

Newsletter



YARRA CITY
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

April 2020

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President's update

1 These are disconcerting times: no sooner do we get used to
2 one challenging situation when there is suddenly a new set of
3 circumstances that we have to adapt to. This was evident
4 earlier when the program coordinators quickly rescheduled
5 events because of the Collingwood Library closure. They
6 certainly deserve a medal for their efforts! But now we are
7 dealing with the biggest complication of them all – the COVID -
8 19 pandemic that is forcing us to rethink everything we do in
9 terms of how to stay further apart to avoid its spread.

10 We first suspended all U3A Yarra City indoor face-to-face
11 activities and regretfully later we suspended outdoor
12 programs. This was to follow the 'social distancing
13 recommendations of government and health experts –
14 particularly recognising the vulnerability of our age group.

15 It seems to me really important to *physically* distance
16 ourselves from potential risks, while continuing to maintain
17 our *social* connections.

18 To help members stay connected, we are working on a
19 number of ideas and initiatives such as literature groups, the
20 Social Issues Learning Circle group and Parliamo 1, who have
21 been running their discussions online. The experiences so far
22 have been extremely positive, with a lot of fun along the way!
23 We are exploring this and other ways to support members and
24 classes to stay connected. Over the next few months, we will
25 become much more proficient using online conferencing and
26 connecting 'virtually'.

27 While online alternatives are not possible for all activities,
28 tutors and group leaders have sent information and resources
29 to help members stay engaged with their area of interest. We
30 have all joined U3A for the opportunities it provides for us to
31 connect with others and to learn, and the committee will
32 continue to look for ways to support our community in both.

Cont.



David Lee

President's update cont.

We are also continuing work on our social media project, *Connecting U3A Yarra City*, which began earlier this year. We are working with Amy Churchouse, who established the first Good Karma Network, and have collected members' surveys about people's use of social media and interest levels in participating in a *member only* Facebook group. If ever there was a need for a group to support members maintaining connections with our U3A community, this is it, so watch out for further information.

But most importantly, we need to look out for each other and ourselves. Touching base with people to make sure they're okay, keeping a daily routine, and keeping up with exercise. As a fellow member said to me last year, it's important that, as far as possible, we keep doing what we love doing. Finally, if you have a suggestion or question about how we can facilitate members to stay connected, please get in touch. Email is preferable, and phone messages are being monitored.

David Lee – President



Read the [President's Report](#) on our website under the **About Us** tab.

Connecting U3A Yarra City: Amy, Frank and Janet

COVID-19 advice



The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services provides the best advice on the virus and details are regularly updated on the following website:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Advice includes virus symptoms, how it is spread and ways to reduce the risk of coronavirus infection and updates on the most recent measures to combat the spread of the disease.

June Newsletter



The newsletter team aims to produce a June edition so we ask you to be creative during this 'lockdown' time and send us details of '*at home*' experiences, activities, stories of hope, book reviews, photographs or whatever you have found helpful to keep engaged and active.

Members will be informed of commencement of classes through our usual media such as **The Bulletin** and the [U3A Yarra City](#) website.

Lyn, Susannah and Tina

Lunch around the world

*...enjoying
excellent
conversation
and food...*

Once a month twenty or so Yarra City U3Aers gather together at a restaurant for a most enjoyable couple of hours. Class members arrive at the restaurant of the month to find our tables ready, and all we have to do is sit down, choose food and drinks and get on with the business of enjoying excellent conversation and food with our U3A friends.

But this is not the whole story. Well in advance, our tutors, Jan and Ann, have spent considerable effort finding suitable restaurants that are happy to take 20 people for lunch on a Tuesday. Without their dedication and planning, the rest of us would not have had the many great lunches that we have enjoyed. Thank you Jan and Ann.

