U3A Benalla Inc.

Newsletter – August 2025

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Please send reports for the newsletter to newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com by 26th August 2025

President's Report

Over the last two months we have had four successful sessions of our Digital Upskilling course conducted by Melissa Antony. These sessions included information about being safe online, downloading and uploading, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the use of Chat GPT and using social media.

Following on from this I was asked for a basic Apple course to complement the Android course currently being run by Ruth Jelliff. Jenny Sawyer has agreed to run 4 Apple sessions on Friday August 1 and 8 and September 5 and 12 in Room 1 from 1.30pm to 2.30pm with an extra half hour for troubleshooting individual problems. The course will cover Wi-Fi v Mobile data, settings, using the Calendar, Notes, Messages and Emails and Money (bills and buying online). There is a sheet on the table outside Room 1 for enrolling yourself or you may contact the Course Coordinator Anne Nelson on 0438 447 379.

U3A Benalla have applied to be part of Get Online Week and will be running a free BBQ and Ask a Digital Question on Wednesday 22nd October at 12 noon. Please bring any friends who you know would benefit from our Digital instruction classes so that we can introduce them to Ruth Jelliff, Robyn Lukey and Jenny Sawyer. Could you please let Helen Jeffree on 0490 092 267 know if you wish to attend. We are pleased that the Ukulele group will be providing entertainment during the BBQ.

The value of our U3A Benalla groups to the community has been noted by Age Friendly Benalla. This has led us to be invited to open five of our regular groups to members of the Benalla Community who are not U3A members during Senior's Month in October 2025. The groups which will participate in this are Easy Bush Walks on Wednesday 1st October at 8.45am, Patchwork and Craft on Thursday 2nd October at 1pm, Ukes for Fun on Monday 6th October at 11.30am, Car Torque on Thursday 23rd October at 2pm and Birdwatching at 9.30am on Friday 24th October. Thank you to the Convenors of these groups for showcasing your group to the wider Benalla community.

On 27th June Doug Smith and I met with the new CEO of Benalla Rural City Council Peter Keane and discussed the possibility of U3A Benalla getting more floor space at the Benalla Seniors and Community Centre. The meeting went well, with Peter Keane saying that he was "on board" with our need for a larger meeting room.

Margaret Jenkins, President

Group Reports

American History

After completing our perusal of the debates about the formation and ratification of the nation's Constitution, the class briefly considered the probable intention of the Second Amendment, before moving on to learning about the key challenges and successes of the first four presidents. The duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr was also of interest. A couple of videos supported our learning, while the other ones (now working) will begin our August session.

An investigation of the expansion westward will be initiated on Tuesday, August 4th. Over a couple of sessions, this will include the forced Indian removal and Andrew Jackson's presidency, hardships faced by white pioneers, the gold rush in California, the building of the railroads and so on.

Barbara Rogers

Art Appreciation

We were fortunate in having local artist **Kate Jenvey** acquaint us with her work in July. Kate is an interesting woman. Born in Africa, Kate lived there until she was 10 years old and then migrated to Australia. A realistic painter, Kate has maintained a connection with Africa and spends some time there each year. She paints animals, both African and Australian, but mostly African, in exceptional detail. Kate explained to us her early life and the feeling of attachment she has for Africa. She shared with us her love of the African Landscape and African Culture. It was extremely enjoyable.

We encourage all U3A members to visit the exhibition.

Join us at 'First Monday' at the Benalla Art Gallery on August 4th at 10.00am, to hear **Anderson Hunt** as he offers insight into his practice as a successful sculptor who has seen many projects through from beginning to completion.

Neville Gibb

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

This month's session began with a message from James: "I won't be there as am enjoying the warmth of NW Queensland!! See you next time." Lucky James!

July's icebreaker prompt "one of the few benefits of dying is that I will not have to wrestle with computers anymore…" sparked much discussion!

Stories on **'Communication… or other changes over time'** followed. Kathy wrote about trying to persuade resistant farm partners to purchase a computer ("decades later, they still remain resistant!") while Tom recalled his first job in a Telegraph Office working with telephone switchboards, fax, and Morse code machines. Anne began her story, *Communication and the Dog and Bone*, with an image of Dick Tracy's two-way wrist radio, traced changes in 'devices' over time and concluded, "…Not only is my device a phone, street directory, answering machine and encyclopedia, it's also a camera. Not even Dick Tracy's creator imagined such a device."

For **'Firsts and Lasts'**, Robyn wrote about buying her 'First Antique' bentwood chair and her lifelong passion for antiques. Jan described meeting her 'First Friend' Hazel when she was three and the joy they still share exchanging letters eight decades later.

John wrote a heartfelt tribute to the dogs which have accompanied him through life's twists and turns—from his 'First Dog' Juliet, the unexpected gift who brought solace; to Elsa, his current, and possibly last, canine companion. Bev Morton's reading about a nearly disastrous 'First Ride' on Princess, the circus pony, was greeted with applause.

Heather shared a smorgasbord of 'firsts' - 'First Boyfriend' (pictured), 'First Home' after arriving in Perth as a 10-year-old 'Ten Pound Pom'; 'First Horse,' Daniel Boone; and 'First Marriage,' which "I can honestly say … was my last".

Carmyl's story described how a chance pairing in a church youth group evolved into her marriage to Don. "We were married for sixty-two years. My first and last boyfriend."

'First Cars' brought tales of adventure involving Joan's *Austin Freeway Super Six*, Ray's *Morris Oxford Saloon*, and Max's 1927/28 *A Model Ford Coupe*.

Catch up stories included Barry's reflections on a flight he'd taken in Western Australia many years ago, while Tom wrote of his 'very special' 1953 Five Shillings Queen Elizabeth II Crown Coronation Commemorative Coin; 'Monkees' LP and the first (still enjoyed) video he ever recorded featuring Torvill and Dean's 'Bolero'. Merv's moving story, *Two Wrongs don't make a Right*, described traumatic memories of disciplinary over-reach by a priest at school towards another student for a relatively minor infraction, memories which have had a lasting impact on his attitude to religion.

With seventeen members present, there was a delightful mix of stories – sometimes moving, sometimes humorous, always memory stirring. Thanks everyone, for another memorable session!

