



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Welcome, everyone, to your U3A Deepdene Term 4 Newsletter, the final newsletter for 2025.



Philip Russell

We've got a while yet before we start hearing Christmas music in the shops, but the year is definitely moving on. Planning for Christmas and holiday activities will soon come into greater focus.

Here at U3A Deepdene, as well as our regular courses, there are a number of special events this term to look forward to. On 12 November there will be a Wednesday Special presentation, 'Trump's Tumultuous Year'. Members should also watch out for emails about the end-of-year social event to be held in early December. The catering for this event will include a call on members with surnames L to Z to bring a plate – so it will be my turn this time. For our members who are also course tutors, later in December there will be an end-of-year lunch as part of thanking them for their continued and amazing efforts to bring us the courses we enjoy so much.

But that's not all. Anne Kemp and her team are also putting together a range of activities for U3A Deepdene members in a vacation program to be held over January, before the start of the U3A year on 2 February 2026. I have enrolled in several events in Anne's vacation programs run between terms this year, and most recently joined a group to see the Impressionists exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and to take a 'behind-the-scenes' tour of the Arts Centre (see the photos on page 25). I'll be looking out for the emails about Anne's January vacation program.

Behind the scenes at U3A itself, the 2026 year will be significant, as we prepare for the application of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). As part of this, there will be a temporary change to memberships fees, just for the 2026 year, to \$35 (from \$50 in 2025).

Enjoy reading this newsletter to find out about some of the highlights of both Term 3 and so far in Term 4, across the breadth of the substantial U3A Deepdene program. What others are doing at U3A might well interest you, no matter what *your* chosen courses may be.

In each newsletter I also make sure to thank everyone who volunteers their time and energy in leading, researching and presenting our very wide range of courses. It is the work of all our volunteers, including across administration and catering, that makes U3A Deepdene membership such a stimulating and social experience.

Have a great Term 4 and a happy and safe Christmas and holiday period.

See you around U3A.

Philip Russell

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people of the Kulin Nation, and their elders past and present and future, who are the traditional owners of the land on which U3A Deepdene is located.

We are honoured to recognise our connection to Wurundjeri Country, history, culture and spirituality through this location.

We also acknowledge the traditional owners of lands across Australia, their elders, ancestors, cultures and heritage.

IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGY NEWS!

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE TABLE OF CONTENTS IS NOW HYPERLINKED?

If you are reading this newsletter as a 'soft copy' (on your computer/phone/tablet) you are now able to click on an article's title or page number in the Table of Contents and be taken straight to the article.

AND NOT ONLY THAT ...

The purple arrow at the bottom right hand corner of each article is also hyperlinked!

If you click/press on it, you will be taken back to the top of the Table of Contents.

HOWEVER ...

If you are reading a paper version (hard copy) these features will not work.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

We would like to reinforce the importance of the protocols we request for our safety.

Please remember to:

- Wear/bring your membership card with the reverse filled in to all face-to-face sessions.
- Carry your medical waiver form (with details included) to all physical exercise sessions.
- Take into account the weather and decide whether you will attend or not.
- Consider your own fitness regarding the activities in which you choose to participate.
- Carry water with you and wear a hat outdoors.

It has been suggested that we install the free '**EmergencyPlus**' App on our mobile phones:

It is easy to do and it's **free!**

- **Download the App:** Available on both Android and iOS platforms, users can download the app from Google Play Store or Apple App Store.
- **Install and Open:** Once downloaded, install and open the app.
- **Allow Location Access:** The app requires location access to function correctly. Ensure you grant the necessary permissions.
- **Familiarise Yourself:** Explore the app's features and understand how to use it in an emergency situation.

You can see your exact location (most important).

It is just a tap of a button to alert 000 Emergency, SES, or Police immediately.



AED - AUTOMATED ELECTRONIC DEFIBRILLATORS

Each of U3A Deepdene's locations has a defibrillator on the walls in case of emergency. Open the package and a recorded voice immediately gives instructions for use.

Please note their positions:

- **Balwyn Park Centre** – beside the lift on the upper level
- **Alston Halls** – to the right of the doorway into Room 1B from the Breezeway
- **Stradbroke Park** – inside Room 1, to the left as you enter from the Cricket/Football oval (not the Athletics field)
- **Horrie Watson Pavilion** – inside, on the west wall, on the right of the doors into the kitchen.

