

Newsletter



YARRA CITY
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

June 2020

T: 9416 3443

E: u3ayarracity@gmail.com

W: www.u3ayarracity.org.au

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/u3ayarra>

17 Stanton Street

Abbotsford 3067

Office Hours: Mon 1– 3pm, Fri 10 – 12 noon

(Closed public holidays & school holidays)

Contents

President's update.....	1
Program and Forums update....	2
Reflections on Forums online..	3
Ageing well in Yarra	4
COVID-19	4
OYB spinning its wheels	5
Parliamo.....	5
Musings on COVID-19.....	6
Lockdown	6
Finding my way to U3A.....	7
Spanish flu pandemic 1919	7
Claire and Clare in Isolation....	8
After 'The Big Sleep'.....	9
Tutor profile.....	10
During COVID-19 shutdown...	10
Photo gallery	11
Diary dates	12



David Lee

President's update

It has certainly been an eventful semester. Faced with the COVID lockdown, tutors and members have taken up the challenge of running our program online with alacrity. Many of our classes are running via Zoom and other video conferencing platforms, and members have adapted to the new environment with resourcefulness and good cheer. A highlight for me was Jan Tinetti's online forum talk, featured in this newsletter.

The *Connecting U3A Yarra City* Facebook group has been established and with just on 80 members, is going well. If you are on Facebook then I recommend you join this group.

Despite these successes we are concerned that there may be members whose confidence with digital technology may be impacting on their ability to connect. Accordingly, we have surveyed our members about their use of digital technology and thank those who responded. The committee is in the process of contacting members who are not on the email list, to complete the survey over the phone, and once we have collated the results we will distribute them via a bulletin. Of course, people's technology issues are varied, and so there will be a range of strategies to address – where we can. We are looking at online workshops and hopefully, some one-on-one mentoring. In particular, thanks to Harry Lewis, whose computer workshop provided a valuable way to solve computer queries, and to members who have offered support. In addition, we are partnering with the Digital Learning Team at Yarra Libraries.

Congratulations to the On Yer Bike team, whose *On Yer Bike U3A* web site shares information about cycling trails in Melbourne and Victoria. Since the beginning of this year there have been 6,658 visits - 40% more than last year. I recommend you visit the web site, which includes reports from group rides, at <https://onyerbike-u3a.org.au/>.

Cont.

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

Looking ahead to next term, it is still difficult to predict when our venues will be available and when conditions will allow us to resume indoor face-to-face classes. We will keep you informed.

By now you will have received the special bulletin with the program for next semester, including information about whether ongoing classes will be online or, in the case of outdoor groups, returning face-to-face.

We have new offerings which are listed in the Program and Forums update below. All of these sessions are online and will only be available to those enrolled, so make sure you go to our website at: www.u3ayarracity.org.au to enrol (click the Membership button and follow the prompts). The access details for each of your enrolled sessions will be emailed to you.

David Lee – President

Program and Forums update

Since March many of our groups have been busy with online Zoom, Jitsi or Google Meet classes. We feel very encouraged by this willingness to embrace new technologies. Groups continuing in this way include Criminal Law, Post-Colonial Literature, Ageing Well, Bonsai, Computer Workshop, Crossword Solving, French Conversation, Mandarin, Meditation, Memoir, Music Group, Spanish, Social Issues Learning Circle (SILC), and even Walk and Coffee Group meet on Zoom.

Our Online Forum session went very well so we will be offering Online Travel Forums in Term 3. These are advertised in our U3A Bulletin. Members need to enrol in these sessions by registering in MyU3A, from the [Membership page](#) on our website, so that they can be invited to the Zoom meeting.

Don Just is offering another Criminal Law series, on Monday afternoons in Term 3. Again, book online through MyU3A to be invited to join the meeting. We are keeping in contact with the Yarra venues to see when we can resume using their facilities. Outdoor groups are making decisions as appropriate, e.g. On Yer Bike are riding within COVID-19 restriction guidelines.

Our thoughts are with you all.

Lyn Watson and Mary Walker



Reflections on Forums online

Zoom is an easy way to present talks. I'm glad I gave it a try...

