program and continued with Meg Dillon's Stories of Benalla's Past the following year. Now almost complete, Judith's project *'Benalla Hospitals and Nurses of the early 1900's'* celebrates the contribution of the nurses who ran private hospitals in Benalla during the first three decades of the 1900's, before the establishment of the Benalla Bush Nursing Hospital in 1935. Judith is looking forward to giving a copy to Meg Dillon to read; to showing the final document to John Avery at Coinda and to providing copies to Benalla Family Research Centre and the Benalla Historical Society for use in future research. Judith describes her project as being "like a jigsaw puzzle, with some gaps, hopefully not too many discrepancies and certainly more information to be obtained", adding that she persevered to complete it because "it would be a shame if it wasn't recorded to be available to anyone who wishes to continue with this, or similar research."



What a wonderful project to work on during *2020 Year of the Nurse & Midwife!*

Bev Lee

Tech Savvy Family Research

We have changed the course title to 'Family Research' and adjusted the course description for next year:

Family Research is a 'guided self-help group' which aims to provide support and encouragement to members who are working on their family history. We also plan to provide

- Mentoring for members keen to develop skills in using family history resources such as [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com); Trove; My Heritage; Scotland's People and other online records such as Births/Deaths/Marriages, Rates Notices and Cemetery Records
- Links to the resources available at the Benalla Family History Group
- Opportunities to write about our families, with monthly topics such as 'Found'; 'A Family Secret'; 'A Family Treasure'; 'I wish I'd met...'; 'In search of'; 'A black hole'; 'Grandparents', and more!

We are looking forward to meeting up again next year with members who came to our first and only session in 2020.

Bev Lee and Wendy Sturgess

Vale Gwen Cheetham

Members of U3A Benalla were saddened to hear of the passing of Gwen Cheetham on Tuesday 17th November 2020.

Gwen was involved with the Singing for Fun and Harmony groups for 14 years. She was part of our concerts as well as our regular sessions held three Thursday mornings each month. We all enjoyed her company and with her pure soprano voice she was a very dependable member of the group.

Life ball was another group in which Gwen participated for several years. When she decided that she was finding the pace of the game a bit much, Gwen became an excellent umpire. It was well known that you couldn't get away with much if Gwen was umpiring.

Rupe was involved with Astronomy or Exploring the Universe and Gwen supported Rupe by often sending one of her favourite slices or cakes to Astronomy for the group's supper.

Rupe and Gwen kept in close contact with their adult family and grandchildren and had lots of visits from the family.

Gwen's other interest was her garden which she kept in immaculate condition. She was also an excellent cook and this fact was commented on by several family members at her funeral on 24th November at the Benalla lawn cemetery.

Thank you, Gwen, for some excellent memories. We will miss you.

Our sympathy is extended to Rupe.

'Covid Musings'

Les's hydroponics project (continued...)

"Here are the latest pictures from the hydrophone.

There are now lots of tomatoes and the plants are eating much nutrient in the extreme heat. I cut away as much unwanted foliage as I can to avoid too much loss of nutrient. I'm still hoping for some ripe ones for Christmas. I'd have to say it would be much cheaper to buy them at Woolies, but it has been interesting. The light is a bit inadequate and it would have been better if there was an opal polycarbonate panel above them, but the neighbours may not have liked that after nightfall.

My other pastime of growing banksias from seed is progressing ever so slowly. The picture shows them after 10 weeks. Two of them are starting to produce true leaves. Two did not survive the hot weather. I'm not sure when to start feeding them."



Les Rodgers

'The Psychological Dirt on Gardening'

As well as monitoring Les's hydroponics project, a few months ago we shared photos of Covid-19 garden projects by Pauline Bailey and Heather Wallace. Demystifying Psychology convenor Jane Rushworth has been musing about the psychological value of gardening during the pandemic, creating a fascinating slide show titled *'The Psychological Dirt on Gardening'*. Jane drew upon and recommended an article by Seth Gillihan who described 10 psychological benefits of gardening – "Practising Acceptance", "Moving beyond Perfectionism", "Developing a Growth Mindset", "Connecting with Others", "Connecting to Your World", "Bathing in Green", "Being Present", "Physical Exercise", "Reducing Stress", "Eating Healthfully".

Les, Pauline, Heather and other U3A gardeners are therefore likely to have been quite psychologically resilient in terms of weathering the Covid break. If you would like to see Jane's slideshow, you can access it on the Demystifying Psychology page of the website. Thanks, Jane!

What's On

Wednesday, 2 December

10:00am *Demystifying Psychology* Zoom Group

Friday, 4 December

11:00am *Easy Walkers* End of Year Gathering - Baileys Winery, Taminick

2:00pm *Investment* - Zoom Meeting

Wednesday, 9 December

9:15am *Mid-Week Walks* – Mount Glenrowan

Friday, 11 December

12:15pm *Singing for Fun* End of Year Celebration – Benalla Golf Club

Monday, 14 December

2:00pm *Creative Writing* – sharing of stories by email and catch up at a local cafe

Wednesday, 16 December

10:00am Christmas *'Meet and Mingle'* in the Benalla Gardens

Friday, 18 December

1:00pm *Demystifying Psychology* Zoom Christmas session

Please note: activities arranged directly by convenors with their groups may not appear on this list.

From the Archives

American born U3A member Louise Doddrell brought her favourite Christmas decoration along to the Christmas 'Collectors' session in 2017.



Happy Christmas!