Left is the sign outside the buildings indicating that an AED is nearby.

Right is the AED beside the lift at Balwyn Park Centre and at our other venues as listed above.



Members are reminded that U3A Deepdene has policies about Health and Safety, as well as Physical Programs. These can be found on our website.



A TRIBUTE TO SUE WILMS

PRESIDENT 2016 – 2017; VICE PRESIDENT 2015; COMMITTEE MEMBER 2014



Sue Wilms

It is with sadness that we report the death of Sue Wilms, Past President of U3A Deepdene.

Sue came to the role of President with a high profile within Boroondara Council as the Director of Early Childhood Services for a number of years. She brought with her sound skills in leadership and in governance of not-for-profit organisations, which she utilised within U3A Deepdene at a time of our rapid growth in membership, and in the scale of the organisation. During her presidency, our organisational arrangements were developed to cope with this rapid growth. The first strategic plan was also developed, guiding the immediate future of the organisation.

Sue's experience within the Council meant that she was able to carry forward the very successful working arrangements between U3A Deepdene and personnel within Boroondara Council Aged Care division, which had been established under previous presidents. During Sue's presidency, Council's plans to provide U3A Deepdene with permanent, tailored accommodation were expanded. Sue worked co-operatively with Council personnel on the early stages of this project which eventually became the Balwyn Park Centre.

Sue was a warm and gracious member of U3A, participating actively in a range of programs, particularly ones relating to literature and to the exercise classes.

Joan Taylor and Suzanne Collings



AUSTRALIAN STORIES HISTORY BOOKS DON'T TELL

When I signed up for this talk, I must not have read the full summary, as I went along expecting a range of stories, diverse little snippets of important or less important stories from the Australian past. However, on the screen prior to the presentation by Gillian Yung, there was a sub-title: 'The extraordinary story of Jørgen Jørgensen'.

So just *one* story, and I thought, 'Who the heck was this man?' Well, we were soon to find out, by dint of Gillian's prodigious research skills and impressive tenacity in tracking down rare books and documents. (For her to disclaim any pretensions to be called 'an historian' was soon to be proven unwarranted.)

With humour and clarity, Gillian told a story that twisted and turned in unbelievable ways, as if of a fictional character. No doubt there were elements of fiction and make-believe in the accounts written down by Mr Jorgensøn himself, but so much else was based on clear evidence, including official documents, ships' records, court records and the like.



Jørgen Jørgensen

Born in 1780, the son of the Royal Watchmaker in Copenhagen, Jørgen enjoyed a basic education and comfortable early life. He was not drawn to watchmaking, but rather to the tales of the sea and the exploits of a certain James Cook. This led to his being apprenticed in about 1795 on an English collier – like Cook – but by the late 1790s he was on board a whaler bound for South Africa. He jumped ship and made his way to Port Jackson, where he signed on to the *Lady Nelson* under an assumed name, John Johnson. In 1803, he would be present in Hobart at the first British settlement in Van Diemen's Land (VDL). (His return there 20 years or so later was to be not so positive.)

Space limitations do not permit a full detailing of his exploits over the next 15 years, but they include a return to Denmark to fight the British navy in 1807 as a privateer; a journey to Iceland in 1809, where he and his crew took control of the Danish territory and he became the 'self-proclaimed' protector of the native Icelanders (he was soon relieved of this position). He was imprisoned on a Thames-based hulk for 3 years; worked as a spy for the British Foreign Office during the Napoleonic Wars; had periods of serious gambling and indebtedness that led him once more into prison and possible execution, until finally, in 1825, he was transported to VDL for life. (In the course of these years, Jørgen would call on the good offices of Joseph Banks and Sir William Hooker [both eminent botanists] to save him from numerous predicaments – a consequence of his providing interesting botanical samples from his travels). Oh, and by the way, he spoke seven languages!

The final 15 years of his life in VDL saw Jørgen eventually obtain a ticket of leave and, indeed, a pardon. He worked with the Field Police, participated in the notorious Black Line, was involved in the exploration of the north-west of VDL, oversaw the construction of the Ross Bridge, and derived a precarious life as a writer. He died in 1841.



