



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – March, 2019

U3A Benalla & District Inc

P O Box 674

Benalla 3672

Website: u3abenalla.weebly.com

Facebook: facebook.com/U3abenalla/

Newsletter: newsletter@u3abenalla.com

Please send all newsletter items for the newsletter to newsletter@u3abenalla.com by 25 Mar 2019

President: Dorothy Webber

5762 2116

president@u3abenalla.com

Secretary: Geraldine McCorkell

P: 5762 2134 M: 0408 522 662

secretary@u3abenalla.com

President's Report

Congratulations to all on the successful start to 2019.

Our numbers are amazing - 303+ members - and a number of the classes have had to limit numbers. This is the first time we have had to do this. This goes to show U3A Benalla has courses people want. We apologise if you haven't been able to join the group you wanted. If numbers drop off this will be looked into.

Thank you to our existing and new convenors who are the reason for our success. I have been getting great comments from members on how they are enjoying their classes

Thanks go to Jenny Sawyer for running the summer school of Be Connected

Thank you to Terry Dillon. Terry has retired as our go to computer expert - he has donated many hours of his time to this and thanks will never be enough. Michael Plex will now be taking on the role of looking after our computer needs.

As we will be paying Michael all requests for his services must go through me. Ring 0412263071 and I will arrange with Michael what is required.

The NBN is due to be installed on Tuesday 12th March (hopefully it will be a smooth process).

Politics may be disrupted as the time I've been given is between 8am -12noon.

On Wednesday at Meet & Mingle 50 members had lots of questions for Sean Ginnivan of Benalla Rural City Waste Management.

The March Meet and Mingle on Wednesday 20th March is the U3A Annual General Meeting.

Dorothy Webber, President

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for U3A Benalla Inc. will be held on Wednesday 20th March at our monthly Meet and Mingle meeting, 10.00 a.m. in the U3A room, Seniors complex, Fawckner Drive Benalla. Nomination Forms for the Committee are available from the Secretary Geraldine McCorkell 5762 2134. All welcome.

Group Reports

A Night at the Opera: French Style

Our merry band listened to Gounod's opera, *Faust*, enjoying the 2011 New York Metropolitan Opera's stunning production. Jonas Kaufmann sang the role of Faust but most of the group felt he was out-sung by Rene Pape in the role of Mephistopheles and the gorgeous singing of the Russian soprano, Marina Poplavskaya, in the role of Marguerite. The contemporary set, often bathed in darkness, seemed the perfect foil for this disturbing story of a man who sells his soul to the devil.

Meg Dillon

Armchair Traveller

A reminder that Brian Vial and Andrea Stevenson will address the session on Tuesday 5th March at 2 pm on the topic of their Papua New Guinea travels. This will be the first occasion we have touched on the subject of New Guinea and should be of immense interest.

Ray O'Shannessy

Art Appreciation

Ivan Durrant spoke to our group about his latest exhibition *Coloring Lake Mokoan*, on display until the 3rd of March at the Benalla Regional Gallery. These restored local wetlands, formerly the Winton Wetlands, are now cycling through their natural periods of dry and wet. Ivan talked about his childhood fascination with water and reflections and his ability to see glowing colors in the landscape. He became very familiar with Lake Mokoan when living in Benalla and visiting friends who lived by the lake.



This exhibition brings these influences together in shimmering displays of reflections, water and sunsets, all reimagined by the artist. Ivan talked about his love of color and his technique for creating the lost edges of the abstract shapes that bring this landscape to life. His paints and brushes are on display too—a colored confection of the artist at work. Well worth a visit. You will never look at Lake Mokoan in the same way again.

Meg Dillon, co-convenor

On Monday 4th March at 10 am Bryony will speak about Face-to-Face Portraits from the Collection. Bryony is keen to expand the Art Appreciation group and will be inviting the public to also attend our lectures. The Gallery will be collecting the \$2 coin donation directly, but we ask that you tick your attendance off in the attendance book.

Neville Gibb, Convenor

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

At our first session we explored the history of writing groups at U3A Benalla; the development of the memoir writing course and our regular use of ABC Open's 500 Word topics as a focus for our writing each month. We considered optional approaches such as 'Stories from the' or 'Stories

my Told me'; then looked at the 'Our Stories' area of the website.

Before breaking for coffee we each interviewed a person we didn't know well, introduced them to the class and described their memory of 'the closest they have been to receiving an Oscar, winning an Olympic medal or being in the Guinness book of records'! This was relaxing and demonstrated the gentle art of reminiscing with others.

After the break fascinating stories were shared of 'Family Traits'. Some writers reflected on genetic traits, others behavioural traits.

A group of members keen to write a memoir focusing on themes such as life stages gathered together after class to share their ideas, agreeing that they will do this each month to support one another and share progress.

The topic for the 500 word task for March 25th is '*I Broke It*' - with back up topics to choose from if necessary such as 'The Year That Made Me', 'New in Town' and a 'A Person who Shaped Me'.

The brief for '[I Broke It](#)' - A broken plate, a broken bone, a broken record, or even being broke. Tell us about a time you broke something, and what repercussions you face.

