



## NEWSLETTER – TERM 1, 2022

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### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello again Everyone

Welcome to our Term One 2022 and a fabulous, imaginative and inspiring program of physical and mental activities, classes, skill development and social activities.

As I write this in week 2 of our term, I know that many of you have already participated in quite a number of face-to-face sessions. I imagine you have noticed the greeters/monitors taking the time to check your forms and look at the vaccination certificates. We are so fortunate to have volunteers take on these roles because these classes could not operate without this type of assistance.



*Susie White*

I also know that some of you are really happy that we are still providing quite a number of sessions on zoom. About two years ago, most of us had never even heard of this electronic option! We are so lucky in this respect and will continue making zoom sessions available, catering particularly for those who are unable to get out and about.

A key frustration of zoom sessions is the limited possibility of socialisation. We know that conversations and human contacts are very important for our health. The City of Boroondara is also very concerned that people, especially in the age group of U3A, have opportunities to meet each other and connect. For this reason they have provided some funding for Seniors Groups to develop activities which include a range of other groups. Hence, U3A Deepdene is joining with the Eastern Senior Chinese Association and the Kew Home of Chinese to conduct a festival at Balwyn Park entitled **Seniors Sharing Cultures**. **This is planned for Tuesday 24 May from 10.00 am – 3.00 pm**. Please keep the date free to enable you to participate in a really varied and enjoyable festival, and contact me if you would like to join some planning sessions (and meet even more Boroondara residents) for this event.

So many of you ask me to thank Jenny and Tral Cash for all the planning and administrative work they undertake to enable U3A Deepdene to operate as a well-oiled machine. I must also thank Carole Williams, Lesley Macleod and their team for planning and conducting a really **Joyous January** program. The name says it all!!

Most of you know too that Joan Taylor has program oversight. She does a brilliant job and pleasingly for those of us who work with Joan, she is encouraging a number of members to undertake new roles in our program. If anyone has ideas and would like to offer some assistance, this will be happily accepted.

We have some morning and afternoon teas for new members coming up shortly. Please come along if you joined us in 2020, 2021 or this year. We missed making proper contact with you all at the time.

There is much more to write about, but only so much space available. Please keep in touch and join those programs which interest you. Hopefully participant numbers in various rooms will not have to be limited for too much longer!

Best wishes for a happy Term One.

*Susie White*

## CATCHING UP WITH FRIENDS

### END-OF-YEAR LUNCH FOR TUTORS



### THE CHINESE 8 BROCADES CLASS ENJOYED LUNCH AT JADE RESTAURANT



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Term 2            Monday 2 May to Friday 24 June
- Term 3            Monday 18 July to Friday 9 September
- Term 4            Monday 3 October to Friday 2 December



During March there will be three special morning teas for new members. Covid restrictions during the past two years meant that new members' welcome events have had to be cancelled. Members who joined us between 2020 and now will receive an invitation by email, and we, the committee, look forward very much to meeting you face to face.

Annual General Meeting - 4 May at BPC or via zoom; venue decision will be made closer to the date.

# JOYOUS JANUARY

## HOLIDAY PROGRAM 2022

In our trip around Joyous January we were fortunate enough to travel from Roman ruins to Red Riding Hood, from Splott to Shrewsbury ... read on.

Bombs, dormice, convicts, terracotta warriors, elephants, a wolf, Shirley Bassey and Bruno the charming Dordogne Chief of Police - we had the lot! Some sessions were on Zoom and others in person at Balwyn Park. Yoga, walks, lunches, picnics, a barbecue, book lovers, and online bridge completed the program. A few city trips and activities were amended or cancelled; however the trip to the Athenaeum did take place.

The first face to face session was noticeable for the happy, smiling faces which could be seen despite the masks. Off we went on an amazing trip to Sri Lanka dodging bombs and dodgy tummies (all OK). Lesley MacLeod really gave us the feel of a hot, fascinating country, with the odd elephant taking up space on the (unmade) roads. Up into the cooler hill country, monkeys, birds, water buffalo, deer and other local animals were in evidence. Tips: buy some paper made from elephant dung (no smell); and wear sockettes, so that when you take your shoes off to go into a temple you still have some grip when walking. A must see is the magnificent 14th century Buddhist temple at Lankathilaka near Kandy.



**Gerald Hughes**

Gerald Hughes entertained us on Zoom while wearing a white toga and a gold laurel wreath, which he swapped at the end of his talk for a Roman helmet. He and Kathy lived near Chester in England before being transported to Australia. The Poulter settlement was used by the Romans to supply fresh farm produce to the garrison in Chester, conveyed by floating the supplies down the river. It was far larger than any other Roman settlement in England and played a number of highly important strategic roles. Gerald provided us with a fascinating talk full of facts, photos and diagrams.

Terry O'Callaghan took us back to China along the Yangtze and the Great Wall, which was a tempter to his part 2 in Friday Travel.