Ross Bridge

While Jørgen Jørgensen would not necessarily be held up as a model of propriety, the sheer extent of his journeys and the catalogue of adventures and occupations he was involved in, presented with passion and colour by Gillian, made this a most entertaining talk. Certainly, she tantalised her listeners to seek out further information about her subject.

Graham O'Rourke



LAUGHTER AND FUN AT THE ANNUAL AFL TRIVIA QUIZ AND LUNCHEON

On the second Thursday in September, well over 60 U3A Deepdene members arrived at the Balwyn Park Centre to share in some AFL frivolity. Members came decked out in AFL team colours and enjoyed a wonderful afternoon arranged by the News and Views Committee.

Yes, this face-to-face social event is a far cry from the usual News and Views Zoom sessions, held each Thursday of term (12 noon – 1.15 pm), covering a wide range of thought-provoking national and international affairs, with expert speakers from across Australia. Owing to a ‘quirk’ of U3A Deepdene history, this AFL annual luncheon is also organised and hosted very happily by the News and Views Committee and Karin Watts, an honorary member for the event.

Cheerful and highly motivated members entered the room, which had been superbly prepared and decked out with team-coloured balloons scattered across the tables. Rousing team songs and ‘Up there Cazaly’ welcomed members, who quickly settled into completing a footy word puzzle. Footy aficionados sat alongside those ‘who didn’t have a clue’ about AFL. This is one great characteristic of this event. No one cares if you don’t know about footy, as those U3A Deepdene members who are experts are very happy to share their extraordinary knowledge.

Kay Axsentieff (usually the excellent online host of News and Views) was our marvellous MC for the event. Kay appeared with a bag full of Hawthorn paraphernalia, so any ‘teamless or clueless’ members could don a borrowed scarf and become a Hawks supporter for the afternoon.

Once the event was officially opened, to set the mood prior to the ‘main game’ we were treated to a unique and humorous presentation by Suzanne Collings (one of U3A Deepdene’s inaugural members). Suzanne reflected on her days at the University of Melbourne, where she studied Commerce and played some early women’s football in 1959! Suzanne’s speech is on page 13.

Two trivia quizzes were very ably prepared and orchestrated by Karin Watts (our expert quiz master) and Kay Axsentieff. Karin’s depth of football knowledge never ceases to amaze! The ‘girls’ did a great job keeping us all in order and encouraging us as we worked through the footy quizzes during the afternoon. The various questions prompted serious discussion at some tables and laughter and hilarity elsewhere.

We were treated to a delicious ‘footy-inspired’ buffet lunch and drinks between the quizzes, to provide some extra inspiration and social camaraderie. Clearly it worked, as most teams had better results in the second quiz. Scores were tallied and prizes awarded to team winners on the day, in recognition of their outstanding knowledge in all matters ‘footy’.

Quiz-winning team: Jeff Monks, Tim Hodgetts and Ron Copperwaite

Best dressed: Teresa Molella

The winners of the U3A Deepdene online footy tipping competition were also announced and prizes awarded:

First: Caryl Hogg

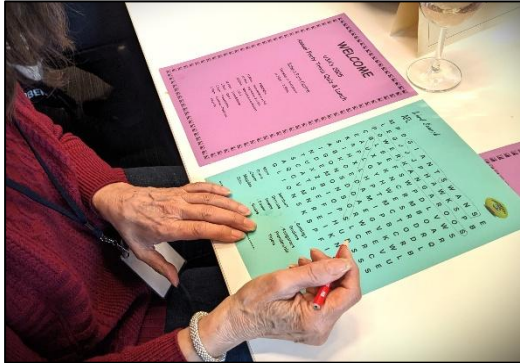
Second: Sue Bradshaw

Third: Malcolm Barnett

Sincere thanks were expressed to all the generous volunteers who assisted most competently with set-up and pack-up, hospitality (food and drinks), decorations, multimedia and quiz content. Extra special thanks must be extended to Kay Axsentieff and Karin Watts, who were our champion volunteers on the day.

In the complex world in which we all live, the Annual AFL Trivia Quiz and Luncheon offers a wonderful opportunity for members to come together and have a terrific time, sharing knowledge, laughter and great company. If you have never attended this luncheon, note it in your calendar for 2026. You will be assured of a memorable and entertaining day.