Bev Lee

Booker Reading Group

We read the 2018 winner of the Booker prize, Anna Burns, *The Milkman* set in Northern Ireland during 'the Troubles'. Middle sister, the main character, struggles to manage her relationship with her maybe-boyfriend, while being stalked by an older man, the leader of the local paramilitary.

Her mother is a particularly bitter and resentful woman who has already lost two sons in the civil war and shows no sympathy for her daughter. The toxic environment of gossip and bitchiness that permeates this community weighs heavily on the girl. Despite all this some subtle humor can be found and towards the end there are small signs that some sort of improvements may help this community out of its hopelessness.

A mixed response from the reading group, some enjoyed it, others found the prose style difficult. We will be comparing other books from the Booker Long List with this winner. Our book for March is *Warlight* by Michael Ondaatje and we will be meeting in the Benalla Library at 2pm on Friday 15 March. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to join us.

Meg Dillon

Bushwalks

Easy Walks

Chinaman's Island, Yarrawonga, Wednesday, 3rd April 2019

We will follow the walking track along Lake Mulwala to Chinaman's Island revegetated parkland with interpretative signage and lunch in the park; approximately 6 kms.

Meet in carpark behind Seniors Complex (U3A), Fawckner Drive, Benalla at 9.45am for departure at 10am. Participants, please contact Margaret Walshe by Monday, 1st April 2019, ph: 5762 3906; or 0427 005 202.

Suggestion for walkers: place conveners mobile phone number in your mobile phone contact list: Margaret Walshe 0427 005 202; Wendy Sturgess 0403 226 649.

Wendy Sturgess and Margaret Walshe

Mid Week Walks

Mt Buffalo

On Wednesday March 13 the Mid Week Walks group will undertake a series of three easy and interesting walks at Mt Buffalo – Dickson Falls, Cathedral/Hump and Old Galleries (subject to time). Some climbing will be involved to the Hump. Total distance 7km. Meet at 'The Centre' Tennis Courts, Barkly Street (Behind Aldi) to leave Benalla at 8 am. Leader: John Boehm 0428 254 801.

John Boehm

Chat n' Chew

What an enjoyable start we had to our 2019 Chat 'n' Chew year at the Royal Hotel on 15th February.

On **March 15th** we will do it all again – plenty of chat and a little chew at the **BOWLS CLUB** at 12.00. All welcome.

Trish Potter has kindly offered to be my contact until my telephone has been transferred to our new home. So ring Trish **5762 1117** (a male voice will answer for messages).

Shirley Kearney

Collectors

At our first meeting for the year we welcomed four new members and of course our returning members at a well attended meeting. Our theme was 'Souvenirs' and we had a wonderful display and were fortunate to hear some very interesting stories and reminiscences about the pieces. Many of the items were holiday souvenirs.

Margaret brought along a London Festival Theatre Program actually signed by Rudolph Nureyev. She was lucky enough to go backstage and meet Rudolph following the ballet, a lasting memory.

Jacquie brought along a family heirloom, a Royal Stafford trinket box, produced for a 'Back-to' to Horsham in 1929. A picture of Horsham featured on the lid. Jan showed some Chinese artefacts and we were privileged to hear how she became interested in them as she told us about her background and growing up in Tasmania.



An unusual item - and a first for Collectors - was a bottle of wine from HDC winery in the Glenrowan area. This winery no longer exists but we were reliably informed that they produced some very nice wines. The bottle had been purchased and put away for a special occasion and then forgotten. It was souvenir of the winery and many happy days out. The wine looked as if it hadn't improved with age and was most unlikely to be opened.

Robyn brought along a selection of souvenirs from London, Norway, Russia, Germany and Spain. Wilma showed a pendant and necklet from Greece, and a drawn thread cotton and silk tablemat bought from a lady at a church in Moni on Naxos Island, a Murano Red glass pendant from Venice and wooden figures "The Deepings", Nicholls Rivulet – Huon Valley.

Lynne had Cats from Istanbul, Italy and a reproduction of the Book of Kells. Elaine brought along items from Switzerland and Barbara items from Cairo, a Henry VIII fridge magnet, and an item from the Wedgewood factory. Judith showed glass lollies purchased at Port Douglas and Venice as well as an ornament from Olympia in Greece.

Our scheduled March meeting falls on the 11th March, which is a long weekend. It was decided to hold the meeting for those who are around. A theme was not set so please bring along one or

more of your favourite items. The meeting will be held as usual in the U3A room at the Seniors Community Centre at 10.00 am

Judith Borthwick

Creative Writing

We welcomed some new members to the Creative Writing class in February. Because this was the first class for the year, we spent some time talking about the purpose of the class. This is a self-help class, with encouragement from members of the group.

We then started the class with a challenge to write 1-2 sentences on the topic of "The Skatepark".

There were some projects over the Christmas break, and the results were shared. One of the challenges was to write a piece that could then be edited and developed over the semester. These were shared, along with ideas as to where the story would go next. It is hoped to publish the final products on the U3A web page in June.

Members of the group were also asked to provide some ideas for topics to be used during the year as prompts for our writing, and these have been collated into a reference document.