August's theme is **'Life Changing'** and includes the topics *'Advice', 'Emergence'* and *'How We Met'*. For full details, check the website or reminder email.

Beverley Lee

Australian Shares & Stock Market

At our Monday 7th July meeting we welcomed new member Ken to our group. We covered some basic online information sources such as Market Index and Commsec web sites. Click on the link to view Market Index - https://www.marketindex.com.au/

On this site you can find lists of upcoming dividend dates, unit prices of iron ore, gold, silver etc and a full listing of stocks that make up the ASX grouped in ASX 20, ASX 50, ASX 100, ASX 200, ASX 300 and the All Ord's AXO.

Nothing to do with shares … Les presented a comprehensive slide coverage on smart door locks that unlock with facial recognition on both the outside and on the inside of your house door. Costs start at approx. $700 without installation.

On the Long-Term sheet Les leads with his choice of Life 360 stock some $3,788 positive for the year, followed by Neville with EVN $3,767 positive. Our whole group is 10% positive for the year to date.

On the Real Time Trading sheet Sue leads with her selection of Elders after selling her NAB in June and buying Elders. Elders had an ex-dividend date of 3rd June hence she collected a dividend on our 7th July sheet. Neena has decided to sell WOW and buy TLS and then in September buy back WOW, as the ex-dividend dates follow about 10 days apart.

At our extended afternoon tea break we enjoyed assorted sausage rolls, party pies and snack bites from our 1970's fry pan oven. The result was very few were left over to take home.

On the monthly sheet John is miles ahead with DRO followed by Wende with silver base metal. Five members have chosen a new stock for review at our August meeting. If you were away, please drop me an email on your new selection choice asap.

Overall, on all sheets our stock nett total values are up since June, so let's hope July is also positive.

Our next meeting is on Monday 4th August 2025.

Malcolm Sanders

Be Connected – Android

During July we learnt how to use "find my phone" and how to create a message on the lock screen to help with lost phones.

We had a very interesting demonstration by Bev on the use of Google Home Assistant and a Sprout Speaker. There were many questions for Bev and great discussion on devices that can assist us with daily living. Thank you, Bev.

In August we will delve further into some of the issues Bev touched on, for example, ChatGPT, as well as revisit some more basic topics.

We continue to encourage class members to suggest topics and issues they would like help with.

Ruth Jelliff

Be Connected – Tech Advice

This month we have taken up Terry Dillon's suggestion of providing information through the newsletter about **Pass Keys**, which he sees as the next step in online security.

What are passkeys? Passkeys let users log in to websites and apps using biometrics (like fingerprints or facial recognition) or a device PIN. Relying on public-key cryptography, they are more secure than passwords.

Key Benefits:

1. *Stronger Security* Passkeys are *phishing-proof*. Since there's no password to steal or share, attackers have nothing to intercept.
2. *No More Forgotten Passwords* Your device manages logins, no need to remember or reset passwords.
3. *Faster Login* Unlock accounts with a quick fingerprint scan or face ID — no typing required.
4. *Works Across Devices* Cloud syncing (e.g., via iCloud or Google) makes passkeys available on all your devices.
5. *Ready for the Future* With major tech companies backing them, passkeys are set to replace passwords as the new standard.

In short, passkeys are safer, faster, and easier!

For **more information,** including an **'Ask Leo' video on Passkeys**, click on **this link** to our page on the website.

Bev Lee and Terry Dillon

Birdwatching

Birdwatching outing to **Reef Hills State Park**, Benalla, Thursday 14th August 2025

Our U3A birdwatching program for 2nd semester resumes on Thursday 14th August, with a visit to Reef Hills State Park, a 2,400-hectare mixed eucalypt forest with an excellent range of native understorey plants. The park is well worth visiting because of its proximity to Benalla and the diversity of bird species it supports. Perhaps some Golden Wattles will be flowering by mid-August.

Please meet at the car park behind the Seniors Community Centre at 9am. Wear sturdy shoes and bring binoculars if you have them. We may have time for a café visit afterward.

Kathy Costello

Brain Games

Most stayed away but, despite power cuts and stormy chill, Rae and Elspeth gave the neurons a wintry workout.

Elspeth Maconachie

Bushwalking – Easy Walks

Unfortunately, July's Glenrowan Walk was cancelled, on prior advice from BOM (or perhaps Ned Kelly himself?). The weather on the day turned out to be incorrect, so this walk will now be held on 6 August.

Wednesday August 6 – **Glenrowan History Orienteering**

An interesting day's stroll around Glenrowan streets to find answers to written clues (map supplied). After an early lunch, plus optional coffee from the café of your choice, we resume the walk with another set of questions to answer, this time on the history of the Kelly Gang's links to Glenrowan and district.

Destination: Glenrowan Lions Park, next to the new toilet block. Lunch and afternoon tea also in the Park.

Wednesday September 3 – **Reef Hills Early Spring Walk**

A lovely 8km walk along bush tracks in nearby Reef Hills Park, to spot wildlife and discover evidence of early mining activities. Hopefully, there will also be flowering Wattles and some Wildflowers to photograph.

Destination: Reef Hills Picnic Ground shelter, approx. 1km from the main entrance off Midland Highway. Bring lunch and afternoon tea.

For both the August and September walks –

- Meet at U3A Carpark at 9.15 for a 9.30 am departure. ($5 travel cost).
- Contact Bev Thornell: 0447193244

Bev Thornell

Car Torque

How many people in Australia own an electric car? Not many, but as battery technology improves and the price becomes more attractive, primarily due to Chinese imports flooding the market, the take up of electric cars and their various combinations of battery and petrol power continues to rise.

'Car of the Month'

Graeme Greed, a member of our U3A Benalla Car Torque group, was the guest speaker at our July meeting. Graeme gave a very comprehensive run down about electric cars as the owner of an EV Kona.

