

Newsletter



YARRA CITY
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

April 2021

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President's update

I have to say, it's great to be back, in particular meeting old friends who we haven't seen except on a computer screen for possibly a year, also meeting new members.

Welcome to all new members, some of whom moved into the area late 2019 or early 2020, and have only now been able to join classes and activities face-to-face.

This year our traditional welcome lunch was held outdoors under the shady trees at Gahan Reserve, as the community room at Collingwood Library was unavailable. The turn-out was really positive; about 50 new and returning members, and provided the opportunity for lots of connections. Many thanks to Sue Kurt for organising the trestle tables, and everyone else who shared food.

Of course there have been challenges, especially with 'pivoting' as they say, to adapt to the changing restrictions on the capacity of rooms at Yarra venues. I especially want to acknowledge the hours of work that Lyn Watson, our Program Coordinator has put in over the weeks leading up to the beginning of the year: booking venues, clarifying the class limits due to COVID restrictions, moving classes that can no longer be accommodated in our Stanton St office and much more. Thank you, Lyn!

On that note if anyone thinks they would like to join Lyn and Christine Harrison in coordinating and managing the program, please get in touch.

So, how are we going, as we emerge (hopefully) from the year of COVID lockdowns?

One indicator is membership, and our membership numbers are good. At the March meeting of U3A Network Victoria (the State umbrella organisation), Susan Webster, the President, said that it was a goal across the Network for membership to be at 80% of the level this time last year.

Cont.



David Lee

***President's
update cont.***

At U3A Yarra City, our February membership was 330, compared to 340 in 2020, well above the State goal. That, combined with the fact that almost all our classes from last year have continued along with several new classes, attests to the health of our U3A - see [Program](#) and [Forums](#) update.

As well, our members continue to make connections outside of our U3A. For instance, Vice President, Andy Hansen has been working assiduously on a U3A Network Victoria initiative, focused on ensuring all U3As address issues of data security and privacy. Two of our members have been active on separate Network Advisory Groups. These have been established to support U3As from across the State interested in or already teaching in a particular area. I want to acknowledge the contributions of Rodney Spark to the Indigenous Studies Advisory Group, and Christine Butera, who leads our Mindfulness Meditation class, and is a member of the Meditative Practices Advisory Group. At the local level our Ageing Well group, facilitated by Helen Nankervis, has been very active building connections with Council, and planning for a seniors conference during Seniors Week in October (see Ageing Well in Yarra update).

David Lee – President

Program and Forums update

If we thought last year was action packed, this year has been equally so. Managing the program in these times certainly has its challenges.

We have had some venues open but with reduced numbers, some closed, some groups wanting face-to-face, others continuing to use Zoom, and the Collingwood Library is still closed until July. We have had masks off and on again and the Office declared too small for classes. As well there were the niggly changes to dates and rooms.

***She told me that
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bookings yearly!***

On the plus side, Christine Harrison and I had a productive meeting with Catherine Tranter at Yarra Venues. She provided guidance on managing our bookings. She told me that we were the highest user of venues, with over 300 individual bookings yearly!

Nearly all our 2020 classes have resumed with lots of enthusiastic participants, and we have started two new bike groups, a German language group, Israeli Dance class and a Feldenkrais class. Getting to know members and tutors is a rewarding part of the Program Coordination.

The Forums continue via Zoom, with May and June talks listed in the [MyU3A](#) database on our website.

Look out for Photography and a Criminal Law class in Semester 2 as well as occasional Royal Botanic Gardens walks. Thank you all for your patience.

Lyn Watson

New horizons

*I feel
extraordinarily
fortunate to be
in this city.*

In 2019, after 20 years overseas, I finally had more time to spend with my family in Melbourne. As a comparative newcomer to the city, my acquaintances were few and scattered.

When COVID 19 struck followed by lockdown, I self-isolated, like everyone else, read, made masks, listened to music, and walked the Yarra Trail upstream and down. True, it was solitary, but one could still visit the parks and gardens nearby, stroll into town, shop at the supermarket and share the experience with other residents, creating a feeling of solidarity without actually interacting.

As active cases of the virus dwindled in Victoria and an early vaccine became increasingly realistic, it was time for me to take stock and set in place a new way of life. U3A seemed a good path to explore, offering convivial activities with people my own age. I enrolled in a couple of courses which involved the actual physical company of people, Parliamo 2 and Talking Films (see photo).

A good choice, it turns out - both are engaging and fun. My local librarians were instrumental in finding me a delightful book group; Yarra Leisure opened the doors for me to Pilates and energetic Aqua Aerobics and a nearby bushwalking group offered me the chance to enjoy the society of fellow walkers. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to be in this city. I have already met a great many interesting, stimulating people and my horizons have indeed expanded in a wonderful way.