Next month, the 2nd Monday is on 11 March, which is the Labour Day holiday. We decided that two months was too long between classes. For those who are available we will meet on 11 March at 2:00pm. Members will select one or more of the following topics:

- Monday was supposed to be the worst day of the week. Today had it beat by a mile.
- After sitting at the same desk for three years, I figured I was beyond seeing anything new. I was wrong.
- Rain turned the narrow path into a stream of mud and dead leave

Joy Shirley

e-Book Group

Our literary season kicked off with *A World of Other People*, by Steven Carroll. To link the story of a love affair with the poetry of T.S. Eliot was certainly a challenge, but I think a successful one. A day after the Blitz in London, three people stood on a rooftop acting as fire spotters, when they saw a British plane go down. One of these watchers was Iris, a would-be novelist, and another was the acclaimed poet T.S. Eliot. A year later, quite by chance, Iris meets Jim, an airman sitting on a park bench who is clearly distressed. She speaks to him, and their love affair begins, but later cools due to a misunderstanding. Hoping to see Iris, Jim goes to

a reading of *Little Gidding* by the poet, but the evocative and powerful imagery of a plane going down triggers a memory of his rear gunner trapped in the burning aircraft. He wanders off into freezing weather, and dies of hypothermia. It's only later that Iris and T.S. Eliot realise the doomed airman was Jim. If anything, this novel, made us aware of the power of love, the power of words, and the meaning of hope and inspiration.

Helen Scheller

Exercises for Fun

Exercises for fun has commenced again after the Christmas break. It is so encouraging to know that so many of us want to get active and improve our fitness.

We welcome all the new faces and look forward to continuing the year with lots of enthusiasm.

Join us on a Monday at 9.30am, and then have a cuppa and a chat afterwards. Have fun

Helen Jeffree

Exploring the Universe

How can scientists use telescopes to actually see the early Universe?

When we look at distant stars and galaxies we are looking back in time. We are seeing them as they were when their light left them and it may have taken billions of years to reach us. In fact some stars we see today may have exploded long ago and are now a huge cloud of gas and dust; the birthplace of more stars like our Sun.

The answer is tied up with the speed of light. Light travels at a very fast 300,000 kms per second. The age of the universe is approximately 13.77 billion years and distances "out there" are vast.

That was our introduction to 'Exploring the Universe 2019', after we viewed a film "The Very Best OF Hubble in 4K Ultra HD" which prompted questions from our new participants. This film can be seen on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyDRv1iSjxY>

We continued with two videos that explained it all from the earliest moment of the universe, the so-called "big bang" that led to everything in the universe today.

How Far Back Are We Looking In Time?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ld1ygiwY4k>

And another that explains the evolution of the universe. The early universe was opaque. The first stars were born much later.

When Was The First Light In The Universe? Seeing as far back as possible.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icdeQ7Hlc7A>

A quick trip to the Sun for the 10th anniversary of the Hinode space observatory before afternoon tea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZsatEhX9PI>

Spacecraft don't take holidays. The nuclear powered New Horizons space probe has been travelling for 13 years and is now in the icy cold far reaches of our solar system. On New Year's Day it zipped past a space rock 6.4 billion kms from Earth that has been nick named 'Ultima Thule'. It's a frozen remnant from the formation of the solar system. New Horizons sent back heaps of data and images that are still reaching NASA back here on Earth.



On January 3rd, a Chinese space probe and a robotic rover made a historic landing on the far side of the Moon and beamed back images via a specially located satellite.

Advanced technology and huge telescopes are returning brilliant images. Supercomputers are producing fantastic videos of the cosmos in 3D. This quality reproduced on the U3A High Definition television is superb. This is better than science fiction. This is real.

Bev Morton

Film and Literature

We are now watching movies at BPACC, then meeting on the 2nd Wednesday to discuss the movie.

Our February movie was the remake of "Storm Boy". We met in the library to discuss the movie where we welcomed several new members to our Film and Literature group. Some of our members had seen the earlier version filmed in 1976.

In general, people enjoyed the movie. In comparison with the earlier release it was not as bleak. The scenery was beautiful with more colour. And Storm Boy's father was not as distant as in the earlier release. There were some changes to the original story, with Michael Kingley as a grandfather (Geoffrey Rush) telling his

granddaughter (Morgan Davies) of his early life as Storm Boy.

Overall, it was a lovely story, with some good performances. The sounds of the ocean and the storms were realistic. Some good scenes showed the relationship between the grandfather and his granddaughter as he told the story of his life as Storm Boy. A couple of outstanding scenes showed the grandfather sitting beside his younger self, both contemplating the water and birdlife around them. The relationship with the aboriginal (Fingerbone) who helped Storm Boy nurture three pelicans was sensitively handled.

As with many films there is a message in the story – as Michael shows regret that he never forgave his father for sending him away to school, he is encouraging his granddaughter to talk with her father with whom she is in conflict.

Our movie for next month's discussion is "Green Book". This film has had some good reviews and is based on a true story set in the still racially divided southern states of America in the 60s. You can find out more about the movie on IMDb. The opening screening is at 10:30 on Friday, 22 February, and the final screening is on 5 March at 7:30pm. We will be meeting on 13 March at 1:30 in the library to discuss the film.