Penny Wightwick



Lunch at Mamas Kitchen



Tasty Arabic food

Richmond walkers

*...with a couple
of gentle elbow
taps ...*

On a very crisp nine-degree morning in March, several members of our group met at the Bridge Rd /Church St corner, with a couple of gentle elbow taps in greetings.

We ambled down through Abbotsford, crossed to the north side of the Yarra while the temperature steadily rose and we were bathed in sunshine with the clearest blue sky. The first part of the walk in the park was flat and the area was returning to a wilderness so we took the adventurous steep path high above a very picturesque section of the river.



We stopped at a table for some serious conversation then opted to cross the pedestrian bridge to the south side to walk to the outdoor cafe and sat in 20+ degree warmth. Another enjoyable walk with very agreeable company.

Wendy Hall

First Nation's people and On Yer Bike

**...Brighton's
Dendy St
Beach, the site
of the largest
midden ...**

The popularity of U3A Yarra City On Yer Bike group grows and we now have a waiting list. A new feature is the inclusion of a route stop to learn about and reflect on the continuous importance of the area to our First Nations peoples.

In support of Reconciliation the group decided to acknowledge their riding across the lands previously occupied by the peoples of the Kulin nation and to use that opportunity to improve knowledge and understanding of Melbourne's Indigenous heritage. The weekly research and resultant commentary is undertaken by Rodney Spark, one of the regular riders.

The first ride incorporated the Bayside Coastal Indigenous Trail stopping at Brighton's Dendy St Beach, the site of the largest midden in inner Melbourne stretching for one km in the sand dunes behind the beach front. The midden is mealtime evidence (bones, shells, fireplaces etc) that the Boon Wurrung had continuous settlement of the Brighton area for many thousands of years. The group were surprised to learn that the six clans that make up the Boon Wurrung stretched from Werribee Creek to the Mornington Peninsula, Western Port Bay and Wilson's Promontory.

Bike riding in Melbourne is either on the lands of the Boon Wurrung or the Woiwurrung language groups to the north of the Yarra. The six rides so far have explored more than 200 kms of paths on both sides of the Yarra and stopped at significant Indigenous sites, for example; the most likely location of the infamous John Batman Treaty signing in 1835, and Speakers Corner where more recently campaigners for Aboriginal rights and citizenship addressed public meetings.

Riders have been surprised to learn about the landscape contrast between north and south of the Yarra prior to European settlement. Travelling north to Bundoora 'the plain where kangaroos lived' the lush countryside had been maintained by the Woiwurrung for many thousands of years as a hunting ground. Travelling to the south it was 4,000 hectares of wetlands, a journey across a land of creeks, swamps, trees and the intersecting walking tracks of the Boon Wurrung.

Rodney Spark (*Special thanks to Rodney for his informative talks*)



Historical interest ride - Speakers Corner



Scotchman's Creek

Yarra ramblers

... admiring the waterfront Bollard Trail and looking for the rabbit on each group.

On a Thursday morning in March, our intrepid leaders Kim Harley and Sue Kurt, organised a wonderful outing. Ten U3A members caught the ferry from Docklands and cruised across Port Phillip Bay, arriving an hour and a half later in Geelong. No worries about being too close to each other on board the boat, as Chris counted all of 13 passengers disembarking the ferry in Geelong. We did bunch up for the group photo but were cognisant of our responsibility of not being too close to each other.

From the ferry we walked along the Eastern Beach foreshore, admiring the waterfront Bollard Trail and looking for the painted rabbit on each group. The day was overcast, however the temperature climbed to 31 degrees with humidity.