Christina Mishra

Yarra Ramblers

*The scenery and
landscape were
a delight,
traversing easy
paths.*

On Thursday 18th March Sue and Kim, leaders of Yarra Ramblers, took us on a walk along the Main Yarra Trail in Eltham which meets up with the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail in Donvale. The scenery and landscape were a delight, traversing easy paths.

Thanks for a fun day. **Marion Lumb**



Mona Lisa (Frank) & friends (Sue & Kim)



The Yarra

A new activity for a New Year

... in time 'we may find that the floor gets softer.'

Earlier this year while reflecting on 2020 I felt a little anxious. Admittedly reading, zooming and wandering the streets and lanes in the area had been enjoyable, but I didn't want to be restricted to these activities in 2021. After all we had been led to believe, rightly or wrongly, that there would be more freedom and greater opportunities in the New Year. But what to do that would not only be different but interesting and challenging in a COVID-safe way?

Luckily the 2021 U3A Yarra City courses offered an intriguing new opportunity with Feldenkrais. For years I had done resistance training where the goal was to increase weights or repetitions to improve strength and fitness but what to make of an activity that emphasised using less effort to improve mobility and



flexibility? This improvement is facilitated by Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner Lachlan Fleming. Each week Lachlan guides us through a sequence of small, gentle movements to help us improve our concentration, posture, movement and coordination. Whether we are standing, sitting or lying on the floor, Lachlan helps us to get maximum benefit from the classes by encouraging greater mindfulness to expand our

movement options. He has even suggested that in time 'we may find that the floor gets softer.'

What an inspiring activity that is contributing to my enhanced wellbeing in 2021.

Helen Hargreaves

OYB
Cycling Award
for
Veronica Kim
"The Pocket Rocket"

An acknowledgement
of the exceptional
cycling skills of
Veronica
who,
at 80 years,
is still
riding way
out in front!!

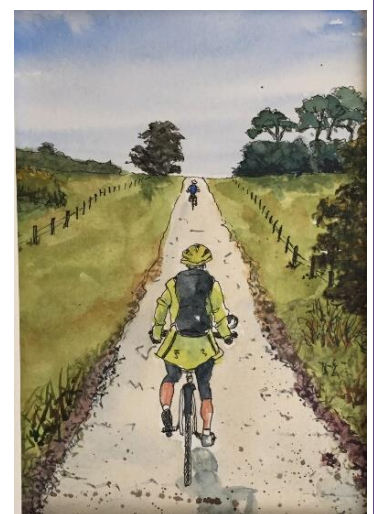


Senior rider

The On Yer Bike group congratulates Veronica Kim on being our first Octogenarian rider.

While large group celebrations fell flat because of repeated COVID house rule changes, OYB members individually celebrated with Veronica and wished her many more happy rides.

...at 80 years, (she) is still riding way out in front...



Veronica rides another hill
- Lyn Morgan

Ageing Well in Yarra update

... we were asked to submit our views on changes required to update the Collingwood Senior Citizens Centre

This year The Ageing Well in Yarra Group has been meeting face-to-face at Fitzroy Library. In January we were asked to submit our views on changes required to update the Collingwood Senior Citizens Centre to ensure the facility is best able to meet the needs of older people and local community groups in the City of Yarra. The Manager of Aged and Disability Services spoke to us at a recent meeting and this now appears to be part of a longer-term project for the area surrounding the Collingwood Town Hall.



Jonno Morris has been selected for the Active Ageing Advisory Committee (AAAC) which met for the first time in February. They reviewed results which came in from the Shape your Future Community Vision Survey mentioned in the November 2020 Newsletter.

In March several U3A members visited the Collingwood Yards Open Day. We are excited that Olivia Allen, Community Arts Officer, City of Yarra has welcomed our interest and possible future involvement in the Collingwood Arts Precinct.

Helen Nankervis & Pamela Kleeman-Passi in Studio 14, Collingwood Yards

Seniors Week 2021

Yarra City Council has granted us a Small Project Grant to conduct a Conference of Seniors Groups in the City of Yarra at the Fitzroy Town Hall Reading Room on October 5th 2021 during Seniors Week. The aim is to connect fellow Community Groups in the City of Yarra and to consider ways of working together to promote Active and Healthy Ageing. Further details to be provided in the next newsletter. We want as many of our own members as possible to participate to discuss our common issues and outcomes that can be implemented.

Helen Nankervis & Nina Hansen

COVID – Remember when...or remember not!

Lockdown fear avoid isolate
 Wash hands Happy Birthday twice sanitise
 Walkers crossover anxious roads deserted silence
 Activities gone diary blank so much time sort and chuck
 Op shop treasures prized essays photo albums memories future trips?