Barbara Emerson



Footy word puzzle



Kay Axsentieff, Barbara Emerson, Tral Cash



Angela Padula, Heili Mottram, Caryl Hogg, Celia Dynon, Helen Sjogren



Delicious 'footy-inspired' lunch



Karin Watts, Sue Bradshaw, Kay Axsentieff, Caryl Hogg



A PASSION FOR WHITE GOLD

PATRICIA BEGG OAM BEQUEST TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA (NGV)

This Zoom presentation on 13 August 2025 was hosted by Lois Heycox and given by Amanda Dunsmore and Imogen Mallia-Valjan, who are both curators at the NGV.

We learnt about works from The Patricia Begg OAM Bequest Collection, which are currently on display on Level 2 at NGV International in St Kilda Road.

Patricia Begg, and her husband Chris, will be known to some of you, as they delivered many amazing presentations to U3A Deepdene at Stradbroke Park.

Their bequest of around 350 works is a significant donation to the NGV. It is one of the most distinguished private collections of ceramics in Australia.

Patricia developed her collection over more than 40 years, focusing in large part on ceramics from the 18th century.

Curators Amanda and Imogen gave a fascinating and very well illustrated talk about the 200 or so works currently on display at the NGV. They explained how the collection demonstrates the historic dialogue between East and West in the 18th century.

Half of the works illustrate the decorative and stylistic approach taken in this era and the other half illustrate the social and cultural features of that time.

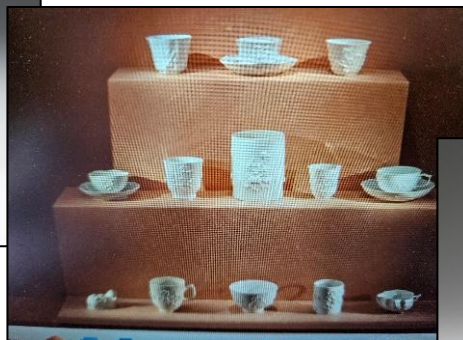
We saw many attractive items, including some used in the grand dining and daily living of the upper classes of the day, such as vessels for tea, coffee, hot chocolate, cosmetics, perfumes and snuff.

The history and beauty of these objects, presented with such enthusiasm and knowledge by Amanda and Imogen, was inspiring and informative.

One useful tip that Amanda gave us was that we can borrow a booklet at the NGV information desk and take it up to the exhibition so that we can be informed on the details about each object on display.

We highly recommend a visit to the NGV to see this fascinating exhibition.

Wendy and Graham Ray



Some of the images in the presentation

I DIDN'T KNOW MY PHONE COULD DO THAT!

On 22 October, Errol Muir, Tim Hodgetts and Judy Still led two fantastic sessions, supported by 'Get Online Week', which provided a grant that - as well as enabling us to learn how to use a number of amazing apps on our phones - included the provision of a delicious morning and afternoon tea!

Nineteen topics were offered and the members of the two classes were asked to vote for their top 5. The topics covered in the 2 classes were:

Back tap: allows you to trigger actions - such as turning on the device torch, taking a screenshot or running a custom shortcut - by double-tapping or triple-tapping the back of your phone

Find my device: locates lost devices such as phone, iPad or AirPods by showing them on a map, playing a sound, activating Lost Mode to protect our data, or remotely erasing the device

Genius scan: turns a smartphone into a document scanner, allowing you to take pictures of documents and save them as multi-page PDF files

Measure: uses the phone's camera and augmented reality (AR) to let you take measurements of real-world objects, such as measuring the length of a table or the height of a person

Mirror to TV: wirelessly displays the phone's entire screen on the TV, allowing you to share photos, videos, apps, presentations and also to play games on a larger screen

Podcasts: apps that allow us to discover, subscribe to and listen to a vast library of audio and video programs on topics like news, education and entertainment

Shazam: can be used to identify the music playing, explore the music you love, and discover songs and lyrics

Speech to text: converts spoken words into written text, allowing you to dictate messages, emails, notes and other text anywhere you can type

Wallet: serves as a digital hub to securely store and manage a wide range of important items, including credit and debit cards for Apple Pay purchases, etc.