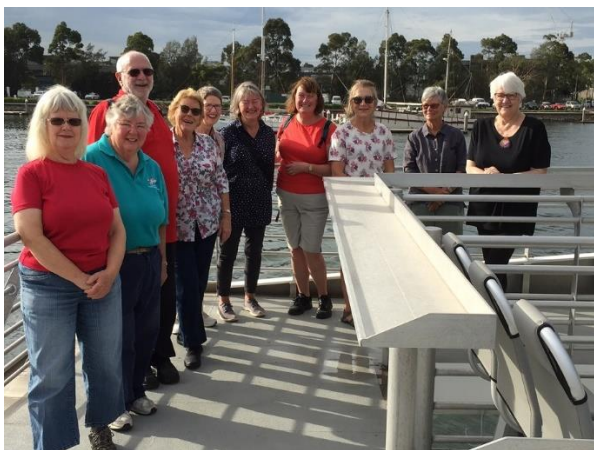
Our goal was the Geelong Botanic Gardens where we were most impressed with the welcoming baobab trees and the newly constructed main entrance gates with the tall sculpted 'trees'. The design of the gardens was most pleasing, with plenty of nooks and crannies, massed plantings of flowers, a rose garden, huge varieties of bamboos, and many very tall 19th century trees as well as the conservatory.

The original (renovated) Telegraph Station has been relocated to the gardens from gold-rush days, and a sunken glasshouse from the 1860's remains, now housing cacti and succulents. Just at the right time and place, the Garden's cafe appeared, selling loads of fresh sandwiches and drinks. Luckily, we were served before a hoard of people descended. A couple of ravens kept their beady eyes on us in case we should drop crumbs. We, however, had read the 'Do not feed the birds' sign!

For our return journey we split up, Kim and Sue leading their group back along the beach front, while Chris lead a band of four directly to the railway station.

It would have been an opportunity to visit the Woolshed Museum to see the Wildlife photo exhibition, alas, in these days of COVID-19, the Gallery was closed. Thanks to Kim and Sue for planning this enjoyable ramble in Geelong.

Wendy Hall



Ferry travellers at Spotswood



Beach bollards

Tutor profile -Teresa Pitt

When did you join U3A Yarra City?

I joined U3A Yarra City a year or so after my very unwilling and unexpected retirement in 2006. I had been sitting around in a state of shock, staring at the walls and wondering what on earth I was going to do with myself. A friend mentioned U3A to me, so I started getting involved.

What roles have you had at U3A?

I've been tutoring in Landmarks in Australian Literature since 2009, and in Film Studies since 2010.

Do you have a favourite book or film?

Well, so far we've read about 120 books in Oz Lit. Some I've loved, and some I haven't been so fond of, but I couldn't possibly pick a favourite! There are also a lot of films that I love, but if I have to name one I would choose *Casablanca* (1942) with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. I've seen it dozens of times and it still makes me cry.

What professional work did you do?

I worked in book publishing from 1980 to 2006. I had a degree in English Literature and Politics and started out as a trainee book editor. I eventually became a senior editor and then a senior commissioning editor. I was lucky enough to work for a number of Australian publishing houses, including Penguin Books Australia and Melbourne University Press. I also taught Editing 2 at RMIT TAFE for several years. I'm also a very experienced waitress.

What activities or hobbies do you have?

I'm involved with the recently-established Melbourne chapter of the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive. We're running monthly events called 'Sundays With Friends', which showcase the amazing work done by the Archive in preserving and restoring Australia's audio-visual heritage.

I also have nine grandchildren. The oldest is 28, and the youngest is 13.

I adore spending time with them, but they grow up much too fast for my liking!



What advice would you give someone thinking about joining U3A?

Don't be shy! One of the great things about U3A is that you get to meet people who are interested in the same things as you are. That's a great foundation for making new friends.

What have you gained personally as a tutor?

I've learned as much from my students as they've learned from me. That sounds like a bit of a cliché, but it's true! And I really appreciate the genuine enthusiasm and interest they bring to our classes. I've made so many friends through U3A - I don't know where I'd be without it.

What's one thing most people wouldn't know?

Gosh! I don't know - does having dinner with Barry Humphries at his house in London count?

Interview by Susannah Dax

Ideas from U3A Network Victoria



Read U3A Network Victoria's activities for keeping active & fighting isolation.

