



Benalla and District Inc.

## Newsletter – February 2025

U3A Benalla & District Inc

P O Box 674, Benalla 3672

Website: [u3abenalla.weebly.com](http://u3abenalla.weebly.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/U3abenalla/](https://facebook.com/U3abenalla/)

Newsletter: [newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com)

President: Margaret Jenkins 0424 454 313

Secretary: Nicole McFarlane

0428 696 408

Course Ann Nelson

Cordinator: 0438 447 379

E-mail Address: [u3aben@gmail.com](mailto:u3aben@gmail.com)

Please send reports for the newsletter to [newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com) by 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

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### President's Report

What a fantastic morning U3A Benalla had at Enrolment Day on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Thank you to all the Convenors who came and talked with members and new people wanting to join U3A about their courses. The information that you shared no doubt helped members decide if that course was for them.

After Enrolment Day on January 15, 2025, U3A Benalla had 322 members, this being 44 more members than after Enrolment Day in 2024.

Some courses have already begun. When I was at a meeting last Monday the new Ukulele members were having their introduction to the ukulele in Room 1, whilst on Thursday Community Singing commenced for the year at the Hub at Coinda.

A big **thank you to Len Jeffers** for the time and effort he has put into the enrolment process. Len enters each member individually into the system and then constructs class rolls and other information for each Conventor. This takes many hours, and we do appreciate what you do for U3A Benalla Len.

Each member has a **name badge**. We encourage members to wear these name badges, particularly at the beginning of each year, so new members can become familiar with the names of everyone in their group.

The U3A Committee would like to invite all Convenors to a **Conventor's afternoon** on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 2.30pm in Room 1 at the Benalla Seniors Community Centre. This will be an opportunity for Convenors to ask any questions or discuss any aspect of running their course with the Committee and other Convenors. Afternoon tea will be provided.

U3A Benalla is very fortunate to be having a **visit from Helen Haines, Member for Indi** on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 from 10am to 11am. Helen will be speaking with members of the U3A Benalla Committee regarding accommodation and then will be joining the U3A Politics and Current Affairs group to speak with them about Federal politics. Any member of U3A is welcome to participate in the Politics meeting with Helen.

A preliminary reminder for your diaries is that the **AGM of U3A Benalla will be held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025** at 10am in the Auditorium of the Benalla Seniors Community Centre. Guest speaker will be Bill Sykes who will speak about Agriculture in Northern India.

The AGM is the time to consider members for roles on the U3A Benalla Committee. Due to the retirement of Corrie Witlox, Treasurer of U3A Benalla, there will be a **vacancy on the Committee for a new Treasurer** as from March 2025. A position description can be obtained by contacting me on 0424 454 313. Corrie has done an excellent job as Treasurer and is retiring due to having held the position for several years. There will be more information about the AGM and a link to the Nomination Form in the next newsletter.

On a final note, the box of **U3A Benalla files containing documentation from between 2006 and 2024** has been lost. This was originally located in the cupboard opposite the kitchen. If you have any information about the whereabouts of the box, please contact me on 0424 454 313.

Wishing all members a happy and enjoyable year of U3A activities.

Margaret Jenkins,  
President

# Enrolment Day 2025



Photographs – Rene Martens and Bev Thornhill

## Program Update

At the time of publication, U3A Benalla has 369 members, with more enrolments to come. New courses *Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques – Botanical*, *Mahjong*, *Come and Learn Croquet*, *Train Buffs* and *American History* are all starting with more than 15 members. *Car Torque*, *Exploring Writing Children’s Books* and *French at the Table* are also well supported.

We had 22 participants enrol for *Mahjong* which was fantastic. However, it was obvious that the group was not going to fit into Room 2. After consultation with Kay Blore, Mahjong is moving into the Auditorium and will commence at 11.15 am each Monday immediately after Exercises for Fun for 1 hour.

*Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques – Botanical* also had more people wanting to enrol than was anticipated. Margaret Zaal has kindly offered to run two classes so that all the members who wanted to come to her group can. Both groups will be on the second and fourth Wednesdays, with the 10am group being in the Auditorium whilst the group commencing at 1pm until 3pm will be in Room 2 on the second Wednesday and Room 1 on the fourth Wednesday.

In recent group updates, *Spanish* is now commencing on Saturday 8 February – we do apologise if the change of class time and date caused problems for some new class members. *French at the Table* with Carole Ruta is now commencing on Saturday 1 March.

A reminder also that *Birdwatching*, *Bushwalking – Easy Walks* and *Lifeball* commence in March, and that *Birdwatching* and *Photography* usually take a break during June, July and August.

Convenors are encouraged to contact Anne Nelson, Course Co-ordinator, on 0438 447 379 or email [gables5@bigpond.com](mailto:gables5@bigpond.com), if they need any support.

## Group Reports

The first newsletter for 2025 includes reports from groups which held activities in December, as well as details of the starting and meeting times of all groups.