Joy Shirley

Games

We enjoyed Scrabble, Travelling Australia (lots of reminiscing when landing on places we've been) & Trivial Pursuit. Great fun.

Dorothy Webber

Garden Appreciation

March 28th. We are off to Cactus Country on the Murray Valley Highway in Strathmerton. Admission is \$12.50 for 20 people or more. Lunch is offered at the venue, \$15 for Lasagne and salad or Vegetable Frittata with salad this includes tea and coffee. An extra is a serve of cactus cake with ice-cream.

We will leave from the Seniors car park at 9.30 a.m. Car pooling with a map and instructions will be available then. Please give Gwen a ring on 5762 7017 if you are coming on this trip.

12th March The Wangaratta U3A Garden group would like to meet us at 10.30 a.m. in the Benalla gardens for a chat and swap ideas with the possibility of lunch at the Golf Club. Once again could you let Gwen know if you would be available for this

Gwen Turner

German for Beginners

This new course has been very popular. Attendees at the course are encouraged to ask questions in German as well as respond to questions from the Convenor in German. This provides a lot of enjoyment as many who attend have not spoken this language previously

Pauline Bailey

History: After the Victorians

We started by listening to the Coronation music for King Edward VII, but this year will not be all about British Kings, as Parliament made the decisions and policies. By contrast the rulers of Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire & Russia all claimed to rule by Divine Right, whilst France was a Republic. These were the major European powers.

The last century closed and the new one opened with the Boer War spanning them. This war was deeply unpopular in Europe and became more so as reporters wrote of farms being burned and concentration camps being established. 1/1/1901 saw the birth of the Australian nation and the celebrations included a contingent of Colonial troops who had returned from the Boer War. These troops had been raised by the States: in future the Australian Federal Parliament would be responsible for recruitment.

Australian Colonial troops had fought in Campaigns like the Sudan, but the first use of such troops were in the two wars fought by the British in New Zealand against the Maoris. The British suffered some defeats and requested Australian troops to come to their aid. In Australia a continuous frontier war was being waged against Aboriginals by settlers and it continued during the period we are now reviewing.

Terry Case

History: An Introduction to Civilization

Our two meetings for this month explored some major trends in Ancient Greek culture, including some things we have borrowed from them. My aim was to provide a balanced view of this culture as past historians have sometimes over-romanticized it. Its dark side included almost constant warfare between the city states and the Persians; the suppression of women and the horrible practice of female infanticide that was common. The ancient world, including the Greeks, was based on the economics of slavery, as men and women from defeated enemies were sold as slaves. Even Athens, the supposed shining light of

democracy, had a limited but interesting political model of government that only included adult male citizens. We concluded by investigating Athens culture and politics with a final look at what art historians have idolized, stunning pottery and a glorious development of realistic marble and bronze statues

Meg Dillon

Investment

At the first meeting of Investment for 2019 we welcomed two new members to our group, Helen and Mal Jeffrees and also Brian Trevana who had attended our last two meetings in 2018. We hope you all enjoy our discussions.

At the beginning of the session we acknowledged the uninspiring end to the Share Market in 2018. Then we looked at what CommSec saw as the prospects for 2019 and also what the Big Issues for 2019 were likely to be. It is important to consider issues like this at the beginning of a year as these issues can influence which stocks are likely to show the most increases during the coming year.

We thank Brian Greed for suggesting our second topic for discussion which arose from the proposed Franking Credit policy of the Labor Party. With a Federal election likely by May 2019 at the latest this policy could have large implications on some retired member's income through taxation changes. We discussed if there would be a demand for shares with unfranked dividends and also whether there will be more demand for growth companies that pay out less in dividends. It was a great discussion with Bill Parris using his mobile phone to clarify some points for us.

The next meeting of Investment will be on Friday 1 March at 2pm in the U3A room at the Seniors Complex.

Margaret Jenkins

Let's Talk Books

The holiday season and hot weather certainly contributed to a great deal of reading being done over the break. Lorraine read and enjoyed 6 murder mysteries, Laurie listened to the Poldark series that was, as he described it, a kaleidoscope of the era around 1932. James Heriot was revisited and enjoyed. An interesting read was If I Die Before I Wake by Emily Koch, quite a discussion on this topic. Barbara had read The Silk Road and obtained a copy of 'The New Silk Road' by Peter Francopan an enlightening look at history shaping the world. Judith Bassett has had an article published in Quadrant 'The Faithful

Massacre of 1838', previously published in the Journal of Australian Studies in 1989. Well done Judith. Enjoyed 'My Mother a Serial Killer'. The mother was married in Wangaratta and met a younger man and murdered him and 2 others – gruesome.

'Mirka and Georges - Culinary Affair', written by Lesley Harding, stories of the restaurant, recipes and art, as the reader described it, *wicked but virtuous*. Helen enjoyed Duchess, Lady Margaret Douglas a Scottish Lady who came from the house of Tudor and was the granddaughter of Henry the VII. Highly recommended was 'The Land Before Avocado' by Richard Glover – how Australia used to be. So many and varied were the books this month I couldn't list them all, these were just a taste of what U3A members are reading. Quite a few books were swapped for others to enjoy. See you all on Tuesday 5th March.