No more shopping food delivery healthy cooking lots of veggies
 Walking walking walking
 Time for gardening weed and prune COVID garden any punnet will do
 Zoom and Jitsi novelty frustration
 Sugar craving desserts reappear cooking goodies anticipation endorphins flooding
 Email funnies good to laugh walkers greet smile.

Time drags energy lags alone
 Missing family....friends....zoomed out....funnies fall flat....phoning diminishes....withdrawal
 Seven months weight creeps on Covid brain masked faces
 Personal bubble mine floats stretches breaks isolation human contact
 Walking walking walking.

Five K eases to 25 excitement family reunion at last connection!
 Gardens blooming COVID retreating Libs still bleating Dan holds firm.
 Donut day double donut triple
 Audi day Olympic day now six
 Edinburgh Gardens overflowing families feasting
 Youths skateboarding street performers rehearsing
 Excitement Freedom Life.

©Nancy O'Toole

Profile - Geraldine Robertson

When did you join U3A Yarra City and why?

I joined eight years ago. I already knew of U3A and I wanted something that offered ongoing learning and the possibility of new friendships.

I know you have at least 20 substantial publications to your credit - Can you please tell us something about these and yourself?

About 15 years ago I developed a medical condition that kept me home much of the time. I was not really ill, more bored, so I wanted people to come to me. I knew people who shared my feeling that there was a need to research and publish little known women's stories and activism, and as I had just bought a computer, I thought we could do this. Fortunately, others thought so, too. We formed 'Women's Web stories actions' and created a website -

www.womensweb.com.au

About my personal life: I come from what I call a mixed family - protestant/catholic, Labor/Liberal, a woman's job is in the community/a woman's job is in the family. As a child I received such mixed messages I decided the grown-ups really didn't know what they were doing. Of course I didn't know what I was doing either, but I didn't know that. The good thing was that even in my ignorance I somehow learned some truths I could later apply to Women's Web:

- that it is frequently not a case of 'us and them' but sometimes more a case of 'both'
- that stories matter and
- that people called 'ordinary' matter too.

Women's Web has published books, articles and websites. It has given talks and forums. It has participated in many groups, particularly those dedicated to peace.

My work through 'Women's Web stories actions' has been fun. I have been privileged to meet people who inspire me - and us all.

Do you have a secret superpower?

Yes, I collect pens wherever I go, but don't tell anyone.

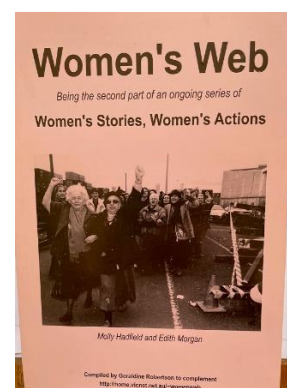
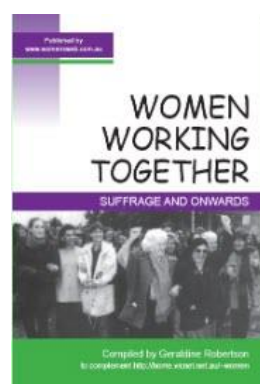
Why do you enjoy U3A?

The people, intellectual stimulation and the good company.

What would you say to someone thinking about joining U3A?

Come in - 'the water is fine'.

Interview by Susannah Dax



Tribute – Bob Morrow

6/6/1946 – 31/1/2021

It was with sadness that we heard of the death of one of our most active and respected members, Bob Morrow, after a long battle with cancer.

Bob joined the U3A Yarra City in 2014 and in the years since he made significant contributions to the U3A community.

For years he was membership secretary and cycled across Yarra City to distribute our newsletters and programs to libraries and neighbourhood houses. Bob had a great sense of fun, evident in the image of him and his long-time partner, Viv Blanksby (accompanied by Barbara Selva), on the front of a U3A brochure.

A fine poet, in 2015 he ran a poetry class with U3A. Class members talk about his sense of pleasure in language, and a seriousness of intent that he shared with the best of teachers. He was always inquisitive, curious, and humble.

But it was really Bob's membership of the On Yer Bike cycling group where his contribution to our community was felt most profoundly. In the words of Ross Armstrong, the group's leader, Bob was a foundational member and a stalwart of the group. For six years he rarely missed a ride and as part of the leadership team he regularly planned and led them.

He was a great explorer of the trails around Melbourne, introducing many new rides both near and far, but especially his favourite destination: Nikos Cakes in Oakleigh. Riding in a group led by Bob, you always felt he was sharing something that was special to him – and it was.



*Viewing the ocean,
South
Gippsland*

For many in the group, it was Bob who opened the door and led the way through some of the most delightful rides along the creeks and through the parks of Melbourne.