Terminology

- EV (Electric Vehicle): Any vehicle powered by electricity, including BEVs, HEVs, and PHEVs.
- BEV (Battery Electric Vehicle): Fully electric, zero-emission vehicles powered only by batteries (e.g. Tesla Model 3, Nissan Leaf).
- HEV (Hybrid Electric Vehicle): Combines a petrol engine with an electric motor; no external charging needed (e.g. Toyota Prius).
- PHEV (Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle): Can be charged via a plug and run on electric power for short distances before switching to petrol.
- KWh (Kilowatt-hour): Unit of energy used to measure battery capacity and charging rates.
- Regenerative Braking: Captures energy during braking to recharge the battery.
- Charging Levels:
- Level 1: Slow charging via standard household outlet.
- Level 2: Faster charging via dedicated home or public charger.
- Level 3: DC fast charging at public stations.
- Range Anxiety: Fear of running out of battery before reaching a charger.
- V2G (Vehicle-to-Grid): EVs supplying power back to the grid.

Pros and Cons

✅ **Pros**

- Zero Tailpipe Emissions: Great for reducing urban air pollution and fighting climate change.
- Lower Running Costs: Electricity is cheaper than petrol; maintenance is minimal due to fewer moving parts.
- Government Incentives: Rebates, tax credits, and discounts on registration in some states.
- Energy Security: Less reliance on imported oil; EVs use domestically generated electricity.
- Smooth Driving Experience: Instant torque, quiet operation, and better handling due to low centre of gravity.

❌ **Cons**

- Higher Upfront Costs: EVs are still more expensive than petrol cars, though prices are slowly dropping.
- Limited Charging Infrastructure: Especially in regional and remote areas, though it's improving.
- Range Limitations: Some models still struggle with long-distance travel without careful planning.
- Longer Charging Times: Even fast chargers take longer than filling a petrol tank.
- Battery Degradation & Recycling: Over time, batteries lose capacity and pose environmental challenges.

Following the presentation the group inspected Graeme's vehicle.

Chat Session

The group watched recent dash cam footage from one of our members which captured a near head on miss south of Winton on the old Hume Highway. The oncoming vehicle veered across the double line in the cutting just north of the old Winton roadhouse. Luckily the errant driver pulled back into his lane. The camera footage was tendered to police who later detected the same vehicle on a police speed camera near Myrtleford. The moral of the story - dash cam cameras can be useful in helping to identify law braking motorists, but you need to keep them on all the time.

Doug Smith

Chat n' Chew

A very enjoyable lunch was held by the fire at the Farmers Arms on July 11.

On August 8 we are lunching at **Pavlos**, a Greek restaurant in Nunn St (the old Farmer's Basket). Shared platters will be served - $28 a head, with dessert $33 a head. BYO drinks.

This will be a different experience - I hope everyone is up for something new!

Message me or give me a call on 0412263071 to book in.

Dorothy Webber

Coin Collectors

The theme for our session on Monday, 28 July was **Pre Decimal Silvers**.

Joy began by showing her 3d & 6ds, which included

- 1916, 22, 41, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 57, 59, 60, 62 & 64 three pence.
- 1925, 51, 57, 59, 60, 62, & 63 sixpences.

Peter had two 1954 Royal Visit Florins. He also had a 6th addition Standard Coin Catalogue which was passed around.

Gary produced numerous coins & expanded on the various value of coins, with a number of higher mintage varieties valued at higher prices than ones of lower mintage, this leads to the thought that, although the numbers of these coins were much lower now than at their mintage date, causing a shortage. He also stated that coins such as the 1921 over date 1922 threepence in UNC (uncirculated) state were worth $9000.00, 1918 sixpence was valued at $30.00 & 1933 shillings of VF & EF grades valued at $175.00 to $ 500.00. During WW2, San Francisco minted a lot of our currency. The next coins Gary then around were our first Commemorative coin in the form of the 1927 "Canberra Florin" and the 1937 George VI Crown.

I then finished the "show & tell", with coins such as the first Australian set of coins which included the 1910 Edward VII threepence, sixpence, shilling & florin coupled with the George V first penny & halfpenny minted in 1911, these sets were accompanied with the final George v 1936 set of six coins. The last three sets were the first George VI 1938, the last George VI of 1952 & finally the first Elizabeth II of 1953.

A number of facsimile coins of proposed patterns, including the 1936 Edward VIII Crown & a pair of aUNC (about uncirculated state) 1937 & 1938 crowns, went around.

The afternoon was rounded off with general discussion.

David Lowing

Collectors

The theme for our July get-together was **'Fridge Magnets**' – and such a collection there was, evoking memories of places visited. It was a bit like "I've been everywhere man".

Hobart, London, Rome, York, Swansea, Portugal, Scotland, Boscastle, Isle of Wight, Cornwall, Silverton, Paris, Cockington Green, Prague; the list goes on and on.

There were a number of novelty magnets – elephants, a butterfly, tram, London phone and bus, a Swiss cuckoo clock, a recipe, a prisoner escaping from Alcatraz, a Vietnamese couple, a Delft house from Amsterdam, a cow, a sewing machine, teapot, "David", family photo, doll – just to name a few.

A fun time was had reminiscing over stories about the magnets.

The next meeting in on Tuesday, 12th August – the theme is **'Teapots'.**

Janet Gourley

Community Singing

What a great morning we had at Community Singing in July. Virtually everyone on our list of members turned up plus a visitor of one of our members. We also welcomed about 10 guests from Cooinda plus Karen and Tracey. There must have been at least 40 people in the room, and the sound was wonderful. We heard during the morning that one of our visitors from Cooinda was 101 years of age.

Thank you to Deb for playing all those great songs from Book 2 and to Carmyl for organising the parts of *Catch a Falling Star.* Our apologies to those who had to share song books as we ran out of copies of Book 2.

It was good to see Brian Greed in the audience. Brian has been our pianist for Community Singing for over 5 years, and he seemed to be enjoying the morning. We also took the opportunity to sing Happy Birthday to Joyce Borschmann who will be 95 next week. Joyce started "Singing for Fun" 19 ½ years ago.

We are having Singing for Fun on 31st July as Gwen will be available that day to play the piano. So, our next Community Singing will be on Thursday 7th August at 10am at the Hub at Cooinda. All welcome.

Also, a reminder, we have been invited to Cooinda to Sing on Thursday 28th August at 10.30am.

Margaret Jenkins

Creative Writing

There was no face-to-face class in July. A reminder of the prompts for August

- A bottle containing a rare and deadly poison was found under the sink
- The car was speeding down the highway.
- Next item on her to-do list – write that will.