Geraldine McCorkell

Lifeball

Although the weather was very hot in January, February has been a lot kinder for playing Lifeball. I would still like to see a few more new members and I am looking at a couple of options to try to make this happen. If there is anyone who would like to try Lifeball, come to the Indoor Recreation Centre any Monday morning at 10.00am (we are no longer starting at 9.30am) and have a go. Basically if you can walk, you can play Lifeball. On a positive note, our members are still very much enjoying playing the game and enjoying the social aspect this brings. Marg Merriman is missing in action with a knee problem at the moment and she is hoping to return to the game sooner rather than later.

Marlene Pitts

Meditation

When we have lots of thoughts buzzing around it is very hard to stay focussed and after we don't know where to begin. At the session we begin by correct breathing, gentle exercises which can be done whilst seated followed by some relaxation techniques.

Caroline Sims

Meet and Mingle

Sean Ginnivan, the Waste Facilities Coordinator at the Benalla Rural City spoke to members at the March Meet and Mingle meeting.

Sean's role is to manage all waste management including kerbside collection & landfill operations.

In addition to this Sean manages all the Recreation Reserves and Facilities within the municipality.



The intent of the presentation was to provide an overview of the kerbside collection, defining what is collected and how it is processed.

Currently Council has a three bin system:

Green Bin FOGO Organics (Food **Organics** and Garden **Organics**), Yellow Bin Comingles, Red Bin General Waste.

The Green Bin has only been rolled out within the Urban area of the municipality at this stage.

Sean's presentation '[Kerbside Collection - presentation to U3A Benalla](#)' (pdf) and the [Contamination Letter and Posters](#) to offending residents have been added to the Meet and Mingle page on the website.

Bill Parris

Music Appreciation

A bright start to this year's music with an appreciation of the life and music of J S Bach - the composer of some of the most famous works of the classical repertoire, and who has influenced perhaps more composers than any other figure in music.

Better known during his lifetime primarily as an outstanding organ player and technician, the youngest of eight children born to musical parents, Johann Sebastian was destined to become a great musician.

Bach's use of counterpoint was brilliant and innovative, and the immense complexities of his compositional style still amaze musicians today. Many consider him the greatest composer of all time.

Because of the vast number of compositions (1100 or so catalogued – goodness knows how many there are in total) time allowed only for a sampling of his musical output. Hence we named it "A Dégustation of Bach" and framed our selection of

his music around the instruments he composed for and some choral work.

Our second programme in February saw us move down the years (just a little) from the "Baroque" period of Bach to the "Classical" era and the music of Mozart. Another prolific composer - but with only a little more than half the catalogued works of Bach - so again it was "smorgasbord" of Mozart music across the various genres he composed for, although with not quite the same volume of music to choose from, we were able to lengthen the time a little for our listening experience of the items presented.

Full programme notes of each of the two sessions together with links to the appropriate "Youtube" site for the music presented at both have been posted on the Music Appreciation page of our U3A website.

Bill Squire

Patchwork

We have decided to make wall hangings to donate to the new building at Coinda as this years project. Heather Sloan is co-ordinating this and can let you know the size required. Geraldine, Lorraine and I are doing a Mystery block of the month with Vivienne Shepherd. If anyone is interested in joining us, let me know.

Happy sewing!

Dorothy Webber

Play Reading

Cold Comfort Farm by Paul Doust

The heroine, Flora Poste, having been orphaned is looking for relatives with whom to live. After rejecting a number of others, she chooses the Starkadders, relatives on her mother's side, who live in the isolated Cold Comfort Farm, near the fictional Sussex village of Howling in England. Greeting her as "Robert Poste's child", they take her in to repay some unexplained wrong done to her father.

Each of the extended family has some long-festered emotional problem caused by ignorance, hatred or fear; and the farm is badly run, supposedly cursed, and presided over by the unseen presence of Aunt Ada Doom, who is said to be mad through having seen "something nasty in the woodshed".

Flora, a level-headed urban woman, applies modern common sense to their problems and helps them all adapt to the twentieth century.

It parodies the romanticized, sometimes doom-laden accounts of rural life popular at the time with many writers. Published in 1932, the setting contains developments such as videophones, aircraft postal services, and major demographic changes in London such as residential districts south of the Thames becoming fashionable.

Notably adapted for the stage by Paul Doust. The plot was simplified a little in order to make it suitable for the stage. Many characters are omitted. Meriam's character was merged with Rennet, who ends up with Urk at the end. As a consequence, both Rennet's and Urk's roles are much bigger than in the book. Mrs. Smiling is absent because the action begins with Flora's arrival in Sussex; Charles appears only to drop her off and pick her up again at the end of the play. Mark Dolour, though mentioned several times in the play as a running joke, never appears on stage. Finally, instead of visiting a psychoanalyst to cure her obsession, Judith leaves with Neck at the end.

Our members are really enjoying this play with it's characters and twists and the regular talking to the audience by many characters throughout the play – Neck being another one. We will finish this play at our next meeting.