We practised using some of these apps, under the supervision of Errol, Tim and Judy (who assisted with Android devices in particular) – and it was great fun! My favourites are 'Speech to text', which I now enjoy using when sending messages, and 'Genius scan', a quick and easy way to scan and send documents, which I successfully used later that afternoon.

It is recommended that we explore the **Be Connected** website for free online learning, to build our digital skills, confidence and safety online: <https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>

We thank our wonderful tutors, Errol, Tim and Judy, for sharing their technological expertise with us, and for two extremely informative and useful sessions. We also thank Good Things (goodthingsaustralia.org) for supporting Get Online Week.

Errol is happy to share class handouts with any interested members; if you would like a set sent to you just email him on deepdeneu3atechnology@gmail.com and he will forward a copy to you.

Pam O'Brien



Errol explaining some of the many little-known features of mobile phones



Tim explaining more of the many little-known features of mobile phones



HUDSON FYSH: PILOT, SPORTSMAN AND QANTAS FOUNDER

On 13 October, Matthew Ety-Leal gave us a very interesting presentation about Hudson Fysh, whose maternal grandfather, Henry Reed, arrived in Tasmania from England in April 1827, aged 20. Henry set up as a merchant selling wool, purchasing ships for whaling and international trade, and became a wealthy landowner. He lived in a mansion, Mount Pleasant, in Launceston. Twice married, he fathered 16 children, including Mary Reed, who married Wilmot Fysh, father of Hudson. When Wilmot and Mary legally separated, Hudson lived with his father and attended Launceston Grammar School, St Peter's College, Adelaide, and from 1910 to 1913, Geelong Grammar School. He made many friends at school and excelled at sport. Hudson did not want to go to university and became a reserve with the 26th Light Horse Regiment.



Hudson Fysh

In July 1914 he watched French aviator Maurice Guillaux fly a Blériot stunt plane at Geelong racecourse. The plane is now on display at the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, Sydney.

On 25 August 1914 Hudson, aged 19, signed up with the 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment, later being commissioned in the 1st Light Horse Machine Gun Squadron, and eventually transferring to the Australian Flying Corps, with which he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

In March 1919, Prime Minister Billy Hughes announced a £10,000 prize for the first successful flight from London to Darwin, with competitors supplying their own aircraft. Lt James Legge asked Paul 'Ginty' McGinness and Hudson Fysh, with mechanic George Gorham, to survey the route north from Longreach to Darwin, driving a Model T Ford 17. It was a distance of 2,200 kilometres cross-country and they organised airfields in Katherine and Darwin.

Australian pioneering aviator Ross Smith landed in Darwin from London on 10 December 1919, with a four-man crew in a Vickers Vimy. They had a flying time of 135 hours over 28 days, and they shared the £10,000 prize.

Hudson and Ginty met with grazier Fergus McMaster to discuss setting up an airline for joy flights and aerial taxi work across Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services, and the company now known as Qantas was born. Fergus would raise the capital and another grazier, Ainslie Templeton, was the first shareholder, investing £1,000. Another investor, Alex Kennedy, wanted the first ticket to ride on the joy flights, and Arthur Boyd became chief engineer.

In Sydney, Hudson and Ginty met with Nigel Love, Wing Commander (retired), and ordered 2 Avro 504K 2-passenger planes for £1,500 each. John Flynn wished to set up an Aerial Medical Service with Fysh and Ginty, but on 21 November Billy Hughes refused funding.

In October 1924, De Havilland DH9 biplanes arrived. They could carry 4 passengers in an enclosed cabin. After 3 years of losses, Qantas became profitable, and in 1924 was able to build its own DH50 purpose-built planes at Longreach, under licence to De Havilland.

The first Australian Inland Mission, precursor to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, commenced in May 1928, and the first Qantas international service was to London in 1934-35.

In April 1934 Prime Minister Joseph Lyons signed an agreement for a mail contract between Brisbane and Singapore via Darwin. Then in 1938 Lyons signed a 15-year agreement for mail delivery from Sydney to London, 3 times per week. In 1943 the British government approved an Indian Ocean service, Perth to Sri Lanka, using 4 Catalinas, with Qantas as the operating agent. After the Second World War Hudson realised that the Lockheed Constellation 41 would be the best aircraft for Qantas – it could carry 38 passengers at a maximum speed of 318mph (512kph). In 1946 a Bill was passed for the federal government to buy out BOAC's 50 per cent share of Qantas Empire Airlines. In 1947 a return fare from Australia to England was £585, which was approximately 18 months of an average worker's wages.