Demystifying Psychology – Perception

The sixth and final session on the topic of "perceptions" in July brought the 2025 *Demystifying Psychology – Perception* course to a close. (The Discussion group will continue - everyone is welcome to participate.)

The Semester 1 course took a fresh and often lively look at how women are labelled as "difficult" when they step outside traditional expectations. Starting with the history behind the term, participants explored the psychology of assertiveness, confidence, and the fine line between being strong and being seen as aggressive. Along the way, they unpacked how society and culture shape these perceptions. The sessions included plenty of discussion, case studies, and the occasional Ted Talk that together gave everyone a chance to reflect, share, and practise new strategies. There was a strong focus on building emotional intelligence, handling criticism, and staying true to personal values. By the final session, participants had reviewed existing practical tools for managing perceptions and maintaining authenticity.

The course welcomed all U3A members and encouraged a relaxed, open environment where experiences were shared, ideas challenged, and new understandings formed—with a few laughs along the way.

An additional note from the Convenor: This course was experimental in that AI (ChatGPT) was used to tidy the course content, search for reputable references and to design the monthly units. The AI factor assisted the convener's role, without diminishing the human element. The support of the U3A committee and course participants has been greatly appreciated… thank you.

Everyone is welcome to join in the Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group which next meets from 10:00am – 12:00pm on Tuesday 19 August in U3A Room 1 – there are no pre-requisites. Call with any queries:

Jane Rushworth 0437 621 575.

Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group

This month our group took on a big question: How do our personal ethics play out at local, national and international levels?

Values are what we believe—our core convictions. Ethics are how we behave, especially when those beliefs are tested. Values influence ethics, but ethics involve broader judgments—often shaped by collective agreements, laws, or professional standards. Source: *The Ethics Centre – Ethics Explainer*

We started by looking at the local picture, where ethics are often easier to recognise. In our families, towns, and neighbourhoods, ethical behaviour is reflected in how we treat each other, how our local council engages with the community, and how local groups operate. When something goes wrong, we usually know about it—and we can speak up or get involved. There's a sense of immediacy: we can see the impact of ethical or unethical choices.

When we zoom out to the national level, ethical issues become a little more complex. We can still identify ethical principles in public policy—how we treat older people, refugees, First Nations communities, or how governments respond to climate change. We also discussed the role of political leadership and how national decisions may (or may not) reflect ethical thinking. For example, are policies guided by integrity, or convenience? Is climate inaction shaped by lobbyists rather than shared values?

The further we zoom out, the murkier it becomes.

At the international level, such as in the ongoing Israeli/Gaza tragedy, we found it even harder to detect ethical considerations at work. We asked ourselves: do ethics even have a place here? In many global issues—foreign aid, climate agreements, trade deals, and human rights—it seems that political ambitions often override shared values. The challenge is distance—both physical and emotional. It's harder to feel connected and harder to believe our values still matter when decisions are made behind closed doors, often by many players with competing interests.

So—is it easier to live out our ethics locally?

Most of us agreed: yes, it is. It's more personal. We know the people. We can act directly. And if something feels wrong, we often have a way to speak up or take action.

We also agreed that local ethics can and do influence bigger systems. When we stand up for fairness or honesty in our own backyard, we're setting a standard. Movements that start small—such as climate action, equality, or community care—can ripple outward & shape policy at state, national, even international levels.

In the end, we circled back to a simple idea:

Ethics and values aren't just abstract or distant. They are evident in how we speak, act, vote, consume, and show up for each other—whether that's on our street, in Canberra, or across the world.

Next meeting: 10am – 12 pm, Tuesday 19 August, Room 1. Everyone is welcome to join in the Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group – there are no pre-requisites. Call with any queries …

Jane Rushworth 0437 621 575

Exercises for Fun

It's time to check out the Exercises for Fun 'Video of the Month' for August – **How to get out of the car easily**. Here's the **direct link**, or go to the **Exercises for Fun** web page and click on the button for **'Exercise of the Month'** to watch and work out to the videos for June, July and August.

Come and join us on Monday at 9.30am to keep moving …

Helen Jeffree

Exploring the Universe

A New Telescope with a Camera the Size of a Car!

When the Vera C Rubin telescope comes online later in the year, it will document everything visible in the Southern sky. The telescopes 3,200-megapixel camera is the size of a small car and the largest ever built.

Capturing an image of a huge area of the sky every 3 nights, it will make a record of the night sky for the next 10 years. Astronomers will make a time lapse movie of everything that moves and flashes; asteroids, variable stars, and supernova and will record the largest survey of galaxies ever made.

This amazing new telescope, built on a mountain top at Cerro Pachón in the Andes Ranges of the Atacama Desert in Chile, has produced its first test images. At an altitude of 2,647 metre where the air is dry and clear, the 'seeing' is exceptional. The telescope is a joint enterprise of the US National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy. It is named after Vera Rubin who investigated the effects of "Dark Matter," the invisible force that holds things together and makes up 85 % of the Universe.

It was fascinating to watch videos of the telescope being built, the manufacture of the giant camera and the telescope mirrors. This 300-ton telescope can alter position in 4 seconds and can even be turned by hand. Then came the ceremony of revealing the first stunning images. With amazingly superb detail the images have more pixels than the human eye can see. If shown, they would need to cover 400 HD televisions. Our screens could only show 2% of the area. Here is a selection of some of what you would see if you joined us
The Universe Awaits: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH7rw9nNmew
Rubin's First Images: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsSkmOSC_oU

Bev Morton

Exploring Writing Children's Books

As we reach the conclusion of the Exploring Writing Children's Books program, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who participated. It's been a pleasure to share the creative process with you, and I've truly enjoyed seeing the enthusiasm and imagination each of you brought to the group.

Unfortunately, this subject will not be on offer in the near future. However, for those still interested in writing for children, I'd be happy to offer one-on-one sessions at the library to support your ongoing projects. If you'd like to arrange a time to meet, please contact the U3A office or feel free to ring me directly on 0424 203 119.

Good luck and happy writing — may your stories continue to grow and inspire!