Keith Rogers

Politics and Current Affairs

The first politics class for the year saw our room bulging with members keen to discuss recent events. We barely touched on the changes that had occurred during the break and we did not get to the schoolkids who are taking political action on climate change. A new movement was started by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish teenager, who commenced a lonely vigil outside the Swedish parliament, demanding urgent climate action. This is now a worldwide movement and Greta recently spoke at the World Economic forum, a meeting for the IMF and the super-rich.

Greta quoted the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change data that gives us 12 years to undo our past mistakes before it is too late. She told the forum that "some say we should not engage in activism. Instead we should leave everything to our politicians and just vote for change instead. But what do we do when there is no political will? What do we do when the politics needed are nowhere in sight?"

Adults keep saying: we owe it to the young people to give them hope.

But I don't want your hope. I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to

feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.

I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is."

I am impressed by the action that Greta and others took to draw attention to the disaster they see threatening and am disappointed that there is a pushback from adults, especially those in power to undermine their actions. I think their fears should be addressed.

Terry Case

Recorder Group

The Recorder Group met for 2019 and welcomed two new members and a tenor recorder! We journeyed through some familiar pieces with Janet cleverly interspersing some new challenges - high notes, pinched notes, accidental sharps and that dreaded challenge; 'And now let's play this a little faster!' We did...and we played duets and rounds, two parts and three, plus some wonderful harmonies.

For the next session, people who want to practise new notes should come at 9:00 and the others at 10:00. Happy tootling.

Pat Treleaven

Singing for Fun

This year we have welcomed five new members Joan Badrock, Julie Hooper, Carole Ruta, Chris Dunster and Suzanne Berry to our Singing for Fun group. We hope you all enjoy singing with us and look forward to getting to know you all.

We are fortunate that our three singing leaders Faith Hicks, Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman are full of enthusiasm for 2019. Faith is revisiting many of the songs we have not sung for several months, while Brian and Margaret both have a new challenge for us with a new song on the horizon.

We are grateful that our pianist Gwen Barnes is providing accompaniment on the piano to our three leaders.

During January we were saddened to learn that one of our valued members Elsbeth Shaw had passed away. Elsbeth was a great friend to several of our members and will be remembered for her cheery personality and excellent company as well as her singing.

Thank you to Dorothy Webber for negotiating that our members can use the chairs and tables near the kitchen for morning tea every time we meet.

The next meeting of Singing for Fun will be on Thursday 7 March 2019 at 10am in the U3A Room at the Seniors Complex

Margaret Jenkins

Stock and Land

Rice is nice but dear to grow

In 35 years as a Moulamein rice grower, now Benalla district resident Brian Vial, saw the industry grow substantially to rival dairy exporter Murray Goulburn, as an earner of export income.

Speaking at our February Stock and Land session, he said that towards the end of that 35 year period in 2005, much more expensive irrigation water, was severely depleting the area grown to the water thirsty crop.

Brian said after stints as a teacher and with BHP in the 1960s, he decided to become a farmer. To that end he bought a meat chicken farm on the Mornington Peninsula but with the aim of generating funds to buy a bigger farm.

When he had maximised the poultry farm's earning potential, he sold it and in 1970, bought what became a 2400ha part irrigation farm between Moulamein and Balranald.

Brian said at that time, the big farmers in the Riverina tended to be graziers of livestock, while it was farmers on the irrigation channels like him, who tended to grow crops like rice, wheat and even cotton. Others were dairy farmers.

To gain an initial 50 acre permit for rice, it was necessary to have soil tested for water holding capacity. Eventually the Vials grew up to 200ha of rice a year, but because the crop needs up to 10ML a hectare and the current water price is sky high, son Leigh currently running the farm, has not grown rice this year. He put his limited water supply onto pasture through a centre pivot and that finished a mob of lambs, which in fact topped a Swan Hill market. Leigh has described the Riverina as "rice growing heaven".

Brian's partner Andrea, said that because rice paddocks were artificial wetlands for six months of the year, huge numbers of local and migratory water birds descended on paddies. Ducks and swans were the problem visitors, despite Sydney bureaucrats at one time saying swans did not eat the stuff. But following the discovery that a purposely shot swan's stomach "was absolutely chockers with rice," authorities issued the necessary permits for growers to shoot up to five swans, she said. "That was usually sufficient to move the rest on". Brian said they used to

encourage local and Melbourne shooters, to discourage the nightly duck invasion, so the predators moved to someone else's paddy. Parties of Italian shooters were keen and targeted galahs and rabbits, if ducks were scarce.

Rice cannot be grown in consecutive years on the same paddocks, so with a soil profile substantially full of water, it has become common to sow wheat on rice stubbles almost as soon as the rice is harvested. In wet years, constantly unbogging tractors and drills, was a decidedly "character building experience".

He said the big years for rice – up to 1.7 million tonnes worth \$1.4bn in the 1990s - would not return while water was selling for up to \$500 a ML. Those growing some rice are largely choosing the variety Koshihikari that fetches premium prices in Japan.