[Sharing ideas and opportunities - Keeping active and fighting isolation](#)

SILC group online using Jitsi

The Social Issues Learning Circle (SILC) had its first online meeting today, given the ban on face-to-face events in response to COVID-19.

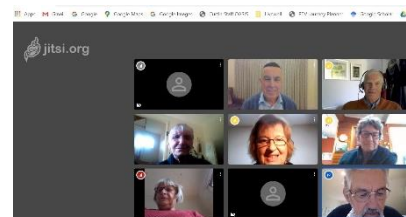
...also consider how the political changes that have occurred in the last few weeks will affect our nation's politics...

As planned, we were to talk about democracy in Australia and how it might be improved. The eight of us participating still discussed democracy, but it was interesting to also consider how the political changes that have occurred in the last few weeks will affect our nation's politics and democracy in the future.

We used Jitsi, a video conferencing technology, to connect. It's free, secure and easy to use. Participants enter or click on an agreed web address at an agreed time. You don't have to open an account, download anything, or go into the Jitsi website (although, if you're using a phone or tablet, you must download the app). Your device needs a camera and phone (though you can still participate without a camera - you just won't be seen by the others). You also need to use Chrome as your browser, and you may be asked to update it. It helps to have a trial run with someone else before joining a group session.

You name the conversation (or 'room' as they call it). Let's say you call it 'yarramusic'. The URL to join the conversation would be: meet.jit.si/yarramusic. If using the app, you just enter the last word.

And of course, you can use this technology to connect with family and friends - a great benefit in this era of physical distancing!



Rob Salter Tutor

Member suggestions

The following section provides activities and ideas to assist you at this time. Some of these require technology others do not. This list has been put together in a very short time, so we hope some motivate you.

Please collect other ideas and submit these for our June Newsletter.

- *I have bought a \$2 Hoola Hoop, remember those, to try to do something which is fun. I must say I was much better at it when I was 12, my granddaughter & I exchange videos, she gets more laughs out of it than I do. **Susannah***
- *This site (Weekend Notes) has a list of free sites (I think) which may be useful when you run out of drawers to sort in this time of isolation. Subscribe to Weekend Notes <https://live.weekendnotes.com/?ref=regforward>. This week included 13 things to do in isolation, 10 ways to fight COVID-19 etc. **Nancy***
- *My family have set up Zoom and we are doing a trivia quiz each day, also we have set up a family WhatsApp so my overseas family can keep in touch. Zoom is great for Book groups as well. **Anon***



Activities, Apps & websites for learning or fun

Check out the following ideas to combat boredom and to help stay connected.

<p>Communication</p> <p>Keep a daily diary – include events thoughts and feelings</p> <p>Ring a friend, or better still use FaceTime (Apple devices) it's more personal and connecting</p> <p>Create a daily routine list and add any new activities</p>	<p>Physical</p> <p>Climb the stairs as a workout – time yourself</p> <p>Walk outdoors and record time (rules permitting)</p> <p>Sweep the outside yard and dust cobwebs</p> <p>Clean something that usually gets forgotten – silver</p> <p>Start a vegetable or herb garden or pot</p>
<p>Household</p> <p>Sort filing cabinet, declutter cupboards, recycle clothes</p> <p>Create lists – contents of deepfreeze, to do tasks</p> <p>Jazz up your menu: try a new recipe, share with friends</p> <p>Grow some seeds, or shoots in a jar</p> <p>Hand water your garden instead of the sprinkler system</p> <p>Explore new TV channels or radio channels on your TV, e.g. ABC Melbourne 25, ABC RN 26, ABC Classic 27</p>	<p>Personal challenge - Do it differently</p> <p>Brush hair with non-dominant hand</p> <p>Use a different lounge chair</p> <p>Change or rotate your art displays or some furniture</p> <p>Sing along to a song and/or learn the words to a song</p> <p>Create a poem to a popular tune – <i>Where have all the XXX gone...</i></p> <p>Sketch your shopping list items or your teacup</p>
<p>Well being</p> <p>Take a bath, dim lights and burn a scented candle</p> <p>Meditate – get comfortable and be aware of the sounds, sights, smells and taste</p> <p>Stop, be still and take 4 deep inhalations/exhalations</p> <p>Play relaxing music - tune in to ABC Classic FM</p>	<p>Games</p> <p>Start a jigsaw puzzle, play cards, do crosswords, Sudoku</p> <p>Binge watch Netflix or SBS on Demand, ABC iview</p>