Hudson Fysh was knighted in 1954. By this time Qantas was carrying 118,000 passengers annually, had more than 5,000 staff, and an annual profit exceeding £13 million. In September 1956 Qantas ordered seven Boeing 707 aircraft, each capable of carrying 190 passengers at 550mph; and in 1957 it was the seventh-largest airline in the world.

The round-the-world service, flying Super Constellations, was launched from Essendon Airport on 14 January 1958. Hudson Fysh handed over his chairmanship to Roland Wilson and resigned his directorship in June 1966, but remained as a consultant. He retired to a rural property in Dural, NSW, called Golden Ridge.

At 77 years of age, he was diagnosed with lung cancer and he died on 6 April 1974. His funeral was held at St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney five days later. Hudson Fysh did not die a rich man; his estate for probate was \$95,817, less than \$1 million today. He certainly was a great Australian and an eminent figure in international aviation.

Graeme Watson



COMMERCIAL CUTIES VERSUS LEGAL LOVELIES

In 1959 I was doing second-year Commerce at the University of Melbourne – the numerate among you can work out that I am talking 66 years ago.

The Law faculty men had just thrashed the Commerce men in the inter-faculty football final.

The women in the Commerce faculty decided to avenge this defeat.

John Birt (Essendon rover – when such a field position existed) was doing Commerce, so he was asked to become involved. John Coleman (after whom the Coleman Medal is named) was the Essendon coach, so John Birt asked John Coleman if he would get involved in this project. The upshot was that John Coleman became our coach. Essendon Football Club even lent us their guernseys. The Law girls managed to convince Lou Richards to be their coach.

We were called ***Coleman's Commercial Cuties***.

Law called their team ***Lu-Lu's Legal Lovelies***.

We had a couple of training sessions with John Coleman. In one of the Law training sessions, Lou told the girls, 'Don't pick up the ball unless absolutely necessary'!

On the day we attracted a HUGE crowd – almost all males.

The game was rather one-sided – our side dominating of course. Law were so demoralised they even insisted we had more than the legal number of players on the ground, so play was halted for a few minutes while we were lined up and counted.

There was no bias in the umpiring – Law provided the umpire for the first half and John Birt umpired the second half.

Without being too boastful, I can say that we thrashed Lu-Lu’s Legal Lovelies – the scores being:

Coleman’s Commercial Cuties 8-4: 52

Lu-Lu’s Legal Lovelies 1-1: 7



That's me (Suzanne Collings) at the right-hand end of the second row, right in front of John Coleman

The game was written up in the *Sun* newspaper by Keith Dunstan, who was obviously a Lu-Lu’s supporter because his comments showed some bias. He claimed that Lu-Lu’s Legal Lovelies were the better looking team, and that our team had been ‘lucky’!

Coleman’s Commercial Cuties then played the Science girls, who were called Brian’s Botanical Beauties – of course we thrashed them!

This was possibly the very first AFLW game?

Suzanne Collings



John Coleman – after whom the Coleman Medal is named



VISIT TO GREENLINK INDIGENOUS PLANT NURSERY

On a chilly, but wind and rain free morning, a nature-loving group of members met at the Greenlink Nursery in Box Hill. Greenlink is not just any nursery. It was established to identify and promote the use of plants indigenous to a specific area of Melbourne. Melbourne has a number of such nurseries, each of which identifies, propagates and promotes the use of plants growing naturally in a particular area. The nursery has had a number of forms and locations over about 35 years, is run entirely by volunteers, and is financed by sales of its plants and donations. Although it operates on City of Whitehorse's Bushy Creek Parkland, its area of interest stretches westward to Yarra Bend Park and includes all surrounding suburbs.