In the 1990s, the two co-operatives, Murray Goulburn and the Rice Growers Co-operative, competed to see which was the biggest exporter of containers through the Port of Melbourne. "But both have changed significantly: Murray Goulburn has been taken over by a Canadian dairy company and Ricegrowers Ltd is about to list their B class shares on the ASX. Active growers will still control the company as A class shareholders, Brian said.

He foresees further difficulties for Ricegrowers because it's A class shareholders are the only ones able to vote on the body's future. "That means they have to be active growers producing at least 200t over two years. But with the drought it is tricky being an active grower," he said .

Brian was elected to the Rice Marketing Board and the Ricegrowers Co-operative in 1993 and retired in 2005. Now son Leigh is a Ricegrowers Ltd director.



Brian Vial and Andi Stevenson with David

On Tuesday 5th March, Guest speaker Julie Knight will speak on Low Line Cattle breeding.

David Palmer

Sustainability

The Sustainability group is now well underway. It is wonderful to be able to welcome new members as concerned about sustainability as members who have attended this group for many years.

During the first session we looked at "The Concept of Sustainability" which was first discussed in *The Limits to Growth*, published in 1972 by the Club of Rome. This report concluded that the finite nature of the natural environment meant that the world economic system could not expand indefinitely. An issue that is constantly raised today in discussions about that state of the planet we are leaving for future generations. We also heard how Sir David Attenborough reiterated this theme at the World Economic Forum in Davos. In his opening address he urged political and business leaders from around the world to make a renewed push to tackle climate change before the damage is irreparable.

January's extreme heat was an obvious topic for discussion and we were not surprised to hear that Australia sweltered through the hottest month in its history in January, with scientists concerned that extreme heat is hitting faster and harder than expected. We also read about a senior Australian firefighter who says climate change is contributing to bushfires so horrendous that homes and lives cannot be protected with fire seasons that are much longer and more severe.

When discussing sustainability and climate change there are so many negative stories however John does also look for positive stories. To our surprise we read about an Australian 'start-up' that hopes to have its electric engines propelling light commercial aircraft within three years, while promising flights that are cheaper to operate, better for the environment and more comfortable for passengers.

Australia's energy system was also another obvious topic for discussion and we focussed on an article titled, "What would Australia look like powered by 100% renewabl-e energy?" Obviously big on wind and solar but also lots of different technologies in different locations, such as pumped hydro, wave and tidal energy, solar thermal with storage, batteries, sustainable bioenergy and more. Industry and transport would need to go renewable too.

An article about Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenage activist who has inspired 'School Strikes 4 Climate Action' all over the world, led to a thought provoking discussion about school students taking

action about climate change. We will be continuing to monitor the nature and impact of student engagement and activism related to climate change.

John Lloyd

Tech Savvy Beginners- Apple Devices

Great to see previous attendees and new faces at Tech Savvy Beginners wanting to better acquaint themselves with their iPads and iPhones. We've cut the lesson time down from two hours to just over one hour. After which members are welcome to a tea or coffee and some individual help with computing problems.

So far we've looked at the buttons and ports on an iPad, using the Internet and entering data into the Calendar App. Of course our first entry was for Tech Savvy, Wednesdays 2:00 - 4:00pm.

Jenny Sawyer

Tech Savvy Projects – Family History

Our first meeting falls after the newsletter deadline –group members will develop a title and focus for their project. Maggie already has a wonderful title in mind 'The Search for Betsy Trim'! Ancestry.com buff Wendy Sturgess will be helping to support the group this year. Thank you Wendy! We meet from 1 to 2.45pm as a full group, with access to the room and support available until 4pm for those not proceeding on to the Tech Savvy Talks catchup at the Northo.

Bev Lee

Tech Savvy Talks

Our February session commenced with a number of short videos about **autonomous aircraft**, possibly for use as Uber style taxis, followed by a Wall Street Journal video exploring the use of autonomous aircraft particularly for military applications. There seem to be fewer difficulties with autonomous aircraft than there are with autonomous road transport.

The second part of the meeting was devoted to **5 G**. The 3GPP standard called 5 G NR was released last year. NR means New Radio. It allows two methods of implementation, a Stand-Alone version for new base stations, and a Non-Stand Alone version, which uses the existing 4 G LTE network to simplify and speed up implementation. Two frequency bands will be used for 5 G, these are called less than 6 GHz and greater than 15GgHz. Videos by Ericsson and Nokia showed what we might expect from 5 G and also the effects of lower latency.

The new enabling technology to achieve these standards is Massive MIMO. This involves changing the disadvantage of interferences caused by multipath propagation from buildings and the atmosphere with MIMO used now, to a very substantial advantage with Massive MIMO. Hundreds or thousands of software-controlled antennas are used, depending on the frequency band, greatly reducing interference and noise leaving only the enhanced required signal. 4G LTE uses 4 or 8.

Les Rodgers

There is an extended version of this report on the [Tech Savvy Talks](#) page on the website.

Wine Appreciation

Wednesday 27 March

Meet at 10.00 am at the tennis court car-park site behind Aldi to travel to **Warrabilla Winery**, Rutherglen, previously visited in 2011 and home to some powerful reds. Lunch at **Pickled Sisters**.