Peter Thompson

Family Research – Getting Started

With the commencement of Semester 2, the *Family Research - Getting Started* class now has only one monthly group session.

At our July session we began by sharing some of the breakthroughs in our research. These included locating and purchasing certificates with clues to help future family research. One class member had located a report on a court case relating to a family member that was very helpful.

After setting individual goals for the session, class members spent the remainder of the time on their family research with assistance from myself as required.

In future there will be other mentors available to assist during these group sessions. In August we have a group session planned for Monday 18th. The following week there will be an organised visit to the Benalla Family History Research Room in Church Street on Tuesday August 26th. This will be a great opportunity to explore the range of resources available there that can assist local family history research.

Deb Saunders

Film Discussion… is returning on Wednesday 13 August at 2pm following a winter break.

Garden Appreciation

Lunch at the Golf Club on July 24th was a bit of fun! We had three lucky draws, with the winners each taking home a 'pot of colour'.

The food was delicious – a lovely way to spend a winter day.

We are now taking a break for winter. I look forward to seeing everyone when we return in the spring.

To our members who have been unwell, I hope you are feeling better.
Take care and stay warm.

Gwen Turner

Garden Team

Soggy and cold conditions kept us away again, so it will be August before we gather in Shirlie's garden.

Elspeth Maconachie

German

It is wonderful to see how we eagerly we all learn and how well we are progressing in our efforts to master the German Language.

Excellent stories are being produced every Tuesday morning, giving me insight into where I can create reinforcing lessons to polish up grammatical errors and prompting me to find and provide the right answers to the big "Why?"

During last Tuesday`s blackouts we settled on doing a lot of reviews, which turned out to be very beneficial. I am very grateful to the members for their hearty birthday wishes and presents, and Sophy for the Cake

Horst Gunther

Let's Talk Books

On a cold Monday afternoon plenty of laughs and discussion took place over books read in June.

Three mysteries were enjoyed ***Shadow Kill*** *by Chris Ryan****, Conspiracy of Bones*** *by Kathy Reichs* and ***Maximum Security*** *by James Morton* the toughest classification in the Australian Prison System. ***Memorial Days by*** *Geraldine Brooks* - after the sudden death of her husband Geraldine took herself to Flinders Island to grieve

her loss. We compared her story to that of *Meg Bignell,* author of ***After the Rain,*** who lost her husband to suicide and her mother to cancer. ***The House of Now and Then*** *by Jo Dixon* - set in Tasmania this is a twisty story of the consequences of telling the truth. ***David Baldacci*** has a new novel for 2025 that is different to the usual - an historical drama set in war time London, ***Strangers in Time*** received a big tick of approval. ***Before We Forget Kindness by*** *Toshikazu Kawaguchi* the fifth book in the *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* series. ***Wild Dark Shore by*** *Charlotte McConaghy* is set on the storm ravaged island of Shearwater and a family's struggle to protect a seed bank against nature and climate change. A good read. Our reader described ***A Prisoner of Birth by*** *Jeffrey Archer* as a brilliant story of twists and turns. Two *Di Morrissey* books ***Following the Morning Star*** and ***Kimberley Sun*** which is a sequel to Tears of the Moon, as usual meticulously researched and well written. Our history buff enjoyed ***The Dark History of the Kings and Queens of Europe, The Queen's Fool*** *by Phillipa Gregory* as well as ***The Lady in the Tower by*** *Alison Weir.* The most powerful and elusive woman in Europe, the biography of ***Angela Merkel*** *by Kati Marton* was very interesting, with a different look at the political games played among world leaders - big tick of approval. Another biography that caused much discussion was ***Joan Lindsay***: ***The Hidden Life of the woman who wrote Picnic at Hanging Rock by*** *Brenda Niall,* a very talented woman in her own right. ***The Lost Child*** *by Kathleen McGurl* is a dual timeline novel in the Titanic disaster, the mother of twins gave one of her children to a deckhand while she got in a lifeboat with the other, only to never see the other child again. ***The Windsor Diaries 1940-1945 by*** *Isabella Leyland* are the diaries of Alathal Fitzalan Howard who lived in Cumberland House during WW11, giving a glimpse into the lives of the two young princesses. ***The Whisperer's War*** *by Jackie French* is the tale of a wealthy upper class young woman in the UK and the conflict between love and duty. Lastly ***The Whitest Flower*** *by Brendan Graham* is written in the era of the Potato Famine in Ireland.

Happy reading during the cold weather - see you all on Monday 4th August.

Geraldine McCorkell

Mahjong

Mahjong continues, with excellent players amazing me with their proficiency. Members are now tackling the Fancy Hands and going really well.

My sincere thanks to Jane Rushworth for running the classes while I was away.

We have started to learn how to score, so now each game has taken on a new objective, not that we're planning to score too competitively as there is still much more to learn.

Another full day session, with a lunch break, is planned. It will be interesting to see if any groups can achieve a full game with all four winds.

I'm thrilled that everyone is enjoying themselves so much.

Kaye Blore

Meet and Mingle

Our guest speaker at Meet and Mingle in July, **Sabine Smyth,** spoke about the **Benalla Migrant Camp** and the personal efforts of her committee to document the history of the Camp including to retain several of the buildings on the site.

The key points of Sabine's presentation included: -

- A displayed array of photos showing the camp as a village within the town with its own shop, crèche, chapel, hospital and cinema and very interestingly the people that made up the population.
- Documenting the History of the Benalla Migrant Camp has been a 12-year passion of Sabine's.
- The Australian Government developed the White Australia Policy that promoted assimilation and the use of labor resources for developing post war infrastructure like the Snowy mountains scheme.

- The Benalla Migrant Camp, established in 1949, was a holding camp following WW2, where migrants from the Baltic States often called "Bolts" were sent by the Australian Government (as displaced persons).
- On arrival in Australia the migrants were processed at the Bonegilla Camp in Wodonga and dispersed to holding centres.
- The Benalla Camp held over 500 men, women and children of various nationalities.
- Benalla was chosen as it was able to supply manual work for the migrants in part through existing industries like Reynolds Chains and The Carpet Factory located in Samaria Road, where both men and women were employed.
- Migrants had to stay in the camp for a minimum of two years and pay rent to the Government during their stay.
- The "Benalla Experiment" as it was known allowed widows and mothers with children to work.
- Sabine launched a program in 2013 and formed a Committee to preserve the Camp history.
- Sabine was successful in 2015 in having Heritage Victoria list the site as of State Significance, a major milestone in preserving the site for historical purposes.
- A book titled "Benalla Migrant Camp - A Difficult Heritage" was launched in 2015. Copies are located in the Benalla Library
- Hut 65 at the Camp is nearing restoration and will open soon to visitors showing a photographic display of the Camp history.

