



NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue 2

July 2020

A few words from our president...



'All is not lost.'
I said about the summer school events as the car rally was rescheduled to April.

I reminded you about the U3A North East Regional meeting that we were due to host in April. And remember Enrolment and Information Day in February? More than 60 people turned up! However, the world can turn on a sixpence at times, and it certainly did that shortly after the last newsletter was published.

Not to be defeated, we continue with our Zoom sessions as well as the Fourth Thursday Walks, Bike Riding activities and monthly Coffee Mornings. Find out more on pages 2 and 3.

We are looking at the potential for hybrid sessions, ie a combination of Zoom and face-to-face, from our U3A rooms – carefully adhering to

social distancing and hygiene protocols of course.

Having the right technology to deliver a high quality, professional experience will be the key to our success and enjoyment of these sessions for those joining remotely.

We know there are some members who miss the social connection and who, for a variety of reasons, do not find Zoom an acceptable replacement. The Program Planning Group is constantly looking for activities that can fill this gap. If you have any ideas, please let us know.

Some good news. Despite the limitations of Covid-19, membership has climbed again. In March we had 111, and now we are at 116. So hang in there! Let's get to the other side of this with our health, sanity and humour intact.

Rosemary Ryan
President

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Our Annual Member Survey will be landing in your inbox in the next few days.

Your responses will help us to be better informed about your interests and needs. Responses are anonymous, so please feel free to speak your mind.

Congratulations to Scribblers...

It is always good to have effort rewarded, and the Scribblers group did just that by being one of five winners of U3A Network Victoria's 'Innovative Course Design' grant. Each winner received \$800.

For those of you who do not know about Scribblers, it is not just for those experienced and already-skilled sketchers and artists, but also for beginners and for those whose skills may be rusty.

As course leader, Olga Evans, says 'If you first learn fundamental skills

from a variety of sources your own "visual voice" will emerge.' 'Fundamental skills' practice is a core component of the Scribblers art journey with other facets of art playing an integral part.



This group approach provides a lovely mix of ideas and inspiration for all to learn from and learn together.

Uniquely, Scribblers is using on-line technologies like Zoom and WhatsApp to share their art, with occasional plein air sessions.

In this work, "Contemplating the Stillness of the Outback in the Late Afternoon Light", Deb has translated some of the new techniques into pastels.. "Being involved in this group of like-minded people has definitely given me confidence to try things I previously wouldn't have and, I feel, improved my art", says Deb.

A Quiet Life in the Country...



How could any of us predict that our choice of a quiet life in the country could perhaps one year save our lives.

This year has seen the most reported and televised pandemic the world has ever known, requiring extraordinary measures to be taken by governments around the world, trying to maintain a balance between the health of its citizens and the health of the various national and the global economy.

And while social distancing, isolation

and sanitizing everything within reach has had mental and emotional repercussions for some, there's no doubt that it has kept us safe here in Indigo.

I think that U3A has done its part in keeping us connected via Zoom and I believe the individual members of our Committee of Management and the Program Planning Group should be applauded for the tremendous efforts they have made in creating new sessions, maintaining popular courses which are suitable for on-line consumption, managing the technical aspects of Zoom, and generally helping keep us sane and cheerful. Special gratitude to our Presenters

and Tutors who have had to face the daunting task of presenting on-line, so much more difficult without the dynamic of a live audience.

I am reminded when speaking to friends and family members in Melbourne, interstate and overseas, just how lucky I am to be here, still enjoying my scooter rides to the shops, able to enjoy the winter sun, the kindness of a caring community, the beauty of the many trees and gardens around me, the birds warbling in the morning, a crackling fire and all the other wonderful benefits of my ... quiet life in the country.

By Carolyn Barratt

The Covid-19 Challenge ...

It is interesting to look back! On 22 March in 'What's On' we had to tell members that all indoor activities would be cancelled, but outdoor activities would continue. On 24 March, just two days later, we had to say that all activities were cancelled. Then, by 29 March, we had rallied and thanks to the efforts of Mike Bydder and Hugh Grady and the willingness of tutors to step into the unknown, we were able to introduce our members to Zoom.