The headings of the courses and activities in the newsletter are hyper-linked to the group's webpage. If you are looking for further details, keen to see extra photographs, or feel like reminiscing by scrolling through past posts of group activities, simply click on the course heading.

\*A reminder that convenors' phone numbers can always be found through the linked headings to course web pages and in the [Program Guide](#) and [Timetable with Dates](#).

Heather Wallace and Bev Lee

## A Taste of Art

Commences on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February and held fortnightly on Wednesdays - 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm Broken River Painters, Barc Hut 11, Benalla Airport Precinct.

Carol Perry

## American History

*New Course!* American History commences on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February and is held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in Room 1.

Barbara Rogers

## Art Appreciation

At December's 'First Monday' session at the Gallery, members of the Art Appreciation group joined artist Juan Ford for an artist talk exploring his art practice, which spans more than twenty years. Juan's presentation coincided with his major survey exhibition [Juan Ford: A Survey](#) at the Bennett Gallery from 8th November 2024 to 26 January 2025.

Begin the new U3A year by joining us on **Monday 3 February 2025 between 10 and 11 am** when the Benalla Art Gallery "welcomes esteemed artist **Ron Robertson-Swann** who will present a talk about his practice for the first *First Mondays* session of the year. Robertson-Swann's exhibition, *Illusion and Gravity: 1960s and 70s painting and sculpture from the artist's collection*, is currently on display in the Simpson Gallery.

Robertson-Swann's most controversial and famous sculpture *Vault* – known as the *Yellow Peril* – was commissioned for Melbourne City Square in 1980 before being, as Ron puts it, banished. *Vault* now lives happily on the forecourt of the Australian Centre of Contemporary Art in Southbank, Melbourne." ([Benalla Art Gallery Website](#))

Neville Gibb

## 'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

Our holiday break is nearing its end, with our first class for 2025 only three weeks away. Perhaps it's time to begin putting your thoughts on paper?

The '500 words' topics set last year for the holiday break:

'*This (.....) Life*' Examples 'This (Downsizing) Life' by an 80+ year old about planning to farewell a loved home; 'This (Number 8) Life' about growing up as 'Number 8' in a family of nine children. Also –see our '[This \(....\) Life](#)' stories! OR

'*Triggers*' Keep a notebook close by during the break in which to note any 'triggers' which lead you to reminisce about a time in your lives. You may have been talking to someone, watching television or a film, driving somewhere, reading a book. Choose one to three of these - write about the memories evoked, keeping the total words to 500 – 750 words OR

'*Memoir Review*' Perhaps you'll have time during the holiday break to read and reflect upon a memoir which you discovered has a particular meaning to you, drawing on our Deeper Dive memoir analysis sheet to write a review to share with the class. Here's the link: '[Memoir Review - Framework Suggestions](#)'

The story topics suggested for new class members:

'*New in Town*' Have you ever been the new person in town? Or did someone else's arrival have a profound impact on you? Share your story in 500 words OR

'*I Was There*'... Have you experienced a significant news, historical or cultural event first-hand? Share your personal piece of history in 500 words.

Class members can, of course, choose from any of these topics.

New class members who would like to write a story for the first class may find this link to '[Tips for Writing your 500 Words Story](#)' helpful. However, it's fine to just come along, find out about what we do, listen to the stories shared and say 'Pass' if you haven't written a story to share.

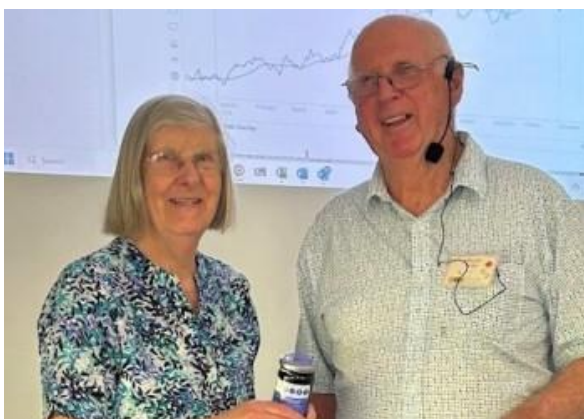
Bev Lee

## Australian Shares & Stock Market

Our meeting in early December was attended by 19 members. We began by thanking Bev Lee for her work behind the scenes, presenting her with a jar of jam. A group photo taken by Bev last month, inscribed with the words "U3A Australian Shares 2024," was distributed to all members.

We discussed scams and fraud, which are particularly concerning over the Christmas period. It is essential to be extremely careful and avoid clicking on links such as "Enter here" or similar wording. The MyGov website is being upgraded, and you should not access it through any links in emails. Instead, go to your stored login page and enter the site in the usual way. Email notifications from MyGov may be scams. Scammers can also raid letterboxes, obtaining full names from correspondence with companies like Link Marketing or Computer Share, and use your Holder Identification Number (HIN) to open bank accounts elsewhere. Most HIN numbers now display only the last four digits as a precaution. To protect against this, ensure you clear your mailbox daily after each postal delivery.