U3A Benalla President Margaret Jenkins thanked Sabine for her informative and passionate presentation and presented her with a U3A Benalla pen.

The guest speaker for August will be a Benalla Ambulance representative speaking on the **AED (Automatic External Defibrillator)** located in BS&CC building.

Doug Smith, Publicity Officer

Music Appreciation

As a pianist Camille Saint-Saëns became a protege of Franz Liszt, who declared him "the world's greatest organist". Saint-Saens later claimed people celebrated Liszt as "the world's greatest pianist" in part because that was easier than appreciating his innovations and importance as a composer. Saint-Saëns, however, seemed to have no illusions about his own gifts as a composer or as a musician. He began composing at the precocious age of three and at eleven debuted as a concert pianist, offering as an encore to play any Beethoven sonata the audience could name. The brilliant child grew into a virtuoso musician and composer who poured out elegant, perfectly proportioned works as naturally, he said, as "an apple tree producing apples". In his 5th and final piano concerto, filled with strange and exotic sounds, he premiered as the soloist in a concert celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his début.

Franz Schubert was an absolute master of melody, composing symphonies, concerts, quartets and more the 600 songs. For all this, his efforts to compose for the musical theatre were haphazard disasters. The

collaborations with the libretti were poor and the performances were few. Fortunately, the “Rosamunde” Overture has survived. Even though it was originally written for a different play which didn’t survive, it has become one of his most popular works.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart penned a staggering total of over 600 compositions throughout his short life, spanning various genres, including orchestral, chamber, piano, and vocal music. As a young 20-year-old in Paris, Mozart wrote to his father that he was composing a concertante for a group of elite wind musicians. Although commissioned it never saw the light of performance for more than a hundred years, and doubt has circulated ever since as to whether it was really written by Mozart. While there may be no solution to the problem of when or for whom it was written, or even whether it is truly by Mozart, there is no mystery about its charm, its melodiousness, or its wide appeal - a firm reminder that while stories behind musical compositions abound, they are never as captivating as the music itself. You can read some of the stories and listen to the music presented in our July sessions by visiting the Music Appreciation page on our website.

Bill Squire

Page Turners Book Group

The Alphabet House by Jussi Adler-Olsen

Two British airmen are shot down over Germany during World War Two. They survive and attempt to escape by hitching a ride on a train filled with wounded German soldiers being transported to a hospital. Stealing the uniforms of two dying soldiers, they assume their identities and arrive at the hospital, a mental facility for shell shocked men. Their gruelling experiences and survival strategies form the first half of the book. One escapes but leaves the other behind and the rest of the book explores what happens thirty years later when they both meet up.

This is a tough book to read and pulls no punches about the horrors of the incarceration they endure. For those who like war stories, this is challenging book about endurance, fortitude and the effects of war service.

What Happened to Nina by Dervla McTierman

This book is not really about what happened to Nina, but instead about the behaviour of two sets of parents when Nina goes missing. One is rich and well connected, the parents of Simon who is suspected of killing Nina after a rock-climbing expedition becomes an angry argument.

The other, an average middleclass family who manage a small B&B, believe Simon is guilty but protected by his wealthy family who hire an unscrupulous legal firm to harass them.

How far will parents go to protect their children? And how far will parents go to get revenge if they think that the law is incapable of solving this mystery?

None of the parents are guiltless or even likeable, but as characters they are shallowly drawn by the author. This could be a good read if you want a well-paced crime novel for a rainy winter afternoon.

The book for our next session on Tuesday morning, 5 August, is **'The Safe Keep',** by Yael van der Wouden - 'Living in a secluded, ruined house that survived WW2, Isabel is confronted by house guest Eva when secrets unravel war-time mysteries.'

Meg Dillon

Patchwork and Craft

We continue to work on our projects and some lovely warm jumpers have been created. Others are working away on their hand sewn quilts. It’s great to see all the work coming together

Dorothy Webber

Play Reading

Our July play, ***Table Number Seven*** by Sir Terence Rattigan, forms part of the double bill *Separate Tables*. It is set in a typical South Coast Hotel Beauregarde, peopled by the old, the lonely and the indigent. The manageress, Miss Cooper, is unable to remain aloof from their troubles. In *Table Number Seven* Major Pollock and Miss Railton-Bell are misfits and their despair draws them together in a touching friendship.

Major Pollock is a 'self-made' army officer without any true background and education to which he lays claim. Miss Railton-Bell's life is ruled by her ruthless, domineering mother who objects to the friendship. She easily becomes hysterical because of her mother's repressive treatment. When a sordid scandal threatens to drive them apart, Miss Cooper comes to the rescue.

Major Pollock tries to conceal from his fellow guests a report in the local newspaper of his sexual harassment of women at a local cinema. Mrs Railton-Bell discovers the truth and turns most of the other residents against him, hoping to drive him out of the hotel. Miss Cooper encourages Major Pollock and Miss Railton-Bell to examine their feelings honestly and face their futures bravely.

Seeing it on the stage would be interesting, watching the various entrances and exits of the cast members which would enhance the cultures of the era (the 1950s). It had some hard truths as well as some humorous moments. For a young couple with a baby, the husband does not agree with the "baby talk" his wife uses. And he is one of the few residents who does not think the major should be sent away. Another resident is not at all interested in the issue at all. There is a scene where conversation with the major raises' questions about the veracity of the major's claims about his background.

Members enjoyed reading the play and expressed interest in reading the other play in the double bill called *Table by the Window.*

Just In! The play for August will be ***Table by the Window*** by Sir Terence Rattigan, the other part of the double bill, *Separate Tables*.