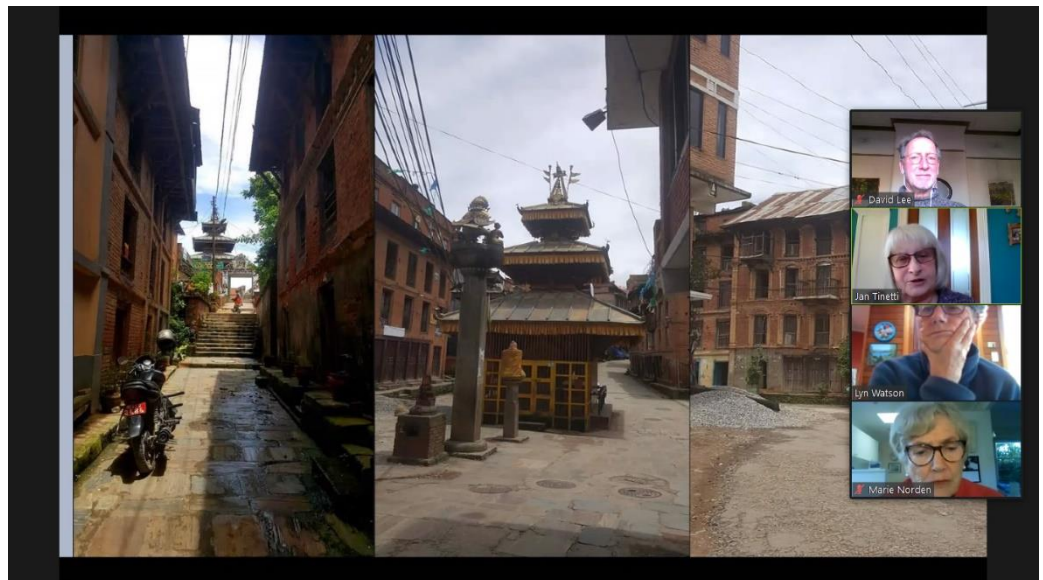
When the pandemic struck and shutdown was in place, I thought 'There goes U3A, a really good part of my lifestyle!' That hasn't been the case. It has changed, not gone away. Whilst I can't wait to get back to pre-COVID-19 life, I've been able to participate in groups and keep in touch online. Most recently I had fun working with David Lee and Lyn Watson to plan and present the first U3A online forum: Two Faces of Asia.

When first approached to try an online talk, I thought I *should* give it a go. It can't be that hard. I had used computers 10 years ago in another life so it could be a good time to dust off the old skills. Once started, I discovered computers have advanced a lot. With a bit of trial and error, and the help of David and Lyn to take care of the admin and technical side of things, we got going.

It took time to select just 20 slides from my material, but eventually I decided to focus on my favourite memories of the trip, a wonderful visit to Gardens on the Bay in Singapore and spending time with family in Dhulikhel in Nepal.

Zoom is an easy way to present talks. I'm glad I gave it a try, revisited the pleasures of the trip, shared my travel experience and learnt something new with other people. Thanks to David and Lyn and to everyone who came along.

Jan Tinetti



Currently we are looking at Housing and Open Space Planning...

Ageing well in Yarra

This group has been meeting for over two years now and this year decided to follow up our study of the Age-Friendly City by examining Ageing issues in the City of Yarra as well as making connections with other like-minded groups in Yarra.

Currently we are looking at Housing and Open Space Planning in the City of Yarra and how well it addresses the criteria for an Age-Friendly City. We also invited Adrian Murphy, Manager Aged and Disability Services, and Frances Moloney, Manager Community Engagement, to join us and inform us on what is happening in the City of Yarra in their respective areas.

Plans are under discussion for a follow-up to our Survey on Friendship undertaken last year which looked at how U3A members maintained friendships over time and the role U3A played in the forming of new relationships.

Helen Nankervis

While COVID-19 has been an inconvenience it has been a time to smell the roses

COVID-19

An opportunity to do all the deferred jobs around the home. My newly renovated backyard trellis gets a coat of white paint, then one side, green, to match the garage. The white, looking bright and happy from the kitchen, stays white. Another coat of green, perhaps, or maybe not, now left undone.