**Terry O'Callaghan**

As ever, our two brilliant story tellers entertained us –

- Jone Gaillard regaled us with 'The Scary World of Fairy Tales': in the early tales the women, if not pretty, were old and nasty and the saviour was always male! Hans Christian Andersen brought in religion and Walt Disney the kiss.
- Gillian Yung brought us two more stories the 'history books don't tell'. First, Mary Ward was the youngest female convict ever sent to Australia. She was 11 years old when sentenced, arriving in 1841. Her legacy - a new women's prison named in her honour in Sydney. One of her descendants is Kevin Rudd. The second story: convict Francis H. Greenway was the first Government architect in early NSW. He designed over 82 buildings in NSW only to die unpopular and in poverty. His crime was forgery which he committed in Bristol, and he is the only forger to be depicted on an Australian bank note - the \$10 note from 1966-1993. (Got one? Keep it.)



**Left: Gillian Yung; right: Scary fairy tales;  
below: \$10 note**





**Shopska salad**

Chris Hayward travelled to Bulgaria which produces half of the world’s roses, and he spoke about the profound changes to the country and its population since WW2. Shopska salad is popular - tomato, cucumber, onion etc topped with a thick layer of grated or cubed Serene, a variety of feta made only in Bulgaria. Wine is cheap but not recommended; what was recommended was the walk in the Rila Mountains, which Chris said was one of the best he has ever done. Quite some recommendation.

My trip took us from Cardiff to Shrewsbury following the footsteps of my grandfather who undertook his articles in Llandaff Cathedral, and looked at the changes to Cardiff since Shirley Bassey was born there in the suburb of Splott and brought up in Tiger Bay. Other famous residents included Ivor Novello and Roald Dahl whose affluent parents went to Cardiff from Norway and stayed. The Norwegian Church is still in Cardiff.

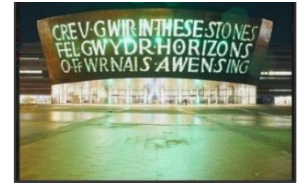


**Norwegian Church**

Many thanks to the presenters, and everyone who assisted in so many ways to make this 2022 program great fun for our members. Planning began in November; Lesley MacLeod, Jenny Cash, Ilza Dulmanis and I undertook a great deal of technical work from then on. This behind-the-scenes work is what made the program run so smoothly, so thanks to them and everyone else involved.

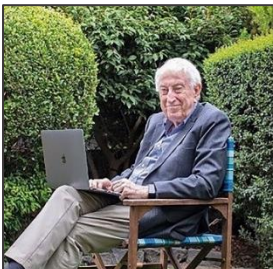
**Carole Williams**

**Co-ordinator Joyous January program**



**Wales Millenium Centre**

## PETER DOHERTY - AN INSIDER'S PLAGUE YEAR



**Prof Peter Doherty**

What a privilege it was to have Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty speak to us at the end of November. His latest book *An Insider's Plague Year* had just been published and he generously spoke to nearly 200 of us well beyond the usual time limit.

He took us through his training, his experience in the USA and the establishment of the Doherty Institute in Melbourne in 2014 as a world class centre for infection and immunity, combining research with clinical and diagnostic information into the one institute.

Professor Doherty is 81 and when Covid19 emerged, he was retired. He could see however, that the Doherty Institute staff were under tremendous pressure, so he took on the role of liaising with them and then communicating the scientific evidence and progress with the community. He wrote a weekly newspaper column (up to 81 articles to date) and did TV and radio interviews.

While Melbourne is the leading Australian city in biomedical research, he emphasised the collegial culture elsewhere in Australia and worldwide, and what a fundamental difference this has made in a fast and effective response to the pandemic.

He believes the most likely source of the virus was from a live wild animal market in Wuhan. He also discussed resistance to the vaccine both here and in other countries, possible side effects, long covid, his hope for two drugs coming through to treat those with the disease, and how the infection attacks the body. He thought the Australian governments had done a good job – especially the Federal decision in closing our international borders early.

Overall, he was optimistic for the next few years with science providing the best evidence-based advice along with its ability to adjust vaccines and discover new drugs for treatment.

He sees a high vaccination rate in the population as the answer to the pandemic and emphasised that in the coming months we should all continue to be careful; and the importance of wearing a mask and getting a booster shot as soon as possible to counter the waning efficacy of the first two shots.

It was a comprehensive session presented with impressive energy and authority.

**Robbie Kentley**

## CATHERINE CROCK - THE GATHERING OF KINDNESS

On 25 November, Professor Catherine Crock AM addressed over 70 members on News and Views about transforming healthcare through kindness. Being a physician at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne since 1998, as well as a mother, she took notice of what families were saying about the stresses they experienced, and acted to improve procedures. She introduced calming music into the hospital environment, composed by Australian composers for the Hush Foundation; offered anaesthesia during painful procedures as well as reduced waiting time to reduce anxiety levels which had previously proven detrimental to successful outcomes.



*Prof Catherine Crock*

In 2009, afforded by a Churchill Fellowship, she visited the USA, UK and Ireland where she realised the need to improve staff culture to ultimately improve health care. She again turned to the Arts, this time to communicate the targeted messages. She engaged Alan Hopgood to write plays based on true stories, to reflect the need and ways to improve staff culture. There have been three plays on tour since 2015 with more than 200 performances for staff and patients. One outcome is that, in some hospitals, overnight phone calls from junior doctors to senior doctors are now recorded to ensure respectful communication. Junior doctors now feel more comfortable about asking for advice at perhaps inconvenient times so they can maintain an excellent service.

Hush Foundation runs Gathering of Kindness Conferences which focus on 'What is a Kind Health System?' to build a safe, supportive, and cooperative workplace. Presently 40,000 people from NSW, NT, WA and multiple hospitals in Victoria check into on-line events with short, sharp tips and videos to improve relationships and health systems.