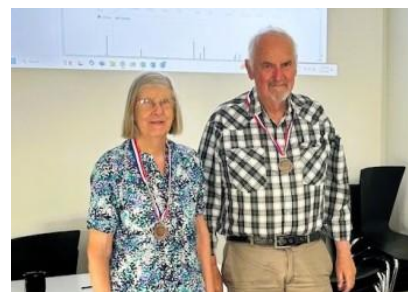
We reviewed the Bendigo Watch List, which I created based on your selections in February across 11 sectors. The list showed a 2% increase in total holding value. Handouts were provided with values as of last Friday. I returned original selection sheets to about six members where names were included. Some selections were unnamed, so those sheets could not be returned.



Margaret J was the winner for “Long Term” selections, with PME showing a \$13,162 increase. She received a jar of jam. Les received the wooden spoon for his AGE selection. For the “Real Time Trading” sheet, Les was the winner with a final holding of \$14,819 for PME and was also awarded a jar of jam. Peter M will receive his wooden spoon in due course.



Graeme had the best performance on the “Short Term Monthly” sheet, finishing with \$21,386 for SLC, earning him a jar of jam. Margaret W’s selection of DRO performed poorly over the last four months, earning her the wooden spoon.



Graeme and Les were awarded gold medals for achieving the highest totals across any of the three sheets. Brent and Colin received silver medals for their holdings, which were in the \$15,000 range. Bronze medals went to Margaret J and Neville for holdings in the \$13,000 range.

Thanks to Wende for taking photos of the awards throughout the meeting.

Registration for 2025 courses will begin at 9:30 am on Wednesday, 15th January 2025.

Our first meeting of the year will be at 2:00 pm on Monday, 3rd February 2025. Please prepare three selections for review so I can update the spreadsheets. A reminder email will be sent out the Thursday before the meeting, including a list of the top ASX 200 stocks to help guide your selections.

I hope to have a guest speaker in March to discuss bonds as a form of investing.

**January Update** - Following enrolment day on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 we currently have 17 members listed for our first meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February in Room 1 at 2pm. Welcome to the three new members and also to our other members from 2024.

At our first meeting you will need to nominate 3 selections for the spreadsheets. We can view any of the 2000 plus listed stocks on the ASX before you choose your selection. I will email out a reminder note on 30<sup>th</sup> January with a listing of the top 200 stocks to help you select your stock you may wish to follow. The full listing of the 2000+ stocks document is too large for easy viewing.

With Donald Trump now President in the US, the Australian stock market rose 100 pts soon after opening on Tuesday 21 January but finished the day only 53 pts ahead. The Australian exchange rate against the US dollar rose 1 cent to 62.4 cents.

I look forward to another interesting year for the share market in 2025.

Malcolm Sanders

## Be Connected – Android

Commences on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February and held on the 1st and 2nd Thursday of the month - 10:00 am to 11:30 am in Room 1.

Ruth Jelliff

## Be Connected – Tech Advice

U3A Benalla members can obtain 'one on one' help in operating and using their mobiles, tablets or laptops by booking a time with either *Jenny Sawyer (Apple)* 0409 545 182 or *Robyn Lukey (Android)* 0403 164 931.

In 2025, members with a well-developed family tree who would like to run a family research problem past someone else can book a one-on-one appointment with Bev Lee. Bev also offers advice to U3A members volunteering in the community who need support with a web-based project they are working on in their volunteer role. Bev can be contacted on 0478 607 838, or [bevlee47@gmail.com](mailto:bevlee47@gmail.com).

*Tech Advice* meetings are offered by appointment and are usually held in Room 2. If you have already enrolled in *Be Connected – Tech Advice*, please give Robyn, Jenny or Bev a call when you are ready to make an appointment.

Robyn Lukey, Jenny Sawyer and Bev Lee

## Birdwatching

Semester 1 sessions commence on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March and are held on the 2nd Thursday of March, April and May from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon. Meet at the Seniors Carpark.

Kathy Costello

## Brain Games

*Brain Games* commences on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February. Sessions are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month – 2 to 4pm in Room 1.

Elsbeth Maconachie

## Bushwalking – Easy Walks

On December 4, U3A Easy Walkers celebrated their end of year break-up at Goorambat Hotel.

Expecting a quiet country venue, we discovered we were sharing the Dining Room with over 40 CWA ladies! The noise level drove us out to the Outdoor Veranda, where it was much quieter. Seated out there in the fresh air, we enjoyed a lovely 2-course meal (with or without affogato).

Bev thanked Julie, our Convenor for the past four years, for her excellent organisation and leadership skills.



We've all enjoyed a variety of walks in the N.E. Julie said she was happy to hand the reins over to Bev! Hopefully next year will be as much fun as the past four years have been.

### Wednesday March 5th: Euroa - Seven Creeks and Arboretum

Our first walk for 2025 will be a lovely stroll around Seven Creeks Circuit Trail (6.81km) in Euroa. After an early lunch, we will head off to the Euroa Arboretum for 2 short circuit walks (1.60km) to explore the park and discover the important work it is doing. BYO lunch, drinks etc.