Joy Shirley

Recorder Group

U3A Benalla Recorder group member Rae Jeffers, pictured here with her Alto recorder, is a fine recorder player.

The Alto (or 'treble') recorder is a larger recorder and has a deeper tone than the more familiar Soprano (or 'descant') recorder. When the recorder was introduced as a children's instrument a century ago, the smaller soprano was chosen to suit smaller hands. As a result, the soprano became the best-known recorder—many of us remember playing it in primary school.

Recorder music, which dates back centuries, is often written for a consort of instruments: Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass. The Tenor recorder is larger and deeper than the Alto, with the Bass larger and deeper still. Even lower-pitched bass instruments exist, including the contrabass, which is quite large.

The Benalla U3A Recorder Group includes players of the Soprano, Alto and Tenor recorders. We would be delighted to welcome more players—learners welcome! Contact our convenor Janet on 0427 080 351

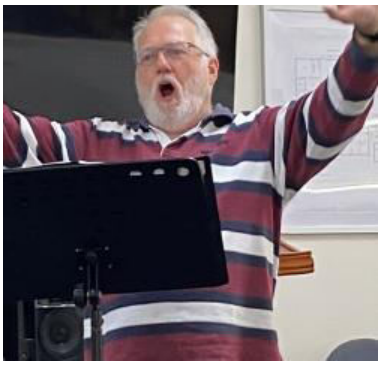
Andi Stevenson

Singing for Fun

In July we had a session without a pianist. Gwen was indisposed with influenza and Deb was unavailable. However, we managed very well.

Carmyl was used to conducting sessions "a Capella" or without a pianist, so ran her session very well, even getting us to sing the companion songs "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and "He's got the Whole World in His Hands". Kieran was able to play the piano for the songs he chose and also did very well. Ross had an excellent technique of getting us to hum the first note of the song, and then we started singing. Margaret divided the singers into two groups and chose alternating Nursery Rhymes. Thank you everyone for the extra effort that morning.

In our third session for the month Kieran chose a group of Irish songs, whilst Ross chose Anthems which included “Advance Australia Fair”, “Jerusalem” and “God Save the King”. Sue took a great photo of Ross enthusiastically conducting one of these anthems.



Thanks to Gwen for playing the piano for the first and third sessions of the month. Thank you also to both Wendys for bringing slices for the first session. Everyone always enjoys home cooking.

Our next Singing for Fun will be on Thursday 31st July at 10am at the Hub at Cooinda. We are moving this Singing for Fun session to the 31st July due to Gwen being available to play the piano that day. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins

Stock and Land & Sustainability

At our first session in July, we discussed the resignation of the management committee for Winton Wetlands, a place we visited during an earlier session. Concern was expressed for the loss of jobs, closing of research and restoration programs and closure of the Hub centre. Discussion raised the question of how difficult it is to run conservation reserves based on a commercial business model. We also discussed an unexpected consequence of the closure of hardwood forestry on public land in that vital seed collection associated with the industry may not occur, particularly in ash forests.

At our second session, group member Les Maclean gave a very informative presentation about the forestry industry in the early 1900s in the Tatong - Tolmie district; the mill settlements, tramways, artifacts left behind and much more. He presented plenty of related photos and copies of old documents. We also viewed a video of Amsterdam's aim to have a 'circular' city by 2050, meaning that all materials used in the city are reused or recycled. It looked like a very ambitious plan.

John Lane

Tech Talks

At our recent session we diverted from our usual format and had a lively discussion as to why a Murder Trial in a small Victorian Town should be the centre of attraction of what seems to be the world’s media. This is a most unusual situation. The mainstream media is not as flush with funds as it has been in the past, but nevertheless the world’s media decided to invest much in covering this trial. The question is - why? We speculated if there was an underlying interest motivating such interest. We reached no conclusion.

Because we are trying to understand China, we again looked at some of China’s current engineering projects. China has many impressive projects under construction. They have rebuilt their train system and now have the largest high speed rail system in the world.

Perhaps we could take a leaf out of their book? Even subcontract them to build us a decent high speed rail system.

Fearing we might be suffering from China fatigue; we ended up learning about electricity. Electricity is still to a certain extent a mysterious force that is not necessarily understood. The BBC’s History of Electricity is an extremely enjoyable video.

Neville Gibb

Train Buffs

At our July session we followed on from June’s subject of looking at the General Arrangement Plans of the Victorian Railways “R Class” Locomotive to discover exactly how a modern steam engine operated.

Several members commented on the skill of the Draftsmen who produced such detailed plans back in the late 1940s without the aid of computers.

The day was completed with the screening of a video of the “Tasmanian West Coast Railway” restoration.

Unfortunately, due to some misreading of the information on the disc (by me), we ran out of time and were unable to complete it. Hopefully this will be done at our next meeting in August, when we will have the pleasure of sharing in Graeme Greed’s visit to the world acclaimed National Railway Museum in York during his recent journey to England.

Athol Graham

Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming

The group has a very busy few months coming up!

The Benalla U3A Four String Strummers will be appearing each week at various nursing homes in Benalla and Violet Town. These days are a lot of fun - it is wonderful to see the Residents enjoying themselves.

Several Ukes4Fun players are planning to attend the annual Whittlesea Uke Muster again in September, an event we are all looking forward to.

In October we have been asked if we would like to play in the Ukulele session at the Seniors Festival in Melbourne. We have also been asked if the group would like to be part of two other groups holding activities which I will discuss in future editions of the Newsletter.

Heather Wallace

Wine Appreciation

In July we visited the **Kooyonga Creek Winery** located at Moorngag. The cellar door is a substantial building located on a rise with sweeping views of the surrounding countryside; a beautiful sunny winter's day was on offer to enhance the views. Upstairs was an exhibition of paintings and sculptures; there were a number of interesting sculptures in the garden as we drove in.

Our host Luis Simian is clearly a very talented wine maker judging from the enthusiasm with which the tastings were received and his extensive tour of the wine making process. The winery produces at least 11 different varieties of wines; all were available for tasting and most were tried by one member or other of our group.

The tour of the wine making processes introduced us to the concept of maturing wines in large plastic vats instead of wine barrels, the oak flavours where necessary are imparted by using pieces or shavings of oak, a much more efficient way of imparting the flavours to the wine. All agreed the quality of the wine was enhanced by the process and numerous bottles left the cellar door as we departed.