And Zoom we did! - with our regulars, **International Relations; Art and Architecture; Explorers of Australia; Conversations; Scribblers; Men's Book Group;** and **Poets**. We also had the stand-alone presentations - **The Greatest Secret Agent** (Stephen Masters); **Pollinators** (Karen Retra); and **Get Active's Healthy Eating** session (Priscilla Chan).

Both the **Garden Group** and **Be Connected** proved to be a little more problematic on the Zoom platform and will be held over to later in the year. **Games** is still on hold, but not forgotten; and **Tastes** is in hibernation but planning to

stage a grand comeback with a picnic on 9 October.



One of the highlights from Term 2 was Karen Retra's '**Wild Pollinators**' presentation. Karen, co-founder of the Wild Pollinator Count, took us on a fascinating journey into the world of pollinator insects. As Karen says, these insects (bees, flies, wasps, butterflies, moths and beetles) are often overlooked or assumed to be pests, yet they play a host of crucial roles in our landscapes, on our farms and in our gardens. Her presentation is available on our website at www.indigou3a.net. (Click on the 'Courses' tab and then go to 'Presentations' in the drop down list). You might also like to visit the Wild Pollinator Count website at www.wildpollinatorcount.com.

We were delighted to welcome back our outdoor activities and be able to actually speak to each other face-to-face, in a Covid-safe way of course. The **Fourth Thursday Walks and Bike Riding Group** resumed in May, and in June the monthly **Coffee Mornings** resumed with a visit to Rutherglen's '*The Other Place*'.

The **Coffee Morning** on 24 July will be at the George Kerferd Hotel in the grounds of Mayday Hills, where Pauline Savy will give us an insight into Mayday in its former role as a hospital and asylum.

Car Rally (30 October) We are hoping for 'third time lucky' for the Car Rally. It was postponed in January due to bushfires and in April because of Covid-19. Keep your fingers and toes crossed.

Make sure you keep reading the weekly *What's On* to stay up to date.

And remember to enrol, especially for outdoor activities where maximum numbers may apply.

New in Semester 2...

Utopia and Dystopia...



Gerry Engwerda

A special treat ... with **Gerry Engwerda** and **Michael Evans** is “**Utopia and Dystopia**”.

Given the time we find ourselves living in, these two sessions should be fascinating.

On 8 September, Gerry will take on utopia in his session ‘*Our World – Background Briefings*’ (formerly *International Relations*). He will look at the way technology, and in particular robotics and artificial intelligence, have changed society and the workplace.

Given that more and more of what we currently do will be soon be automated what will that mean for work, income and the life that future generations will lead?



Michael Evans

In ‘*Conversations*’ on the following day, Michael will focus will on the philosophical aspects of utopian and dystopian thinking, with an emphasis on dystopia.

Whether we are in a utopia or a dystopia often depends on our values and our mindset. For example, some might see Huxley's dystopian *Brave New World* of pain-free and pleasurable living as utopia rather than as a stultifying empty dystopia.

Michael asks ‘*Would we prefer to live in a utopian dream or a dystopian reality? Are utopia and dystopia two sides of the same coin?*’

Don't miss it!

Planes, Pilots, War!!...

Stephen Masters is offering two sessions - **The Murder of the TSR2 Aeroplane:** (11 August) & **Sky, Pilot, War, Fate** (20 October)



Stephen Masters

‘The Murder of the Aeroplane: TSR2’

TSR means Tactical Strike and Reconnaissance. Technically brilliant, fulfilling all the design specifications, this aircraft was the victim of geopolitics. It was the most advanced military aircraft produced in the 1960's with the excellent potential (with further development) of being a long-term deterrent. It was also within budget parameters. So why was an inferior aircraft substituted?