Meet at the Seniors' carpark, Fawckner Drive, at 9.30am - to depart by 9.30am.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting by phone (text preferred) or email to Bev. Thornell, at least 3 days before the day, on [0447193244](tel:0447193244) or email: [beverlythornell@ozemail.com.au](mailto:beverlythornell@ozemail.com.au).

\*Car sharing is usually available for a small contribution.

Bev Thornell

## Cards '500'

*Cards '500'* commences on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February and is held fortnightly on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday in Room 1 from 2 pm to 4 pm.

Doug Smith

## Car Torque

*New Course!* Our new course, *Car Torque*, commences on Thursday 27th February at 2pm in Room 1. Car Torque is held monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday from 2 to 4 pm.

Doug Smith

## Chat n' Chew

The tradition of having our first lunch of the year at *'The Royal'* continues! Our first lunch for 2025 will take place at the **Royal Hotel**, cnr Arundel and Bridge Streets, on Friday 14th February, arriving at 11.45 for a 12 midday start.

Members who have enrolled in *Chat 'n Chew* need to let me know each month if they wish to attend. If I'm not available to answer the phone when you call, please leave a message—also, don't forget to include your name in the message, not just the phone number.

If you wish to attend the February Lunch at the Royal, please contact me on 0427 376 991 by Tuesday 11th February 2025.

Lorraine Knox

## Coin Collectors

Commencing at the new starting time of 2pm on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February, *Coin Collectors* is held on the 4th Monday of the month – 2 pm to 4 pm in Room 1.

Doug Smith

## Collectors

Returning in 2025, *Collectors* commences on Tuesday 11 February, and is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday from 2 to 4 pm in Room 1.

For our first session, could you please bring along 'Something special' from your collection, something which has special meaning in your life.

Dorothy Webber

## Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques – Botanical

*New Course!* *Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques – Botanical* commences on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February. It is now being offered in two groups - both groups will be on the second and fourth Wednesdays, with the 10 am group being in the Auditorium whilst the group commencing at 1pm until 3pm will be in Room 2 on the second Wednesday and Room 1 on the fourth Wednesday.

A reminder from the Course Guide to those who have enrolled, "Materials are supplied at the beginning of this course, but there may be a need to purchase paper or other specific personal preferences later--you are welcome to bring along your own pencils, brushes etc. A pot for water and a white china plate are the only materials needed to be supplied by the participants."

Margaret Zaal

## Community Singing

For the first session of Community Singing for 2025, Brian chose our regular song book 1 for the first session and the Tram sheet song book for the second session. We welcomed Barbara, who was new to Community Singing, and 10 or so visitors from Coinda and their carers. It was good to see Joyce Borschmann and Doug Williams joining the group. Having the residents from Coinda really adds to the morning as it fills the room and creates a great atmosphere.

Thank you, Brian for your great playing for both sessions. We all enjoyed the variety of songs which included Danny Boy, Waltzing Matilda and Amazing Grace. Your ability to play the song announced without any music is amazing.

Thank you, Kieran for introducing the songs.

We are having Community Singing again next Thursday, the 30<sup>th</sup> January. In February Community Singing will be on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February at the Hub at Coinda at 10 am. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

## Come and Learn Croquet

*New Short Course!* *Come and Learn Croquet* is a four-week course held on Tuesday mornings from 9 – 11 am commencing on Tuesday 25 February at 9 am.

A reminder to participants that there is no cost involved, that morning tea will be provided after each session, and that, over four weeks, they will learn:

- The basic mallet skills of croquetting, positioning and hoop running.
- The outline of the croquet court and direction of play.
- Some basic rules of Golf Croquet.
- Tactics involved to select the most appropriate shot to hoop or stymie opponents.

Judy Amery

## Creative Writing

The numbers were down for our December class, with many people caught up in end of year activities. There was no challenge or discussion point, as our plan was for quick discussion around our stories then a visit to a café for a celebration of our year of writing.

### Some of our Stories:

Most of our stories used the same prompt – *“He was digging in the garden when he found it”*. There were two that used one of the other prompts.

*Homelands* was about a young man planning to visit his grandparents’ homeland in Belarus after hearing stories of the war and their experiences. He was trying to learn the language in preparation.

*The Find* was about some recent retirees volunteering to clean up the yard of an old school in preparation for extending a rescue shelter. They find an old Time Capsule buried in late 1950s.

*The Cream Bottle* held a prediction of an upcoming adventure. The bottle had been buried as a joke by the twin girls next door.

*Love’s Labour’s Lost* was about digging up a damp spot in the yard and finding a buried box. It was never opened as it was dropped back in the hole and the walls of the hole collapsed. The centre of the story went back to Shakespeare’s time when he had buried a play that was considered too dangerous to perform. Was the find the missing play?

Another story on *“digging in the garden”* was around a young man who had moved to Sydney and set up in his own home for the first time. We were left hanging as to what he had found when digging in the garden - the class discussion shared various ideas as to what it could have been. Was it a new career path because he enjoyed working in the garden? Or is there another chapter to be written? We will wait and see.