Phone Noel 5762 3149 or Keith & Heather 5762 4086. We usually confirm meal bookings the previous Sunday night.

Community News

2019 Benalla International Women's Day Celebration

Thursday 7th March_ 6:30pm Lakeside Community Centre, Arundel Street, Benalla. **Guest speaker – Christine Nixon**. Tickets \$40.00 include a light supper with drinks at bar prices. Tickets available from the RedB4 Bookshop, Bridge Street, Benalla or Steph Ryan's Office, Bridge Street, Benalla (*Cash Only*) or contact Pamela 0409 223 974.

Chess at the Library

The Benalla Library would like to start a chess club for children and adults all ages. We are seeking volunteers willing to conduct these regular sessions. Someone who can tutor beginners and extend the advanced players.

The chess club would run one afternoon per week after 4 p.m. If you are interested please contact Marlies at Benalla Library. 57622069.

*Thank You to Steph Ryan and her staff for
for printing hard copies of this newsletter for mailing
out and distribution.*

What's On in March

Friday, 1 March

9:30am Sustainability

2:00pm Investment

Monday, 4 March

9:30am Exercises for Fun

10:00am Lifeball

10:00am Art Appreciation - 'Face to Face' Portraits

12:00pm German for Beginners

2:00pm Games

2:00pm Garden Team (Alternate Date re Labour Day)

4:00pm Meditation

Tuesday, 5 March

10:00am E-Book Group

10:00am Stock and Land – 'Low Line Cattle'

12:00pm Beginners' Patchwork

2:00pm Armchair Traveller – 'Papua New Guinea'

2:00pm Let's Talk Books

Wednesday, 6 March

9:30am Play Reading - 'Cold Comfort Farm' concludes

2:00pm Tech Savvy Beginners (Apple Devices)

Thursday, 7 March

10:00am Singing for Fun

1:00pm Patchwork

6:30pm Benalla International Women's Day

Celebration - Christine Nixon

Friday, 8 March

10:00am Music Appreciation

2:00pm History - An Introd'n to Western Civilization

Monday, 11 March

9:30am Exercises for Fun

10:00am Collectors - 'A Favourite Item or Items'

10:00am Lifeball

2:00pm Creative Writing

Tuesday, 12 March

8:00am NBN Installation (8am – 12mid)

10:00am Politics & Current Affairs

10:30am Garden Appreciation - Meeting with

Wangaratta U3A Garden Group, Benalla Gardens

2:00pm Brain Games

Wednesday, 13 March

8:00am Bush Walking - Mid Week Walks - Mt Buffalo

9:00am Recorder - 'Learn New Notes'

10:00am Recorder - 'Full Group'

11:00am Tech Savvy Talks

1:30pm Film and Literature - 'Green Book' Discussion

2:00pm Tech Savvy Beginners (Apple Devices)

7:00pm A Night at the Opera - French Style

Thursday, 14 March

10:00am Harmony Group

1:30pm Executive Committee Meeting

9:30pm Birdwatching

Friday, 15 March

9:30am Sustainability

12:00pm Chat n' Chew - 'Benalla Bowls Club'

2:00pm Booker Reading Group - 'Warlight' by

Michael Ondaatje

Monday, 18 March

9:30am Exercises for Fun

10:00am Lifeball

12:00pm German for Beginners

4:00pm Meditation

Tuesday, 19 March

10:00am History - After the Victorians

2:00pm Exploring the Universe

Wednesday, 20 March

10:00am Meet and Mingle - Annual General Meeting

2:00pm Tech Savvy Beginners (Apple Devices)

Thursday, 21 March

10:00am Singing for Fun

1:00pm Patchwork

Friday, 22 March

10:00am Music Appreciation

2:00pm History - An Introd'n to Western Civilization

Monday, 25 March

9:30am Exercises for Fun

10:00am Lifeball

12:00pm German for Beginners

2:00pm As Time Goes By - 'I Broke It'

Tuesday, 26 March

10:00am Politics & Current Affairs

2:00pm Beginners' Patchwork

Wednesday, 27 March

10:00am Wine App'n - Warrabilla Winery Rutherglen

10:00am Recorder

2:00pm Tech Savvy Beginners (Apple Devices)

Thursday, 28 March

9:30am Garden App'n 'Cactus Country' Strathmerton

10:00am Member Services Group

1:00pm Tech Savvy Projects - Family History

3:00pm Tech Savvy Talks at the Northo

Monday, 1 April

9:30am Exercises for Fun

10:00am Lifeball

10:00am Art Appreciation - 'All that Remains'

12:00pm German for Beginners

2:00pm Games

4:00pm Meditation

Tuesday, 2 April

10:00am E-Book Group

10:00am Stock and Land

12:00pm Beginners' Patchwork

2:00pm Let's Talk Books

Wednesday, 3 April

9:30am Play Reading

9:45am Easy Walks - Chinaman's Island, Yarrowonga

2:00pm Tech Savvy Beginners (Apple Devices)

Thursday, 4 April

10:00am Singing for Fun

1:00pm Patchwork

Friday, 5 April

9:30am Sustainability

2:00pm Investment