Nineteen music albums under the label Hush have been recorded and used as calming background music in care environments since 2000. The latest Hush album, 'Nightlight', is being launched in March 2022. More than 100 Australian composers have contributed to the Hush music collection. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra Collective are amongst those who regularly provide the musicians. The current album involved six female singer/musicians, who are mothers themselves, and who talked to hospital families and based their lyrics on lived experiences. The music is classical, modern classical, and gentle jazz, always uplifting with a sense of optimism and hope. Hush music is now used also in schools and other stressful environments (like dental surgeries) where a calming influence will aid successful outcomes. Albums are available from [www.hush.org.au/hush-catalogue](http://www.hush.org.au/hush-catalogue). Proceeds support future Hush music and arts projects which help transform healthcare experiences for patients and staff. Our Governor, Hon Linda Dessau AC, is the patron of the Hush Foundation.

We were indeed inspired and encouraged by hearing about the positive changes which have occurred since Professor Catherine Crock stepped out of her comfort zone, and against criticism and opposition, initiated more family friendly and less stressful systems for her young cancer patients and their families. She is now proceeding to transform healthcare through kindness where parents are listened to, and all staff are respected and not afraid to speak up if uncertain.

More information about Professor Crock's work can be accessed at [www.gatheringofkindness.org](http://www.gatheringofkindness.org) and [www.hush.org.au](http://www.hush.org.au).

Thank you to Joan Taylor for organizing this very inspiring talk.

*Del Groves*

**The views expressed by presenters in all our classes are their own views and not the official views of U3A Deependene. Our aim is to encourage the exploration of ideas, in a relatively free environment.**

## MEGAN DAVIS - THE ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART



**Prof Megan Davis**

Late last year, in a Zoom session attended by over 200 participants, we were very privileged to be able to hear from Professor Megan Davis, a constitutional lawyer with a long involvement in the campaign for Indigenous rights. It was Professor Davis who designed the ground-breaking dialogue process that led to the Uluru Convention on 26 May 2017, and it was she who read the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* to the Convention and then to the Australian public for the first time. She gave us her first-hand, expert insight into the development and significance of this historic document.

Professor Davis highlighted that the Uluru Statement provides the nation with an opportunity to finally achieve constitutional reform through a referendum to recognise First Nations peoples and give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a direct say in decisions made by Government that affect their lives. Such empowerment, she emphasised, is crucial to improving outcomes for the lives of Indigenous Australians and promoting national identity and culture.

Professor Davis outlined the long struggle for self-determination by First Nations peoples since the 1800s. They never ceded sovereignty. Unlike the cases of Canada, New Zealand and the United States, where the British Government negotiated treaties with Indigenous peoples, no treaty was negotiated in Australia. When the Federal Constitution was created, it was assumed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were a dying race and were treated as if they did not exist. Historically, assimilationist and paternalistic Government policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have had a devastating effect. Professor Davis stressed that the legacy of colonial dispossession, referred to in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* as ‘the torment of our powerlessness’, has resulted in the profound gap of continuing disadvantage shown in the much lower levels of life-expectancy, education, employment, housing and the higher incarceration rates of Indigenous Australians.

Professor Davis highlighted the importance of the Constitution as the rule book for Australia’s political and legal system, and the fact that First Nations people were excluded from it and therefore had no citizenship rights. It took until the 1967 referendum for Indigenous people to be counted in the census, and for laws to be allowed to be made for them (although there is no guarantee that such laws could not be discriminatory or detrimental as the Howard Government’s Wik amendments and Northern Territory Intervention legislation highlighted: the passing of both acts requiring suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act).

The comprehensive regional dialogue process that culminated in the Uluru Declaration was unique. It was led by Indigenous people, not politicians or politically appointed Indigenous representatives; proposals were not presented for consultation but developed through grassroots deliberations. 1200 delegates with cultural authority representing 60,000 people met in thirteen regional centres across the country. The failures of past attempts to achieve reform and reconciliation helped shape the pathway forward. Previous proposals had involved replacing racist clauses in the Constitution and, as in the failed 1999 Republic Referendum, inserting a preamble in the Constitution acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first peoples of Australia - but these were rejected as symbolic and inadequate. Delegates wanted substantive change that would address their voicelessness and advance self-determination. Discussions were comprehensive, differences aired and ultimately 250 delegates from Indigenous communities across Australia came to Uluru to create the largest ever consensus of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on a proposal for substantive recognition.

The *Uluru Statement from the Heart* calls for substantive change with the establishment of a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata commission to decide on processes for implementing treaty and truth-telling. Establishing the Voice is the priority.

‘We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a *rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country’.

The Voice to Parliament would not be a third chamber of Parliament as some critics have falsely asserted. It would only have an advisory role without any legislative power, but importantly, because of its constitutional status, Governments would have to justify any ignoring of its advice. The creation of the Voice would be put to referendum

and, once passed, its composition and function would be determined by Parliament, as was the case with the formation of the High Court after that institution was first enshrined in the Constitution.