The program for our visit was co-hosted by U3A member Janet Russell, Greenlink committee and park team co-leader; Gabrielle Bradley, Greenlink's convenor of seed and propagation teams; and Philip Russell, our U3A president. Philip is also a member of Greenlink's park team. Gabrielle gave us a fascinating talk on how and where they collect their seeds, plus descriptions of some of the ways different plants prefer to be propagated. Credit was given to our Indigenous people, who have long known which plants needed special help, such as controlled fire. Samples of the seeds were passed around. Some had 'wings', which could easily carry them on the wind; some were contained in hard pods that responded to fire. The seeds for the Eucalyptus Camaldulensis (the mighty River Red Gum) were about the size of a small pinhead while some seeds were works of artistic design.

We then went for a walk on Council's Bushy Creek parkland at the back of the nursery. Greenlink was given permission to gradually replant this area to resemble what the land would have looked like before being overtaken by introduced plants. This natural-looking habitat is supporting frogs and other fauna that thrive on the native plants, and it provides some seeds for propagation in the nursery.

After the short walk we were treated to a lovely morning tea, thanks to Janet's amazing cooking skills. Participants had the chance to purchase tube stock selected from the vast array of the nursery's treasures, each tube only \$2. The nursery sells large stocks to government agencies in addition to the City of Whitehorse and other councils.

Greenlink is open for public plant sales on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9 am to 12 noon and the second Saturday of most months, from 9 am to 1 pm. Opening times and lots of other interesting information can be found on the Greenlink website: greenlinkboxhill.org

Anne Whittenbury



Gabrielle explains collection and propagation of seed to a very interested audience



Sticky Everlasting and Longhair Plume Grass



Hoary Sunray



Austral Stork's-Bill



Thrift-leaved Trigger plant



The pond in Bushy Park, where we heard frogs croaking and saw plants: Long Purple Flag, Dianella, Kobby Club-Rush, Berry Saltbush, Hop Bush and Yarra Burgan



FROM DISCOVERY TO CURE: A FIGHT AGAINST ACUTE AND LONG COVID

In Term 3 we had a fascinating Short Course presentation by two senior members of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI).

Professor Guillaume Lessene, who is Associate Director of Therapeutic Discovery at WEHI, and Dr Marcel Doerflinger, Laboratory Head, combined in a wonderfully informative and enjoyable session, very much appreciated by all who attended.

They each told us a little about their respective European backgrounds, how they had found themselves at WEHI and how highly regarded and respected the Institute is internationally.

WEHI originated in 1915 from a Trust established by Eliza Hall following the death of her husband Walter Hall. He had migrated from England to Australia, at the age of 21, arriving in 1852 in the hope of discovering gold in Victoria. He became a very successful businessman with pastoral interests in NSW and QLD, and married Eliza (Kirk) in 1874. They had no children and accumulated considerable wealth. They were quietly and 'unostentatiously philanthropic' throughout their lives.

Professor Lessene gave an overview of the very wide-ranging areas of research and activity within the Institute. There are over 1400 staff and students investigating a wide range of diseases including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, malaria, Parkinson's disease, and many others. The biology of cancer, understanding cell death, the science of immunology and amazing developments in the area of immunotherapy and the role of the immune system combating human infection are just some of the areas of ongoing research.

A much more detailed account of the activities of WEHI is available from their very informative website (www.wehi.edu.au)

Professor Lessene then gave an overview of the Corona Virus pandemic, pointing out how unprepared we were for the pandemic. He then went on to explain and illustrate how viruses infect the cells in our bodies and what we could do to stop viral replication. While the drug Paxlovid can benefit some patients, it cannot be given to everybody and has no effect on Long Covid.

Hence he concluded that 'we need more drugs' and outlined how compounds, that could be developed and tested in animal experiments, evolved.

Dr Doerflinger is the Laboratory Head of Infection and Global Health and oversees the **PC3** facility. This **Physical Containment Level 3** facility is designed for working safely with infectious agents that pose a moderate to high risk to anyone exposed to them.

He introduced the topic of Long Covid, which affects at least 150,000 individuals in Australia. He quoted one patient who is working with the WEHI Researchers:



Photo of Prof Lessene and Dr Doerflinger at BPC provided by Susan Parajuli, Donor Relations Senior Officer

‘After the initial COVID-19 infection, I started getting all these unexplainable new symptoms: fainting, fatigue, muscle aches, tremors, shaking, a lot of gut issues as well, nausea and vomiting, rashes. Everyone could move on with their lives, but for me it feels like I’m stuck in lockdown’.