### Prompts:

We continued writing over the break, so three new prompts were provided.

- He must have been seeing things. There were no such things as ghosts – or was there?
- She watched nervously as her partner opened the door of the café for their first day of business.
- He wiped the drop off his face and looked up, seeing the damp spot on the ceiling.

We shared these stories in January, when new prompts were provided for our first 2025 class in February.

Joy Shirley

## Demystifying Psychology - Discussion Group

The Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group held their final session for 2024 on the 19<sup>th</sup> December over lunch at Zeus Café. As always, the group enjoyed being together and had lots to talk about!





In 2025, the Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group meets on the 3rd Tuesday from 10 am to 12 noon in U3A Meeting Room 1, with the first session on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 10 am.

A reminder that completion of either the previous 'Demystifying Psychology' five-session course, or the new 'Demystifying Psychology – Perception' five-session course, is a prerequisite to joining the Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group.

Jane Rushworth

## Demystifying Psychology – Perception

*New Course!* Demystifying Psychology – Perception commences on Thursday 20 February at 10 am in Room 1. It is held monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday from 10 am to 12 noon.

Jane Rushworth

## Exercises for Fun

Welcome to the New Year of 2025. Maybe you made a New Year resolution to Exercise more? Well, that is a good start! Come along to Exercises for Fun and try to keep it up throughout the year.

See you there, every Monday, 9.30 am start.

Have fun and keep moving!

Helen Jeffree

## Exploring the Universe

*Exploring the Universe* is held monthly on the third Tuesday from 2 to 4pm, with the first session for 2025 on Tuesday 18 February at 2 pm. New members might enjoy reading last year's February newsletter report, '[From Galileo to the James Webb Space Telescope](#)', before the first session.

(As an aside, congratulations Bev, on being awarded the Goorambat Citizen of the Year on Australia Day! Media Team)

Bev Morton

## Exploring Writing Children's Books

*New Course!* Exploring Writing Children's Books commences on Friday 7th February at 2 pm in Room 1. It is held monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday from 2 to 4 pm.

Peter Thompson

## Family Research – Getting Started

Welcome to this year's participants. In the first session on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February, we will be discussing information sources that we can use when researching our family and how to get started when setting up our family tree on Ancestry. In 2025, our monthly group session is being held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month between 1:30 and 4 pm in U3A Room 2. One-on-one Mentoring sessions are scheduled on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday and Tuesday from 1 to 4 pm, also in Room 2.

Deb Saunders

## Film Discussion Group

Commencing on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February, the Film Discussion group is held monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 2 pm to 3:30 pm.

Joy Shirley

## French at the Table

*Late update!* Our new course, *French at the Table* will now commence on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March. Monthly sessions on the 1st Saturday will provide the opportunity for members with an understanding of French to speak in French in a welcoming environment about their French experiences and share recipes, food and stories from France.

Carole Ruta

## Garden Appreciation

Welcome to our new and current members! I'm looking forward to seeing you at our first outing on Thursday 27th February. Please meet at the U3A car park at 9:30 AM. We will be visiting **three beautiful gardens on Mitchell Street**, Benalla. Mitchell Street is a small street with lovely plane trees.

Our first garden is at 14 Mitchell Street (Lakeside), the home of Lyn Tanner. We will have morning tea there, so please bring a small plate to share. The second garden is at Tony Smith's. We will only be viewing the front garden, as the back is currently being renovated. The third garden is at the home of Kathie and Brian Wragg (Lakeview), located at 8 Mitchell Street. Afterward, we will have lunch at the Royal Hotel, Benalla.

On March 27th, we will have a bus trip to the [Blue Lotus Water Gardens](#). The bus will leave Benalla at 7:45 AM from the Benalla Rose Garden, next to the Royal Hotel. The cost is \$64 per person, which covers entry, lunch, and bus travel. Please make payment by the end of February, at our next meeting. Alternatively, you can pay at Red4 Book Shop next to Hide's Bakery. Please leave the money in an envelope with your name and Garden Appreciation on the form.

It is very important to let me know if you are attending, as I need to confirm numbers. Please also inform me of any food allergies.

Gwen Turner 0438 627 010 Email: [gwenturner243@gmail.com](mailto:gwenturner243@gmail.com)

## Garden Team

In early December, the Garden Team worked in Kirsten and Marcus's garden before a festive afternoon tea and a break until next year. Thank you, Ray for the photograph!



Garden Team meets on the 2nd and 5th Monday of the month - 2 pm to 4 pm - at various venues, with the first session on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February.

Elspeth Maconachie

## German

Welcome, 2025. I look forward to another exciting year of learning and discovery. Welcome to our new group for 2025. Thank you for trusting me to share my German knowledge with you. Welcome also to Beverley, our loyal supporter and outstanding helper. I leave this link to the following music - [Schütt' Die Sorgen in ein Gläschen Wein](#) - to get you into our usual friendly spirit.