Professor Davis said that it is vital that First Nations be given a seat at the table when decisions are made affecting their lives. The call for a Voice to Parliament is a relatively modest demand. First Nations people make up only three per cent of the population and the Voice to Parliament provides a way to accommodate their decision-making within the State. Bureaucrats and politicians are often out of touch with situations in remote territories and laws will be of better quality when the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are considered. Prof Davis stressed the need for the Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution so that it can never be abolished by any future Government, as happened in the case of ATSIC.

Significantly, the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* is addressed to the Australian people not the Government.

There is bi-partisan commitment to holding a referendum on constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples and polling shows overwhelming public support for it.

In 2021, the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize. The judges saw it as a 'clear and comprehensive agenda for healing and peace within our nation'.

For those wishing to learn more, Professor Davis' book *Everything you need to know about the Uluru Statement from the Heart*, which she co-wrote with Professor George Williams, is essential reading.

**David Crawford**

## KIM RUBENSTEIN - THE VETTING OF WISDOM

### JOAN MONTGOMERY AND THE FIGHT FOR PLC

It was wonderful to see the large Zoom audience comprising past students, teachers and parents together with many others interested to hear the story of the well-known PLC luminary, Joan Montgomery, as told by Professor Kim Rubenstein in her recently published biography, *The Vetting of Wisdom: Joan Montgomery and the fight for PLC*.

Terri Mackenzie introduced Kim to the audience, expanding on her extensive accomplishments including: School Captain of PLC (1982), B Arts/Law (Hons) University of Melbourne, LLM Harvard, followed by professorships at the University of Melbourne, ANU and now at the University of Canberra. Kim's interests centre around citizenship law, public policy, the Constitution and gender issues.



**Prof Kim Rubenstein**

Kim introduced us first to her book's cover, where a lovely portrait of Joan Montgomery greets the reader. Joan's biography was written over a period of 28 years and it was wonderful to learn that she was in the audience listening, now aged 96.

Kim spoke of her wonderful years at PLC, the enlightened forward-looking curriculum established under Miss Montgomery that embraced diversity and respect for other religions. She mentioned her acceptance as a Jewish student, and of how Joan procured a Jewish bible to present to her on graduation from the school, a bible she cherishes and has sworn on in subsequent legal ceremonies.

When Kim was in the US in 1992, she visited the American History Museum where she saw an exhibition on the role of First Ladies, and in particular, Eleanor Roosevelt. It made her acutely aware of the scarcity of recorded stories about women (their lives being considered too ordinary!). From this, Kim was inspired to write a biography of a woman she greatly admired, her school principal, Joan Montgomery.

Initially commenting that her life was 'so ordinary', Joan went on to suggest that the power struggle over her position as Principal at PLC after the formation of the Uniting Church and the school's subsequent ownership passing to the Continuing Presbyterian Church was definitely the subject for a book.

Kim interviewed Joan very many times over the years. Joan also gave Kim all of her own documentation of events, plus her personal letters. Kim had complete freedom to write the PLC story as she saw it, and Joan only read drafts to fact check. In addition, Kim interviewed many people involved in the saga, including eminent members of the PLC Council at the time, such as Alex Chernov QC, later Governor of Victoria. After consideration of the evidence before her, Kim concluded that although there was a unified school behind their principal, Joan Montgomery, 'power over wisdom' prevailed.

After discussion of her book, Kim moved onto her most recent challenge ... her intention to run as an independent Senate candidate for the ACT in the next Federal election. She has established the 'Kim for Canberra' party and is working towards fund raising and publicity to achieve her next goal.

Many questions and comments followed, all in agreement that Joan Montgomery's intelligence and wit came through in what is a wonderful book, written about a very popular and extremely capable woman.

**Kay Bailey**

## EXCURSION TO TWO LOCAL PRIVATE GARDENS



What a delightful excursion we experienced in mid-November! 45 of us in two groups visited the fascinating gardens of two local families.

The first in Broadway, Camberwell, presented from the street mature trees of jacaranda, liquid amber and magnolia grandiflora; English-style cottage borders and colour theming enhanced the front garden.



The rear garden presented a number of discrete areas – a fishpond and fountain, a Japanese-styled garden and tiled spa with waterfall, a secluded 7-ringed labyrinth with brick paths and mondo grass divisions, plus a circular potager with radial paths. A large paved area with pergola shaded by an ornamental grape vine provided an inviting resting area for our U3A group to chat and have a 'cuppa'. Magnificent roses and flowering creepers plus numerous hanging baskets provided a wonderful ambience.

The second garden, opening off Church Street from Highfield Road, Canterbury, once again presented mature trees in the entrance area, plus a huge hedge isolating the house from the street view. Various features have been created in the garden for



visitors – many of the latter are invited groups of children whom we were told delight in the sensory structures such as pottery and steel insects and animals along the pathways. Areas for hiding, chasing and resting amongst the fragrant plants have also been provided. Our U3A groups delighted in the ambience as well as the photos and stories of the garden's creation.



All in all, our groups enjoyed a wonderful morning! Many thanks to our hosts – the Whites and Reids, and to our tour organisers – Suzanne Collings and Helen Page.

**Text: Leona Haintz, photos: Gregor Howie**

## GIDEON HAIGH - DOC EVATT

On Wednesday 10 November we were the recipients of a compelling presentation by the independent journalist and author Gideon Haigh.