A great time for walks. My local park, planted with an array of native grasses and sugar gums, has a 'corroboree' tree, dead and eaten out. A \$60,000 grant in the early 80s saw it uprooted and mounted on a concrete base. Gagadju Elders, all the way from the Northern Territory, witnessing this piece of history asked, 'but where are the people?'

The avenue of elms luckily escaped the elm beetle but needs constant watch. They now have new buddies planted opposite. Dogs and their owners, a constant presence throughout lockdown, are joined by children as red and white tape is removed from the playground area.

Through Zoom we keep in touch - drinks with friends, Mandarin classes, Criminal Law, Living Longer gym in the lounge room - all great. While COVID-19 has been an inconvenience it has been a time to smell the roses.

Wendy Hall



Sugar gums in Burnley Park

*And grateful to
the weather
gods too ...*

OYB spinning its wheels

Cycling was one thing that was permitted during the COVID-19 lockdown, and a number of members of On Yer Bike (OYB) kept riding singly or in pairs.

But nothing beats our Friday group rides, and I think we all experienced a little burst of excitement when tutor, Ross Armstrong, emailed us to say the group rides were on.

We've had over 20 riders each week, which is terrific, and have divided into groups of 10 or less – a decision which has continued despite larger groups now being allowed. The smaller groups make it easier at traffic lights and puts less pressure on the baristas when we get our takeaway coffee.

No trains either at this stage – often we'd catch a train outbound, and ride back in. Ross surveyed members recently, and very few were keen to use trains at this stage or to ride in one large group.

A couple of spin-off groups emerged from OYB last year, with Penny Wightwick taking a group on Wednesdays, and Pam Kershaw on Mondays.



Both groups are back on the bike paths, so we now have three rides a week.

We're all very grateful to Ross and Penny for being creative in sorting out routes that don't require trains, and leading the groups. And grateful to the weather gods too – we've had spectacular autumn weather for a number of rides, with clear skies, sun, beautiful autumn leaves, and those glorious long shadows cast across the parks.

Pam Kershaw (Monday ride leader)

Parliamo

Ciao tutti.

The Parliamo Uno group has been carrying on with our usual class on Thursdays via Zoom. Grazie Mille U3A!

*...technology has
been a 'need to
know' learning
curve*

This technology has been a 'need to know' learning curve for us all and we are now screen sharing our Italian ebooks and including the Italian audio for pronunciation. Zoom has allowed us to keep our minds active and also to keep in contact socially. We've shared and celebrated two births of nipotini (grandchildren) and two compleanni (birthdays) - virtually - È non vedo l'ora (and can't wait) to celebrate together with a non virtual glass of Prosecco.

Annette Noble

Musings on COVID-19

First meetings with newborn granddaughter, all online.

Brisk morning river walks.

Tentative nods and smiles between strangers.

Tai Chi practiced in confined spaces.

Zooming, Skyping, texting, emailing, snailmailing.

First meetings with newborn granddaughter, all online.

Streamed concerts, podcasts, online meetings, and classes.

Dusting off the jigsaw puzzles.

'Binge bundle' of Aus fiction, home delivered courtesy Yarra Libraries.

Diarising my earring collection – 42 pairs last six weeks!

Takeaway coffees, curries, toasties, in support of local businesses.

Can you get tennis elbow from excessive button pushing?

Should I trust public transport?

When will it all end?

Tina Hocking



Lockdown

...living on my own it has been quite lonely at times

The corona virus lockdown and its aftermath has been both good and bad.

I have quite enjoyed doing Pilates and U3A Italian via Zoom. Seeing friends online was almost like seeing them in real life. With less rushing around generally, I drive less and spend much less money.

However, as a widow, living on my own it has been quite lonely at times. My dog, Fudge, has kept me sane. She gets me out walking, but the lockdown has affected her too. Not seeing her usual dog friends, she has become more protective of me, barking more at people in the park.

The arrival of my first grandchild in April was a difficult time for my daughter, with no playgroup for support and no regular visits to the Infant Welfare Centre. I wasn't able to see them at first but thank goodness for FaceTime.