Horst Gunther

## Let's Talk Books

*Let's Talk Books* commences on Monday 3 February at 2pm in the seating area near the kitchens in the Auditorium. It is held monthly on the first Monday from 2 to 4 pm.

Geraldine McCorkell

## Life Ball

*Lifeball* had a great turn up at their Christmas Breakup at the Golf Club!



To avoid playing in the hot weather, *Lifeball* commences in March, this year on Monday 3rd March. It is held weekly from 10 to 11.30 am at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre, Ackerly Avenue.

\**Lifeball* is looking for a new convenor – if you are interested, please give our Course Coordinator Anne Nelson a call on 0438 447 379 or email [gables5@bigpond.com](mailto:gables5@bigpond.com).

Convenor – To Be Advised

## Mahjong

*New Course!* With 28 enrolled as we go to press, Mahjong has moved from Room 2 into the Auditorium and will commence at 11.15 am on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Sessions will be held weekly on Mondays from 11.15 am to 12.15 pm, after Exercises for Fun.

Kaye Blore

## Meet and Mingle

**Natalie Phillips** from Benalla Rural City Council will be the guest speaker at Meet and Mingle on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 10am in Room 1 of the Benalla Seniors Community Centre. Natalie will speak about the **L to P program** which has been successfully running for a number of years, and which has undergone expansion in the past twelve months. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

## Music Appreciation

Commences on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February and held on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month – 10 am to 12 noon.

Bill Squire

## Page Turners Book Group

We have two books for our first meeting on Tuesday 4th February at 10 am – *Grace Notes* by Karen Comer (*Youth Fiction/In verse*) – ‘Two teenagers survive the covid lockdowns in Melbourne in their own ways’ and *Small Things Like These* by Clair Keegan (*Historical*) ‘Coal vendor discovers cruel Magdalen laundry run by nuns for unmarried mothers’.

The selection of books chosen by the 2024 Page Turners Group for 2025 can be viewed on our web page and [downloaded here](#). The book for our session on Tuesday 4 March is *Feast*, by Emily O’Grady.

Meg Dillon

## Patchwork and Craft

Patchwork and Craft members had a delightful Christmas luncheon together in early December, featuring mouthwatering Pavlova, the community singing of an Australian version of the *Twelve Days of Christmas*, the choruses of which ended ‘*and a kookaburra in a gum tree*’, and more.



Patchwork and Craft is held in Room 1 on the first, third and fifth Thursdays from 1 to 4 pm, with the first session this year on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February.

Dorothy Webber

## Photography

Commences on Thursday 27th February– meets on the 4th Thursday 10:00 am to 12:00 noon February to May, then September to November.

Rene Martens

## Play Reading



We read two short plays in December, then headed over to a café to celebrate the end of another year of play reading. The first play was *Family Party*, a comedy, with the second play a thriller, *The Spider Ring*. It was interesting to read the two contrasting plays.

***Family Party*** was written by Pamela Hansford Johnson and C P Snow around 1950. The setting is a living room of a semi-detached house in the North Midlands in England, around 1950. Three sisters are keen for their great aunt to leave them something in her will. A visit by the great aunt results in a totally unexpected bequest seen by the sisters as outrageous. The 'party' consists of the three sisters and two of their daughters. The contrast between the characters of the sisters, the cousins and the great aunt made for a fun play.

***The Spider Ring*** was written by Mabel Constanduros and Howard Agg in 1958.

The setting is an old English cottage in a remote country area in the UK. A newlywed learns that her controlling husband's first wife died in suspicious circumstances, and realises her life is in danger too. Lorna is excited about plans to travel to South Africa where Frank has used her inheritance to buy a farm. All is upset when their landlady visits unexpectedly and recognises a ring (the spider ring) she had given to Frank's first wife. Mrs Bland informs Lorna and heads off to call the police. Just as it looks like Frank is about to strangle Lorna, the police arrive and the curtains close. With good timing when performed, this would be a very entertaining thriller.

Joy Shirley

Our play for our first session on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February at 9:30 am is *'Enchanted April'* by Matthew Barber (from a novel by Elizabeth Von Arnim). The film was good, so hopefully the play will be too!

Shirley Swallow

## Politics and Current Affairs

Commences on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February and held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month – 10 am to 12 noon. On Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March, our guest speaker after the coffee break will be Federal member for Indi, Helen Haines, who will speak about Federal Politics.

Brian Harker

## Recorder Group

Commences on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February. Held fortnightly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday from 10 to 12 noon.

Janet Douglas

## Singing for Fun

Singing for Fun had an excellent roll up for their December breakup at the Golf Club, which followed their concert at Estia Health in the morning.



*Singing for Fun* recommences on Thursday 6 February at 10 am at the Cooina Hub in Jean Lee Drive. It is held on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of the month from 10 am to 12 noon.

Margaret Jenkins

## Spanish

At our last session at 'The Merchant' on the Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December, the Spanish class thoroughly enjoyed a special order of Cuban sandwiches prepared by the chef.