Lunch followed at the Tatong Tavern. With open fires burning and the old-world charm on display it was certainly an inviting atmosphere in which to round out the day. The food was tasty and the servings generous. As usual there was plenty of conversation and camaraderie.

Our next outing is to **Dinah Wines** a small family brewery owned and operated by the Buller family located at 199 Distillery Road Wahgunyah. Lunch is a bit different - we have organised the Convent in Rutherglen for lunch - food with a Mexican flavour. As the name suggests, the restaurant is in the old convent which has been recently renovated and includes a brewery for the beer lovers.

Carolyn and Garry Smith

Program News

Thank you, Alejandro and Peter!

During July, President Margaret Jenkins thanked *Spanish* teacher Alejandro Diaz and Vice-President Anne Nelson thanked *Exploring Writing Children's Books* convenor Peter Thompson, for their preparedness to teach courses at U3A and their enthusiasm when doing so. Both were presented with a celebratory U3A pen.

Spanish convenor Alejandro Diaz with Margaret Jenkins and class members at his final session on July 26

Exploring Writing Children's Books convenor Peter Thompson with Anne Nelson

Apple Refresher Course

If you have an Apple iPhone or an Apple iPad and would like to feel more confident using either of these devices, we are offering a four-session refresher course, commencing on Friday 1st August from 1:30 to 2:30 pm, with sessions to follow on Friday 8th August, Friday 5th September and Friday 12th September.
We will go over some basics and each week explore different apps on your device.

Topics will include - Wifi vs mobile data/Settings/Using the Calendar/Notes, Messages and Emails/Money (Bills and Buying).

One-hour sessions with flexibility to extend another half an hour for troubleshooting individual problems.

Bring - Apple Device, Apple Username (your email) and Password, Pen and Paper

If you would like to enrol, contact the Course Co-ordinator Anne Nelson on 0438 447 379.

Newsletter news …

After folding and putting the 'snail mail' newsletters in envelopes they need to be compressed. This task falls to newsletter team member Malcolm Sanders who photocopies the newsletter for posting … Malcolm sent in this photograph and message!

"Thank you, Stephanie Alexander and a tape dispenser - you make our envelopes compliant with the Australia Post's max thickness of 5mm before posting each month."

This month a record number of members contributed photos for use in the newsletter - Sue Dwyer, Andi Stevenson, Bev Thornell, Doug Smith, Graeme Greed, Heather Hartland, Dorothy Webber, Janet Gourley, Jane Rushworth, Horst's daughter Annette, Malcolm Sanders, Les Rogers, Gwen Turner and Bev Lee. Thank you all!

Community – Rose City Probus Bus Trip to 'CATS' on January 14, 2026

The **Benalla Rose City Probus** group is organising a bus to see the show **CATS** on the January 14, 2026, and extend an invitation to all U3A Benalla members to join with them to see this show. Further information is available by contacting the Probus Activity Officer, Pamela O'Connor, on 0409 223 974

What's On in August 2025

Friday 1 August
10:00 Sustainability/Stock and Land – Farm visit
13:30 Apple Refresher Course - Session 1 of 4

Monday 4 August
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Art Appreciation - Sculptor Anderson Hunt
11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
14:00 Australian Stocks and Share Market
14:00 Let's Talk Books

Tuesday 5 August
10:00 Page Turners - 'The Safe Keep',
12:15 German
14:00 American History

Wednesday 6 August
09:15 Easy Bushwalking – Glenrowan/Orienteering
09:30 Play Reading – 'Table by the Window'
13:30 A Taste of Art
14:00 Cards '500'

Thursday 7 August
10:00 Community Singing
10:00 Be Connected - Android
13:00 Patchwork and Craft

Friday 8 August
10:00 Music Appreciation
11:45 Chat 'n Chew - 'Pavlos' Greek Restaurant
13:30 Apple Refresher Course - Session 2 of 4

Monday 11 August
09:30 Exercises for Fun
11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
14:00 Creative Writing
14:00 Garden Team—'Shirlie's Garden'

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

Wednesday 13 August
10:00 Recorder Group
14:00 Film Discussion Group (Return)

Thursday 14 August
09:00 Birdwatching - Reef Hills State Park
10:00 Singing for Fun
10:00 Be Connected - Android
14.00 Executive Committee Meeting

Friday 15 August
10.00 Wine Appreciation – Dinah Wines, Wahgunyah
10.00 Sustainability/Stock and Land
14:00 Train Buffs

Monday 18 August
09:30 Exercises for Fun
11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
13:30 Family Research - Getting Started #2 (Rm 2)
14:00 As Time Goes By - Memoir Writing

Tuesday 19 August
10:00 Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group
12:15 German
14:00 Exploring the Universe

Wednesday 20 August
10:00 Meet and Mingle – 'The Automatic External Defibrillator – Benalla Ambulance
13:30 A Taste of Art
14:00 Cards '500'

Thursday 21 August
10:00 Singing for Fun
13:00 Patchwork and Craft

Friday 22 August
10:00 Music Appreciation

Monday 25 August
09:30 Exercises for Fun
11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
14:00 Coin Collectors
14:00 Garden Team

Tuesday 26 August
Newsletter Reports Due Today
10:00 Politics & Current Affairs
12:15 German
14:00 Brain Games

Wednesday 27 August
10:00 Recorder Group

Thursday 28 August
09:30 Garden Appreciation - Winter Break!
10:00 Community Singing – 'Cooinda' 10.30am
14:00 Car Torque

Monday 1 September
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Art Appreciation
11:15 Mahjong (Auditorium)
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
14:00 Australian Stocks and Share Market
14:00 Let's Talk Books

Tuesday 2 September
10:00 Page Turners - 'Balcony over Jerusalem'
12:15 German
14:00 American History.

Be Connected - Tech Advice – 'One-to-one' sessions by appointment for members experiencing problems operating mobiles, tablets or laptops. Contact Robyn (Android Devices) 0403 164 931 or Jenny (Apple Devices) 0409 545 182. Venue: usually Room 2. Referral on will be suggested if necessary.