He spoke about his book, *The Brilliant Boy. Doc Evatt and the Great Australian Dissent*. Doc Evatt was the Labor Opposition Leader in the 1950s, in the time of Menzies. In 1930 Evatt became the youngest ever High Court judge. He was seen as a humane and inspiring Australian.

Gideon Haigh traces one of Evatt's cases, in particular the case of the Chester family.

In a Sydney street in 1937 a 7 year-old boy drowned in an unfenced ditch that was filled after rain. The Chesters sued the Waverley Council for trauma. Evatt argued for the law to acknowledge the inner suffering caused by such an event, as it recognised physical injury. The mother, Golda, was traumatised by the drowning and never fully recovered. Evatt set out to change the way the law judges these situations. This is now a fundamental legal principle.



**Gideon Haigh**

It was a wonderful session and Gideon's extensive research and brilliant, humane storytelling ensure an engrossing read. Gideon was so generous with his time in answering our questions. A fascinating, inspiring presentation.

**Sandra Lansdell**

## LUENA (FORMERLY COLONGULAC)

We were privileged to listen to a fascinating talk on a book written by the owner and an historian about a local landmark 'Luena' at 11 Luena Road, North Balwyn. More than 30 members gathered on Monday 21 February to hear about this historic home erected in 1888, its various owners, and the way the land and building have been used over the past 180 years.



**Luena, formerly Colongulac**

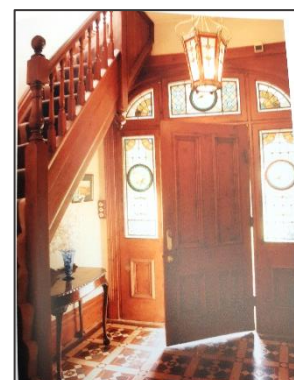
The book *Colongulac: Origins, Owners and Occupiers 1841 – 2021* (publisher SMB Wordsmith, 2021) by the owner Warwick Foster and Dr Stella Barber is a most readable history not only of that home, but of Victorian colonial society from its earliest days. Sumptuously illustrated, it traces the story of a Balwyn mansion which displays the layers of the diverse owners and their role in an ever-changing community. In

1906 the property, then called Colongulac, became a veterinary clinic. From 1936-1953 it was the Penquite Private Hospital and Nursing Home, then for about 20 years, the headquarters of the evangelical Oriental Missionary Society.

This volume is house history on a grand scale but does reflect a current public interest in the built landscape as a window to re-create the past. Meticulously researched, it will serve as a template for others wanting to bring any historic building to life.

Our local community is fortunate that Warwick Foster is prepared to preserve this asset and to share its history with us.

**Alan Ray**



**Entrance with lovely stained glass**



**Warwick Foster with his book**

## PHOTOGRAPHY 2021

Our U3A Photography Group managed to visit a few locations including Blue Lotus Gardens, the Tennis Centre and MCG, Black Rock Foreshore, Maling Road, Kew Junction, Heidi Gardens, Camberwell Junction precinct, Bundoora Farm, Tim Neville Arboretum, Ripponlea, Kew Cemetery, Federation Square, and my favourite location for the year - the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens. Lockdown didn't hold us back! We then focussed on our local area in search of gates, chimneys, stations, food, parks, water, and around our home in search of colourful items, creating still life images and many other 'around the home' topics. We have all improved our technical skills with our cameras and phones, but most of all we enjoyed good company, sharing a meal together at various locations.

Well done to all our photographers!

*Karin Watts*



*Chris Haycock - Cormorant, Tim Neville Arboretum*



*Joan Garnham - Doorway*



*Robin McNab - Ducklings*



*Keith Head - Tramlines at the Junction*



*Karin Watts - Silvereye, Cranbourne Gardens*



*Pete Ogier - Venetian Masquerade*



*Kay Axsentieff - A Reflection of Heidi*

## MICHAEL MCGIRR - IDEAS TO SAVE YOUR LIFE

*Michael McGirr is well known to many through his numerous articles and reviews in the national press and in particular for his five books, the most recent of which, Ideas to Save Your Life, was the subject of Michael's talk to U3A Deepdene. Michael now works with an international NGO, but for most of his career he taught Philosophy and Literature in secondary colleges – spending some time as the publisher of Eureka Street and fiction editor of Meanjin.*

Michael opened his talk on 17 November by pointing out the importance of philosophy in helping humanity from the earliest times, to find meaning in the world and his place in it. He argued that philosophy didn't originate with the Greeks but has been with humanity from the beginning, using the example of aboriginal culture and burial customs to illustrate this point. A strong theme through his talk was that we become more fully human through meaningful connection with others, not by a retreat into a self absorbed pursuit of 'well being'. He noted that shopping centres are finding that the fastest growing class of tenants are 'wellness' providers of various types. In essence, he believes we need to move from the quest for 'well being' to 'well finding' –



**Michael McGirr**

to grow through deeper connection with others and a renewed appreciation of and connection to the natural world. In his book *Ideas to Save Your Life*, Michael expands on this theme by surveying the ideas of around 27 philosophers through twenty short chapters. His book is informed by his long experience as an educator and as one called upon to undertake pastoral care duties with senior students. He talks in particular about the trauma of having three students attempt suicide during his time and the questions that he had to work through in the aftermath. 'Why are we here?' and 'Where can people facing these challenges find genuine community and healing?' These events deeply affected him and he tells us he has been thinking about these questions ever since that day, and his book is an attempt to engage with the fundamental issues raised by these events. In his presentation to U3A Deepdene, he focussed on the concept of Justice and chose four philosophers, three women and one man, to draw out the key issues.