We have a new schedule in 2025. Classes will be held from 12:00 to 2 pm with a 15 min break as usual (we can bring lunch). We are meant to start on Saturday the 1st of February, however this is the day we have chosen to celebrate Lorenzo's birthday, so the first class will be on Saturday 8th of February.

Please watch this video before the first class: <https://youtu.be/QtXxlzo63ms?feature=shared>

I am very much looking forward to seeing you all again and meeting new class members.

Feliz año nuevo! Nos vemos.

Alejandro Diaz

## Stock and Land

There was no Stock and Land session on Cup Day in November. However, following the tradition set by David Palmer, there was a break-up session in early December, the venue this time the **Little Cedar Goat Cheese** café at North Winton.



Thank you, Tom Crocker, for suggesting and stepping in to organise this excursion and lunch. Your choice of the Casual Tour Option - 'Accompanied by one of our children, go for a walk where the goats are and interact with the goats in the Paddock' (by gold coin donation)' was a great success.

The shared grazing platters of goat cheeses, relishes and other goodies were delicious, and Victoire generously spent time with us answering questions when bringing out platters and drinks. It was delightful sitting under the pergola and sharing stories of a love of the land, of farming, indeed of 'stock and land'.

In 2025, 'Stock and Land' will be part of the 'Sustainability' time slot, with the plan to have sessions dedicated to 'Stock and Land' on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of alternate months from 10 to 12, commencing on Friday 21 March at 10am.

Bev Lee

## Sustainability

*Sustainability* commences on Friday 7th February at 10 am in Room 1. Classes are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays from 10 am to 12 noon; with some sessions in this time slot scheduled for 'Stock and Land'.

John Lane

## Tech Talks

At Tech Talks we cover many subjects. At our December session, continuing on the subject of Canberra, we learned that there were several unforeseen problems when the Science Dome was constructed. This Dome was constructed to be a showpiece of Canberra where lectures etc would be held. It quickly gained the nickname - the Martian Embassy. It was found to have a special property. People got ill after spending time inside the Dome. People felt disorientated and lightheaded. Seasick even. It was established that the colour scheme in the decoration of the interior walls affected some people. The interior had to be redesigned. The Science Dome remains a tourist attraction and hopefully people no longer get sick.

Les Rogers talked to us about encryption and decryption. In simple terms the operation of transforming a plaintext block into a ciphertext block is called encryption and the operation of transforming a ciphertext into a plaintext block is called decryption. The need to keep messages secret has been a concern for centuries and is very much at the forefront of modern computer technology. In 1997 a competition was held for the search for a successor algorithm of DES that would be accepted by all. The winner was proclaimed in Oct 2000 and is now in general use.

*ChatGBT-OpenAI* has been in the news lately. One of the topics offered in the U3A class 'As Time Goes By' was *Right Here - Right Now*. Taking this subject literally, I produced an essay attempting to combine nano time into quantum theory. The resulting essay was not entirely comprehensive. However, when the essay was put through ChatGBT the result was extremely surprising. It made the essay not only look authentic but made it interesting and easy to read. It certainly made the writer look good.

It is hard to see how anyone will not now put all their writing through ChatGBT - emails, lectures - anything!  
Neville Gibb

*Editor's Note* - If you would like to read Neville's essay, and the response when ChatGPT AI was asked to review its propositions, go to ['Right Here, Right Now - Meditation on time'](#)

## Train Buffs

*New Course!* The course description for *Train Buffs* was revised slightly for Enrolment Day to provide more information to prospective members:

'*Train Buffs*' is a course for members who are passionate about trains and train engines; for those who worked on the railways or lived in 'railway families'; for those who enjoy trainspotting and travelling in historic trains. Building on members' interests, *Train Buffs* will offer chances to reminisce, follow up interests and deepen knowledge about trains, train engines and railways over time. The course includes classroom-based sessions with speakers on topics of interest; as well as excursions to Railway Heritage Centres and other places of interest, accompanied by lunch at a nearby café or hotel.'



*'The last steam train to Cudgewah, 27 May 1978'*

Athol Graham and Anne Nelson

## Ukes4Fun – Getting Started

The *Ukes4Fun - Getting Started* group commenced on the 20 January. Group members are learning the four chords that form the basis for many songs, as well as learning basic strumming patterns. It won't be long before they are participating in *Just Jamming* sessions as well. Sessions, which incorporate mentoring of beginners by more experienced players, are being held weekly from 10 to 11 am until Easter.

Heather Wallace

## Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming



*Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming* began on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, with members keen to get together, play old favourites, learn some new songs and enjoy each other's company.

Now that Ukes4Fun is in its third year, we are finding it a lot easier to play varied strumming patterns on our ukes and sing at the same time!

This makes performing, including busking together in the community, more fun.

Ukes4Fun members John, Irene, Jenny are pictured before Christmas busking outside Hide's Bakery while Elly, Helen and John are busking near the Commonwealth Bank.



*Just Jamming* sessions are held weekly from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm in Room 1. We will begin to use our new *Ukes4Fun - Drop In* time slot, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays from 1 to 4 pm, shortly.