I am lucky to have friends nearby which has really helped; however, I am missing everyone from the Living Longer gym program in Collingwood.

Finally, one positive outcome has been that people are more friendly, smiling at strangers, and children have written chalk messages on the foot path such as 'Hello everyone, have a good day'.

Katriona Fahey

Finding my way to U3A

I joined U3A Yarra City at the beginning of 2020, hoping for, and finding, a sense of community. Returning to Melbourne after a 40 year absence left me seeking a sense of belonging. It's been harder than I thought it would be, but rewarding. How did I get here?

Without really planning it, I have had a life of great adventure, leading camel rides in the Thar Desert and tours to China as it re-opened to the west in my 20s, then more recently living in Samoa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Ethiopia alongside my civil engineer husband, John. With him, I've also had the chance to look very closely at Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

My first step towards U3A was a frustrating experience with Alliance Française: needing to drive to St Kilda for expensive classes with people who were never the same at each class changeover. I wanted to keep my brain active and the teachers were great, but it became too much trouble.

My second step towards U3A was browsing the City of Yarra website.

I grew up on the northeast of Melbourne and couldn't find my bearings when I moved to Abbotsford. The municipal website gave me lots of information and I started with the Richmond Community Learning Centre. While I now volunteer at Burnley craft classes, there was still a gap. I really wanted to go back to language learning.

Nearly there! I decided that the priority had to be community, so U3A was it. Getting to classes on the tram or on foot really appealed. I enrolled in Spanish, walking (but broke my ankle) and gallery visits. The warm welcome in Spanish classes was lovely, and I feel optimistic that other classes, and maybe friendships, will come.

Anne Thorpe



Spanish flu pandemic 1919

IN THE SUBURBS.
Collingwood.—It was reported to Collingwood town hall authorities yesterday that 21 fresh cases of influenza had developed, the majority being of a mild type. The Military department has consented to the drill hall in Marine-parade, Abbotsford, being made use of for the accommodation of patients whenever necessary, and permission of the Education department has been granted for Victoria Park State school to be used for a similar purpose.

CONVENT ATTACKED
Mr W. J. S. Graham, sanitary inspector, has reported to the Collingwood Council that influenza has broken out at the Convent, Clark street, Abbotsford. The doctor in attendance at the convent reported that the outbreak was not of a severe form.
During the past fortnight there have been 226 cases reported in the district, or 22 more than in the previous two weeks.

The Age 31 Jan 1919 and the Herald 9 Aug 1919

Janet Taylor

Claire and Clare in Isolation

Despair envelops
What to do

Face

Accept

Float

Let time pass

Sit n meditate
n face

Begin

to accept
Try

to float

Then

Let time pass

Thanks Clare Bowditch*
And Claire Weekes**

For four steps

Face

Accept

Float

Let time pass

**Your Own Kind of Girl*

*** The Woman who Cracked the Anxiety Code: Claire Weekes (Judith Hoare)*

Nola Frawley



After 'The Big Sleep'

We ride in church-like silence
 Follow directives with exactitude
 - at 1.5 apart in tidy groups of 10
 Soak up the autumnal colour wheel
 Drink in the gentlest light and clearest blue
 above
 And watch the suspended leaves dislodging
 - floating -
 To add to the fleshy carpet in the undergrowth
 - earth-scented, elemental;
 Necessity's rhythmic cycle is at work
 Unstoppable, we know it all too well:
 The shutting down, the long deep slumber
 That offers solace of a kind and no escape.

And then:

A sudden gust of riders out of nowhere
 Full-bodied jet-black curls and golden strands
 Flaunting their sunlit smiles, their pounding
 sinewy chests
 - full of life's promise and beginnings
 They gift us momentary glimpses of our former
 selves
 Our halcyon days - only a distant echo now and
 fading
 Raising a leafy whirlwind in their wake
 Blind to our longing, melancholy gaze.

At coffee break, under majestic oaks
 We listen to the murmur of the river's flow
 And, like castaways
 We shun the material comforts of impetuous
 youth
 Forget all shackling pettiness, small-
 mindedness, the daily grind

And speak of the higher things that really
 matter:

The quirky growth spurts of a grandchild
The joy of well-tended gardens in full bloom
The sad infirmity or passing of a loved one, and
The world lost in a maze, without the ball of
string to find its way;
 truths that connect and bind;
 shared gestures that sustain.