We have probably all noticed that it is easier to meet and relate to strangers when out walking in the park if we have a dog. People are attracted to dogs since they seem to love us unconditionally and never say anything to hurt us – in fact some people prefer dogs to humans and see the dog as representing what we would like humans to be. This is all telling us something of profound significance about inter personal relations; an idea that is explored and developed by two philosophers, Emmanuel Levinas and Simone Weil. Levinas, a former POW in a German camp, had been a more traditional philosopher before the war. During his five years in the camp he saw how the prisoners became dehumanised and indifferent – yet he noticed that they seemed to be reinvigorated by the attention of a dog that seemed to wander around the camp. Seeing that prisoners could come to feel more human by being welcomed by a dog led Levinas, after the war, to develop his theory of 'Radical Hospitality' where one's whole being is enlivened by the stranger and our desire to relate to them. He argues that we leave ourselves behind so that we can find a more authentic self – a meaningful identity in the context of relationship. Simone Weil follows on from this, arguing we must seek stillness so we can pay attention to the world and not be only concerned with ourselves. She went on to develop the idea of 'decreation' – the concept of putting aside one's personal needs to help others or as she puts it – participate in the creation of the world by decreating ourselves. She saw education as vital in developing the faculty of attention, enabling people to suspend their thought so that their minds are open to broader perspectives. Michael also sees education playing a key role in societal advancement. There is a great need to train young people to think and see past the slogans and cliches so often masquerading as considered viewpoints and information. He observes that many students with 'issues' often find their philosophy classes enjoyable and benefit from the expansion of their understanding of the deeper issues of human existence.

A key question Michael posed was – 'What does it mean to be human?' We then need to ask what makes humans different and how do we relate to non-human species and the natural world in general? Can we say there are circumstances where the life of an animal is of equal value to a human? This is a complex question since animals share many features with humans and many animals have high levels of cognition – sometimes superior to humans

as in the case of dolphins. To explore this issue, Michael introduces Mary Midgley, a philosopher especially interested in the area of human identity, who views humans as having a kinship relationship with non-human animals. She argues that both share consciousness and self-consciousness. A friend of the famous zoologist Jane Goodall, Midgley believes that in an era of Artificial Intelligence and increasing social determinism, mankind is in danger of being reduced to a community of robots, and there is a pressing need to engage with the natural world to re-invigorate human identity. She rejected Plato's idea that we are the centre of the world and nature is there only for us to use. These are challenging concepts and members were keen to discuss these ideas with Michael in question time.

Michael sees philosophy as playing a vital role in the modern world in conveying a sense of meaning and order, a role it once shared with religion, which has declined in influence in recent times. The presentation led to a lively discussion and the members appreciated the opportunity to explore the issues Michael raised and consider what a more peaceful and cohesive society might look like.

**Peter Conlon**

## TUTORS OF ITALIAN

In 2021 our wonderful, dedicated tutor of Italian, Neville Heffernan, retired. Fortunately, one of our students had a contact and we were lucky to have Giada Guintoli volunteer to tutor our grammar class. She is very talented in languages as she speaks Slovenian, Spanish and English as well as Italian Pura.



**Giada Guintoli**

This was a very generous commitment from a student who came to Australia on a scholarship to study and prepare a thesis. Then of course COVID came along, and Giada was stuck in Melbourne. It was not all bad for her as she managed to meet an Australian man; however it has made it harder for her to leave.

Having finished her thesis, she will later return to her Italian home in Gorizia on the Slovenian border. Whether she returns to Melbourne remains an unknown but we would welcome her back – even if she doesn't teach us Italian.



**Maria Bond**

Again fortune has shone on our class. As you may be aware two of our students are residents of Los Angeles. Maria Bond has been studying Italian for some time. She is an experienced teacher and has very kindly offered to take the class for 2022.

For first term Maria and Mike Bond are in Melbourne but will return to Los Angeles for second term. Maria, then, will be teaching us from Los Angeles! Such a wonderful commitment from her. And again, we can marvel at the technology and expertise that allows us to conduct a class this way.

Look out for Maria and Mike in the classes as they are taking advantage of being in Melbourne and attending the U3A Deepdene classes live.

**Lois Heycox**



**Standing: left to right**

**Mike Bond, Virginia McKittrick, Giada Giuntoli, Tony McKittrick, Alan Hamilton, Edith Ma, Sue Foley, Jo Hutton.**

**Sitting: Lois Heycox, Helen Hayes.**

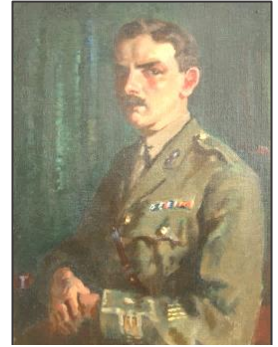
## SOME HISTORICAL SLEUTHING BY DAVID HAY

On 14 February David Hay gave an interesting talk on Zoom, entitled 'Some Historical Sleuthing'. He had purchased an artwork in a Kew auction house in 2014, a purchase which intrigued him so much that it took him on a fascinating research journey. This new acquisition was a portrait of a soldier in uniform, looking very serious and determined.