Heather Wallace

## Wine Appreciation

We are into a new year and as new convenors we are excited and a little scared about organising the first outing for the year. It is planned for Friday the 21st of February with wine tasting at **Taminick Cellars** followed by lunch at **Mokoan Hub Cafe**.

As usual it is planned to meet at the seniors' carpark at 10 am. Lunch is booked for around 12 to 12:30.

We hope to see as many of the regulars as well as lots of new faces. Further detail and reminders will be provided closer to the date.

Garry and Caroline Smith

## Some more December festive cheer...



## Community - Volunteering Opportunities

### Tomorrow Today - Education Benalla Program

The Tomorrow Today Foundation is delivering multiple programs to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes of Benalla and district's children and young people. They have written to U3A Benalla to gauge interest in running lunchtime activities on a regular basis at Benalla P-12 College and FCJ College. There would be benefits for both cohorts from intergenerational mixing. Lunchtime activities have been successfully run at Daylesford College.

You will see a list of the types of clubs run here <https://www.daylesfordsc.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/clubs-societies/> Any U3A members interested in being a part of this program are asked to contact Sally Matheson, Tomorrow Today's Education Benalla Program Manager on 0409 967 303.

### Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

The Centre at Wangaratta is looking for participants for the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors scheme.

This program brings volunteers together with elderly people in their homes or in care facilities to develop friendships that can be rewarding and valued.

Any U3A Benalla member who may be interested is asked to contact Emma Gerrett, Program Officer on 0429 295 475.



## Notices

### Lost – Box of U3A Archived Files

Box of U3A Benalla files containing documentation between 2006 and 2024. Originally this was located in the cupboard opposite the kitchen. Could anyone who has any information concerning the whereabouts of the box please contact Margaret Jenkins on 0424 454 313.

### Position Vacant - Treasurer

Due to the retirement of Corrie Witlox, Treasurer of U3A Benalla, there will be a vacancy on the Committee for a new Treasurer as from March 2025. Corrie has done an excellent job as Treasurer and is retiring due to having held the position for several years. Contact Margaret Jenkins for a job description – 0424 454 313.

## On a final note....

While it is wonderful to see such a wide-ranging group of new courses this year, a number of courses aren't continuing in 2025. However, like *Collectors*, 'they may return'. The members of *Sky's the Limit*, seen here during their final session in 2024, certainly hope so!





# What's On in February

## MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY

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

## TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Page Turners 'Grace Notes' 'Small Things Like These'
- 12:15 German
- 14:00 American History

## WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY

- 09:30 Play Reading – 'Enchanted April'
- 10:00 U3A Office Open for Enrolments
- 13:30 A Taste of Art
- 14:00 Cards '500'

## THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY

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

## FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY

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

## SATURDAY 8 FEBRUARY

- 12:00 Spanish

## MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY

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

## TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Politics and Current Affairs
- 12:15 German
- 14:00 Collectors 'Something Special'
- 14:00 Tech Talks (Room 2)

## WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques – Botanical #1 (Auditorium)
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 10:00 U3A Office Open for Enrolments
- 13:00 Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques - Botanical #2 (Room 2)
- 14:00 Film Discussion

## THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Singing for Fun
- 10:00 Be Connected - Android
- 13:30 Executive Committee Meeting

## FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 11:45 Chat 'n Chew - 'Royal Hotel'
- 13:00 Ukes4Fun - Drop In

## SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY

- 12:00 Spanish

## MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun

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

## TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group
- 12:15 German
- 14:00 Exploring the Universe

## WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Meet and Mingle - 'L to P', Natalie Phillips, BRCC
- 10:00 U3A Office Open for Enrolments
- 13:30 A Taste of Art
- 14:00 Cards '500'

## THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY

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

## FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Wine Appreciation 'Taminick Cellars'/'Mokoan Hub'
- 10:00 Sustainability
- 14:00 Train Buffs

## SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY

- 12:00 Spanish

## MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY

- 09:30 Exercises for Fun
- 10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started
- 11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
- 11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
- 13:00 Family Research - Getting Started (One-to-One Appointments) (Rm 2)
- 14:00 Coin Collectors
- 17:00 Newsletter Reports Due Today

## TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY

- 09:00 Come and Learn Croquet
- 10:00 Politics & Current Affairs
- 12:15 German
- 13:00 Family Research - Getting Started (One-to-One Appointments) (Rm 2)
- 14:00 Brain Games

## WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques - Botanical #1 (Auditorium)
- 10:00 Recorder Group
- 10:00 U3A Office Open for Enrolments
- 13:00 Colour Mixing and Watercolour Techniques - Botanical #2 (Rm 1)

## THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY

- 09:30 Garden App'n – 'Three Beautiful Benalla Gardens in Mitchell Street'
- 10:00 Photography
- 10:00 Community Singing
- 14:00 Car Torque

## FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY

- 10:00 Music Appreciation
- 13:00 Ukes4Fun - Drop In

## SATURDAY 1 MARCH

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