Apps and websites








<p>Jitzi Meet</p> 	<p>Group communication</p> <p>Free video conferencing - use without creating an account</p>	<p>Insight timer</p> 	<p>Relaxation</p> <p>Free meditation app for sleep, relaxation, courses, talks and more</p>
<p>Zoom</p> 	<p>Group communication</p> <p>Free video communications service for video conferencing</p>	<p>Lumosity</p> 	<p>Brain trainer</p> <p>Games to improve memory, attention, flexibility, problem solving etc</p>
<p>Words w Friends</p> 	<p>Games</p> <p>e.g. Wordscapes, Words with Friends, Word Scramble, Quell+</p>	<p>Duolingo</p> 	<p>Languages</p> <p>Language learning website and mobile app, Learn Italian, Spanish, French, German etc</p>
<p>YouTube</p> 	<p>Self help tutorials</p> <p>Learn to sing, paint make a table, repair a puncture etc</p>	<p>MOOC</p> <p>Free Online Courses</p>	<p>Free online courses</p> <p>Sign up for a MOOC (Massive open online course) offered by universities</p>
<p>National Portrait Gallery</p>	<p>Visit a gallery online</p> <p>Explore the Australian National Portrait Gallery</p>	<p>Museums Victoria Collections</p>	<p>Visit Museums Victoria online</p> <p>Type your interest into the search bar and explore</p>

Photo gallery



Physical distancing



Physical distancing at Dandenong



Lunching at Geelong Botanic Gardens



Diamond Creek to Eltham walk



Discussing the Facebook communication group



Guided tour of the State Library

Diary dates

2020

All classes suspended until the end of June

- Jun: New courses and forums published
- 19 Jun: Newsletter submissions due
- Jun: Enrolment for semester 2 (new enrolment only)
- Jul: Tutor class lists available

Dates 2020

- 15 Mar – 30 Jun: Semester 1 suspended
- 24 Mar – 13 Apr: School holidays & Easter
- 13 Jul – 18 Dec: Semester 2



See website and The Bulletin for news on class and term updates

Committee 2020

- President:* David Lee
- Deputy President:* Andy Hansen
- Secretary:* Vivienne Blanksby
- Treasurer:* Denyse Strantzen
- Deputy Treasurer:* Peter Ronge
- Program Coordinator (forums):* Lyn Watson
- Program Coordinator (courses):* Mary Walker
- Database:* Andy Hansen, Frank Moore
- Tutor Liaison & Technology:* Frank Moore
- Publicity:* David Lee
- Health and Safety:* Frank Moore

Other positions

- Membership:* Bob Morrow
- Publicity support:* Nina Hansen
- Newsletter:* Tina Hocking, Lyn Morgan, Susannah Dax
- Office Manager:* Mary Walker

Connect with U3A Yarra City

FaceBook: Send photos and articles to our email address u3ayarracity@gmail.com with FaceBook in the Subject line or go directly via FaceBook.



Web: www.u3ayarracity.org.au

On Yer Bike: <https://onyerbike-u3a.org.au>

News & Events Bulletin: Latest news communication via email

Newsletter: Published March, July and November.
Email u3ayarracity@gmail.com with Newsletter in the Subject line, or post to: Newsletter Coordinator, U3A Yarra City, 17 Stanton St, Abbotsford 3067.

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