David began to question -

Who was the soldier depicted in the painting? What was his story? Where and how were the painter and soldier able to get together? How did the painting come to be at an auction house in Kew?

The first clue David had was on the painting itself: it was signed by the artist, F E Hodge. David discovered that Francis Edwin Hodge was a British painter, who was an accredited war artist during both WWI and WW2. Hodge was renowned for also having painted other portraits, among them King George VI - once in 1938 in his Royal Navy regalia, and again in 1944 in his Air Force uniform.



**The portrait of  
Major H W F B Farrer**

On purchase, David had turned to the back of the painting where he saw a news article from the *London Times* taped there. From the article he learned that the subject portrayed was a British soldier named Major H W F B Farrer. This information took David on a sleuthing journey, set against the historical background of the World Wars. Where was Farrer from, and where and how did Hodge and Farrer get together for the painting?

Following clues, David travelled to Rathfarnham Castle in Dublin, where Major Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne Farrer was born. His mother, Lady Georgiana Beatrice Blackburne, owned that castle from 1852 until 1912.

Later, the Farrers moved to Bridport in England where Henry and his two brothers grew up in a well-educated and sporty family. His father, Henry Richard William Farrer, became Canon at St Margaret's church in Bridport where he was known for his fire and brimstone sermons.

Young Henry joined the army where he became highly respected for his courage on the battlefields in France. He earned many awards, including the Military Cross, which was pinned on him by King George V. Later, 2 bars were added to his MC, with citations for heroism 'for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty ...' On 30 October 1918 he was killed by a shell which also killed two of his soldier mates. The record of him in the form of a painting was created only one month before his death. He was just 24 years old.

David established that Hodge had gone to France and was close to where Farrer had been stationed on a French battlefield. It seemed that they stayed in the same chateau at that time, giving Hodge a chance to paint the portrait.

Coming near the end of his research, David wanted to meet any of Major Henry's living relatives. By chance, he emailed the vicarage at the church in Bridport. Within fifteen minutes the Vicar, Andrew Evans, was on the phone to David in Melbourne and assisted in putting him in contact with Major Henry's great-niece and great-nephew. (Coincidentally, the date that David had acquired the painting in Melbourne was the date that Vicar Evans at St Margaret's in Bridport preached the same sermon that had also been preached by Canon Farrer one hundred years earlier on the eve of World War I.)

Finally, David told us that he had travelled back to Bridport to meet with the relatives and to gift them the portrait of their great-uncle. A beautiful photo of this day is a great memorial.

It was very clear that David was totally engrossed in the research of a very intriguing story.

Now, there is one question left: how did the portrait get to the Kew auction house? What David does know is that the painting was part of an art collection. For the rest, we'll have to wait for another instalment!

PS – David and his wife Leigh have each written a book: David – *The King's Reward, The Life of H.W.F.B. Farrer*; and Leigh – *Home before the leaves fall*.

**Julia Elcock**

**Many thanks to all contributors to this Newsletter: writers, photographers, proof readers and sponsors.  
Your support is greatly appreciated.**

## BERNARD MUIR - THE BOOK OF KELLS

In Term 4 we were treated to an interesting talk given by Professor Bernard Muir who specializes in medieval manuscripts. The Book of Kells is a manuscript of Jerome's Latin translation of the four Gospels. This magnificent book probably dates from the end of the eighth century and was not made for daily use or study. It was a sacred work of art produced as a dazzling decoration presumably to appear at the altar for very special occasions.

Professor Muir told us about the history of the Book of Kells and showed us how to interpret the very intricate patterns that decorate its illuminated pages. The specialists in this field of study use magnifying glasses to better see the minute details. I wish that I had been lucky enough to have listened to Professor Muir's talk before I first saw it in 2015 in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. I would have been able to look more closely at the pages on display and known more about what to look for.

Very little is known about where the Book of Kells was made and who was responsible for the magnificent artwork. Many academics have made it their life's work to study the manuscript and Professor Muir mentioned the comparisons that have been made with two of the Book of Kells predecessors – the Book of Durrow and the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Professor Muir told us that there were many influences on the artwork in the Book of Kells and these can be seen when closely studying the book. The Pictish influence is seen in the elongated configurations. The depiction of intertwined people and creatures comes from the Middle East. There are many images of animals in the manuscript and these are considered to be Germanic in origin. The use of geometric designs is believed to have come from the Greeks and the Islamic peoples who, having rediscovered the learnings of the ancient Greeks, saved them for future generations.

We were shown photos of some of the patterns used on the treasures found at Sutton Hoo. They are very similar to the decorative elements used in the Book of Kells. The intricate designs were made by a combination of free hand and the use of tools like compasses and rulers.

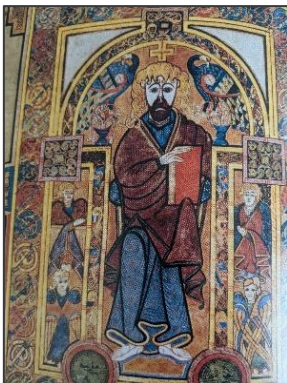
When the Book of Durrow is compared to the Book of Kells, the difference in the brightness of the colour is quite pronounced. The Book of Durrow was created using pigments made from lead, copper and iron, whereas some of the pigments used in the Book of Kells came from lapis lazuli and purple shellfish.