Of course, Bob had his idiosyncrasies, in particular his devotion to his antique Malvern Star bicycle. Rescued from under the house of an elderly relative, lovingly restored, it had only one gear! Which brought with it certain rigours. When approaching a hill, Bob would cut short all conversation, saying, 'I have to stop talking now, there's a hill coming.' Head down, he'd attack the approach to the summit, invariably defeating it while others, with their multiple gears and extra-light bicycles, fell to the side. When the opportunity came, however, Bob rode like the wind, soaring down a long glide with his high vis jacket flowing in the breeze behind him.

Another of Bob's idiosyncrasies was his traditional Aussie ingenuity. When quizzed about the clothes peg that he had attached to his brake cable, Bob took delight in explaining, with clarity and precision, how the peg could be used to stabilise his bike on a moving train. There are members who still carry a clothes peg on their brake cables.

Clothes pegs aside, what so many loved about Bob were those personal qualities that made him so special. His deep and considered decency, the warmth of his grin and welcome, and the sense of integrity that he demonstrated in his dealings with everyone, on every encounter. Vale Bob.

David Lee



*Queenscliff
2016*

The Ride

Bob Morrow penned The Ride in 2014 for the On Yer Bike group

There was movement at the station, for the word emailed around
had guaranteed a day both cool and bright.
Magic spells cast after midnight – two chooks died without a sound –
and, lo, the dawn with not a cloud in sight.

So a motley crowd had gathered sporting garments drab and florid,
scarce a thread of stylish lycra could be seen,
balaclavas, boots and sneakers, high-vis vests and trackies horrid,
and one or two in shorts meant for a teen.

Their bikes were quite a mixture, on that point the crowd agreed,
though no two agreed on just what shape was best:
shiny new and old and rusty, one a cherished patchwork breed,
but each, I'm sure, the equal of the rest.

Ten o'clock, the leader mounted, their departure time drew near,
the pack streamed out in answer to his call.
Half-flat tyres and wonky steering, shaky seats, a sticky gear –
such glitches were no handicap at all.

Now eager, now uncertain, now a hairsbreadth from a spill,
they wound their tortuous way by stream and wood,
under freeways, over bridges, cursing groaning up a hill,
sticking always to the right path – if they could.

The final goal arrived at, came a huge collective sigh –
there before the travellers' eyes a feast was spread:
focaccias, cappuccinos, cakes and pastries piled head high
reassured the starving masses they'd be fed.

At length, their hunger sated, each thirst slaked and talking done,
the riders climbed astride their trusty steeds,
bound for home, they rode sedately, more an amble than a run,
satisfied good fun does not require great speed.

And despite the aching backs, the stiffening limbs, the odd sore knee,
any one among the group would volunteer
to be the first to roll up just so long as they could see
Ross captaining the ship again next year.

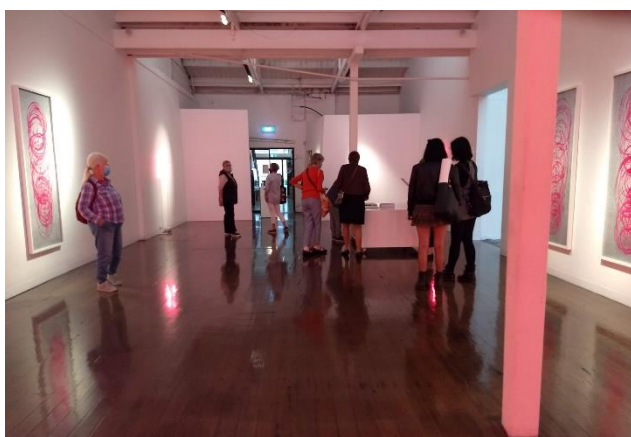
Photo gallery



Arid garden at the Botanic Gardens



Four winds temple at the Botanic Gardens



Arc One Gallery



45 Downstairs Gallery



On Yer Bike - Skipton to Ballarat rail trail



Parliamo

Diary dates

2021

Jun: New courses and forums published
 21 Jun: New enrolments for semester 2
 18 Jun: Newsletter submissions due
 Early Jul: Tutor class lists available

Semester Dates 2021

3 - 18 Apr: School holidays & Easter
 25 June Semester 1 ends
 26 Jun-11 Jul: School holidays
 12 July: Semester 2 starts

See the website and The Bulletin for latest updates



Committee 2021

President: David Lee
Deputy President: Andy Hansen
Secretary: Jan Tinetti
Treasurer: Denyse Stranzen
Program Coordinator: Lyn Watson

Other positions

Communications: Sue Kurt
Publicity: David Lee
Tutor Liaison/Database Support: Frank Moore
Office Manager/Web Manager: Mary Walker
Membership: Vivienne Blanksby
Newsletter: Tina Hocking, Lyn Morgan, Susannah Dax

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