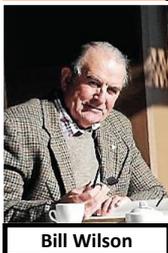
‘Sky, Pilot, War, Fate’

Stephen tracks the journey of one person through the most cataclysmic event of the 20th Century – the Second World War – from railway clerk to bomber pilot and home. Stephen says ‘This is certainly not the adulation of war but, in fact, the complete opposite. This is the life of one person and their return. Above all this is a story about the absolute futility of war.’

View of Mt Pilot ...



A History of Terrorism...



Bill Wilson

‘**A History of Terrorism**’ begins on 30 July and will continue throughout Semester 2. Presented fortnightly by Bill Wilson.

The course will explore aspects of terrorism from Ancient Greek and Rome to the present day.

Terror, terrorist acts and terrorism are as old as human history. Individuals, sects, cults, despotic rulers, revolutionaries, political organisations, independence movements, ‘freedom fighters’ and modern nations have used terror (violence, fear and intimidation) to advance their interests.

Despite this, acts of terror, when they occur, continue to shock and surprise the community. Each generation, it seems, views terror and terrorism as something unique, frightening and new.

Walking Mt Pilot ...

‘**Discovering Mt Pilot National Park**’ (beginning 13 August)

Mick Webster will lead a series of four walks to show the hidden gems of the lesser known and less visited sites and features of Chiltern—Mt Pilot National Parks. The walks will be held each month from August through November.

The first walk will be up Mt Pilot for a general survey and introduction to the Park. The group will continue on by car to an interesting industrial ruin in the Park with several workers’ huts, and return to Yeddonba aboriginal art-site for lunch.

Mick is a member of “Friends of the Park”.

For more information on all four walks, go to our website at www.indigou3a.net. Each walk is listed separately on the Courses list and each requires a separate enrolment.

Bushfire Readiness...

'Bushfire Readiness with the CFA' on 16 September.



None of us will forget the bushfires that tore through our region in January. We all know that it is essential to have a Fire Plan, but are we confident we are Fire Ready?

When preparing for a bushfire, common questions are What do I need to do? When should I leave? Where should I go? Who should I tell? What should I take?

The CFA's April Padbury and Maureen Piera will answer these questions and provide updated information from the CFA. Some of us will have attended the CFA's informative Bushfire Planning Workshop in February, led by Maureen Piera.

Be prepared for the 2020/21 fire season. Don't miss this one.

Memoir Writing...



'Memoirs/Life-Writing' with Joy Phillips, begins on 7 October. In this weekly course, Joy will help you develop your thoughts and ideas about memoir/life-writing: why write a memoir, how to start, how to express the intricacies of memory and feeling, how to tell stories and to shape them for your audience.

Memoir and life writing are about the human need to tell stories, recollect the past, preserve family history, teach lessons, pass on culture, record history, draw insights, and most importantly to help us to make meaning from experience and memory.

Phil Bunn's Corner....



THIS THEY ASKED OF ME.

They said I was converted
I told them ' that's not so '
Perhaps I had reverted
but to what I didn't know.

They said was I concerted
in the effort that I made.
Well, that's what they asserted
in a beguiling sort of way.

They said my actions covert
In getting closer to the truth
An utterance loudly blurted
and bordering on uncouth.

They said, and now they're
yelling,
Now please you must come
clean
Test results you must be telling
Are you Negative Covid-19?

Oh, COVID you meant , not
converted
neither concert nor covert is
the word
Oh please get it right, I blurted
Otherwise, it's quite absurd.

PSB
July 2020



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**Please—Keep reading the weekly
What's On to stay up to date.**

**Remember to enrol for your
chosen courses, including the
Coffee Mornings and especially for
outdoor activities where
maximum numbers may apply.**

**If you have enrolled and
subsequently can't attend, please
let us know by emailing
courses.indigo.u3a@gmail.com
or calling 0492 830 612.**

**This is especially important for
those activities where maximum
numbers apply due to
Covid-19 restrictions**