One of our group stands up, donning an elder's
 mantle
 And using his charismatic lilt and detailed
 knowledge of the site
 He conjures an alien world of myths and dreams
 the oaks are now the noble sylvan ironbarks
 with sacred and ceremonial grounds beneath
 our feet
 And throws at us dates and numbers, names
 and dark-stained incidents
 That draw raw shame from somewhere deep
 inside.

Satiated and homeward bound
 Feeling lucky and grateful to be part of Fridays'
 meet
 We nurse the secret wish to pay due deference,
 give thanks
 To the man who wooed the '*thought-turned-*
vision'
 And implemented it
 With no reward or fee or self-aggrandisement
 Forever fixed and cast in stone:
 A timeless monument
 At Yarra U3A.

Chris Papachristos (Nature lover and passionate
 OYBer)

Tutor profile

Susannah chats with Criminal Law tutor Don Just.

Why were you attracted to U3A Yarra City?

I joined about 8 years ago.

Passive pastimes are fine, but I think the greater joys are real social contact and learning in groups. In retirement, these do not happen enough unless you go out to find them. This to me is the point of U3A Yarra City.

Tell us about your role as tutor and participant?

I have been tutoring criminal law short courses since 2015 at U3A Yarra City and U3A Melbourne City.

Amongst my valuable Yarra City participations have been Social Issues, English Literature, Gallery Visits and Philosophy.

What did you do before retirement?

I worked from 1973 as a barrister, mainly criminal law prosecution and defence. For a decade I had a government barrister position. I taught law for a little while as a senior tutor at Monash University.



Do you have other pastimes, hobbies etc?

Yes, plenty. To list some: novels, films, gym, CAE classes French and Yoga, attending performing arts and AFL, genealogy, visiting especially France and England.

How have you managed COVID-19 isolation?

Longing for it to end. The emergency laws have been easier to cope with in retirement though I am alarmed at the harm they are causing to others. Long local walks have been nice. Learning to Zoom I suppose has been worthwhile.

Could you tell us more about yourself?

I love the City of Yarra area. I have lived in Collingwood for 45 years. Before that, my entire education was nearby. I feel old connection. My maternal grandfather was brought up in Mollison Street, Abbotsford with ancestry around there beginning in 1858.

The Just family once was Geelong Swiss. Enough of that lingered for my Dad to embed my attachment to the Geelong Football Club, even though his home was Kew and North Balwyn.

Interview by Susannah Dax

We used the time to test our knowledge...

During COVID-19 shutdown...

The Tuesday walkers pledged to take solitary or duo-teamed walks, at the urging of our leader, Peter Moore. Afterwards the group gathered for a weekly catch-up on Zoom. We used the time to test our knowledge – subjects included Lynell's historic photos of local businesses, Mary's foundation stones and municipal plaques, and Gwyneth's heights of buildings, populations of states and other numerical matters. A recent offering from Cate surprised us with fascinating facts about the frogs of Merri Creek. The Common Eastern froglet is a widespread inhabitant, apparently.



Viv Blanksby

Photo gallery



Collingwood Library repairs underway



The Yarra on a foggy morning



OYB riders social distancing



Empty streets and waterways



Viewing the Aboriginal ceremonies site & tree



400 year old corroboree red gum

Diary dates

2020

26 Jun: Semester 2 enrolments open
 27 Oct: Annual General Meeting
 2 Nov: 2021 Membership opens
 20 Nov: Nov Newsletter submissions due
 4 Dec: 2021 Course enrolments open
 To be advised: Christmas quiz

Semester Dates 2020

27 Jun - 12 Jul: School holidays
 13 Jul - 18 Sep: Term 3
 19 Sep - 4 Oct: School holidays
 5 Oct - 18 Dec: Term 4



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: Position vacant
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://onverbike-u3a.org.au>

News & Events Bulletin: Latest news communication via email

Newsletter: Published March, June 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.

U3A Yarra City Reg: AC047182K