Professor Muir showed us examples where the manuscript had been written on at a later date in an attempt to translate the very decorative script. Greek delta was sometimes used for Latin 'D', and elsewhere omega is used for Latin 'O'. We were told that the Irish liked to use Greek letters occasionally to show that they were learned.

The text in manuscripts prior to the Book of Kells flowed together in Latin without punctuation. The people who created the Book of Kells introduced punctuation by using dots between words. They also used a series of red crosses and brackets to signify passages that were to be deleted.

Professor Muir's talk has caused me to look at the Book of Kells with new eyes and I hope to be able to see it again in person sometime soon.

**Paula Grundy**



*From the Book of Kells, left to right:  
Portrait of Christ; example of ornamental text; portrait of the Virgin and Child*

## ALISON INGLIS - THE HAMILTON ART GALLERY

The Hamilton Gallery, three and a half hours west of Melbourne, recently celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Alison Inglis, until recently Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Melbourne, provided an engaging presentation about the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition and associated events.

Alison's involvement with the gallery began as a larger research project on Australian regional galleries. Viewing the Hamilton Gallery collection and realising its breadth she applied for funding to undertake research to establish the nature of the collection. When this funding was not approved she and eight colleagues – art historians, scholars and curators from around Australia – decided that the project was of such importance that they would work as a team during lockdown to establish the credentials of the collection as part of the HG:60 Exhibition.



The Hamilton Gallery had its foundations from the bequest of local pastoralists, Herbert and May Shaw. Keen collectors, they donated 780 items, largely Asian art, to form the gallery. Today the collection has over 9,000 objects in four key areas: European Art, Decorative Arts, Australian Art and Asian Art. The works include paintings, works on paper, ceramics, sculptures, glass and porcelain. The gallery is best known for its decorative arts and works on paper.

Alison took us on a virtual tour of the ground and first floor galleries that make up the exhibition HG:60. We were fortunate to have a very personal tour not only of the exhibits themselves but also an opportunity to understand how and why they were displayed.

As one of the curators, Alison provided fascinating insights as to how the collections were arranged. She noted the importance of subject matter themes and material themes and how they are interlinked. She commented on the importance of wall colour and the importance of sightlines and how objects relate to each other.



A series of exhibition spaces were particularly interesting. You circle through the first Australian gallery moving from late nineteenth century landscape paintings; to a group of works on paper relating to indigenous Australians; to the works of Arthur Streeton, Rupert Bunny, Nora Heysen, Napier Waller and Howard Arkley. Beyond is the Asian collection with its Chinese ceramics representing each of the major dynasties represented and a range of contemporary Japanese ceramics.

In stark contrast was the exhibition of Decorative Arts. A wall had been painted a vivid royal blue which set off an eighteenth-century French tapestry depicting the 'Entry of Alexander to Babylon' after a design by the artist Charles Le Brun. The Hamilton tapestry was probably made in the Belgian workshop of Judocos de Vos, and is based on one of the sets of Alexander tapestries made at Gobelins for Louis XIV in the late 1660s. Delicate Meissen pieces and eighteenth-century silver are displayed on another wall. They are complemented by objects of virtue such as snuff boxes, watches and jewellery.



The exhibition was not simply an exhibition of objects from the Hamilton Gallery. It was the culmination of research by the team of scholars, led by Alison. They made several significant discoveries as they researched the collection. They identified works that needed restoration and indeed one painting has already been cleaned and conserved. They noted the significance of the Paul Sandby collection and the importance of landscape painting in watercolours during the eighteenth century. The team also discovered in the Hamilton Gallery a work by Edward Calvert, 'The Bacchante' a wood engraving so rare that the only known other is in the British Museum.

A beautiful coffee table book was also produced - *HG:60 Hamilton Gallery 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* and is available from the gallery. Other associated events were cancelled due to the pandemic but a symposium, '60 Years in 60 Objects' was to proceed in February. Fortunately, the exhibition has been extended to March 2022.

*Aliya Porter*

# CITY CHURCHES ARCHITECTURE WALK



**Alan Ray and Richard Hume and the Collins Street churches**

On Tuesday 15 February Alan Ray led a group of 15 of our members on a tour of some historic city churches, to explore the architecture of the inside and outside of these buildings. Churches visited included St James Old Cathedral (built 1842), Collins Street Baptist Church (built 1862), Scots Presbyterian Church (built 1874), and St Michael's Uniting Church (built 1866). Many of the group had lunch together in a nearby food court after the tour. The weather was not too hot and we were able also to view the oldest house in Melbourne (built 1850/1) in King Street near the Flagstaff Gardens. The western end of Melbourne is perhaps not so well known as the central shopping area and the eastern end.



**Collins Street Baptist Church**

**Text by Alan Ray; photos by Graham Ray**



**Scots Presbyterian Church**



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Weekly emails are sent to all members with email addresses; watch for these updates.

See our website for details of courses.

The Program Guide for Term 2 2022 will be distributed at the end of March.

**PHOTOGRAPHERS:**

Members of U3A's Photography group, Maria Bond, Giada Giuntoli, Lois Heycox, Gregor Howie, Pam O'Brien, Alan Ray, Graham Ray, Carole Williams, and in public domain.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Pam O'Brien



**Jellis Craig**

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