In order to try and understand and solve the problem of Long Covid, Dr Doerflinger explained how his team went about trying to find a mouse model in order to understand the disease and find treatments. His team went on to develop what appears to be a mouse model of Long Covid after an enormous amount of complicated, prolonged and innovative work.

While there are still a large number of unanswered questions about the Covid pandemic, those who attended this fascinating session came away marvelling at the extraordinary work undertaken at WEHI and with a sense that, perhaps, there may be a drug developed, in the foreseeable future, that may be able to treat the devastating effects of Long Covid.

Andrew Roberts



WETLANDS IN A DRY LAND

This talk by Associate Professor Emily O’Gorman mainly focused on her recent book, *Wetlands in a Dry Land*, published in 2024, covering ‘More-than-Human Histories of Australia’s Murray-Darling Basin’.

We were introduced to a subject that directly or indirectly affects us all; but generally, we know little about the complexity of wetlands. One of the reasons is that, not just because of colonisation, we view wetlands as a hindrance to our development and often a health risk. As a result, Emily says that up to 87 per cent of the world’s wetlands have been ‘drained’. More recently, there appears to be a greater understanding that wetlands have a worth in preserving for at least their diversity of animals, insects, plants and often historical and cultural significance.



Assoc. Professor Emily O’Gorman

Emily has looked at the wetlands down the Murray-Darling Basin, considering four locations along its diverse length. There is no easy definition of what classifies a ‘wet area’ as a wetland and the various definitions are disputed internationally. Without an agreed definition, apart from the academic interest, in practice it will be difficult to measure the impact of climate change on these areas.

To help better understand the difficulties of defining what wetlands are, Emily gave considerable focus to the Toowoomba swamps in Queensland. She expanded on the impact, the cultural and historical significance; although each wetland is different in nature and environment, many of the reasons for ‘civilising the swamps’ are the same.

The Toowoomba swamps or wetlands were starting to impinge on the town, affecting its growth in several ways, apart from the need for additional land. A study showed that mosquitoes were associated with diseases, so an eradication campaign was instigated. This work moved the wetlands further away from the town inhabitants, giving more agricultural land, which over time became houses and so the process was repeated. However, this eradication program didn’t completely solve the mosquito problem. There was so much public support for getting rid of the mosquitoes that even DDT was used, with the terrible environmental consequences we now acknowledge.

Increases in population resulted in an increase in water demand. The wetlands are an integral part of the natural water system. A water management system inevitably takes water from the wetland area, changing its character, environment and the natural inhabitants that it supports.

Wetlands are typically in lower areas of the local natural geography of the land. Hence, uncontrolled wastewater from humans, animals and even market gardens is likely to reach wetlands. The increased organic load and its nature resulted in odours, as well as the environmental consequences that disrupt the food chain, including fish, which were a food source for the Indigenous population: a reason to put in sewerage, requiring more management and control of the wetlands.

The progressive destruction of wetlands had an impact on many animals, including migratory birds. This is one of the issues that has raised the natural value of wetlands and the need for their preservation. Emily also discussed the cultural and historical significance of wetlands. As a food source they were an important location for the Indigenous population. The solution of the colonialists was to drive the local Indigenous population away.

Emily clearly identified the importance of wetlands in Australia's human and environmental history, as well as their potential worth. Already a considerable amount of this history has been irrevocably removed, making work and books like *Wetlands in a Dry Country* even more important.

Roy Olliff



LUNCHTIME CONVERSATIONS

A NEW WAY TO CONNECT, REFLECT AND SHARE IDEAS

At U3A Deepdene, we're privileged to enjoy a remarkable variety of courses - spanning a wide range of subjects, formats and presenters. From the wealth of knowledge within our own talented membership to the fascinating insights offered by guest speakers from outside the organisation, our programs continue to enrich, inspire and connect us.

Yet, as our community grows, some members appear to want more opportunities to engage face-to-face - to talk, listen and exchange ideas in a relaxed and friendly setting. At the same time, there's a growing curiosity about the social, cultural and political issues that shape the world we live in today.

That's why Ken Parker, Bruce Pulbrook and I are excited to introduce a new discussion series this term: **Lunchtime Conversations** - an informal, thought-provoking way to connect with fellow members over shared ideas and good company.

Each session provides a welcoming space where everyone can contribute freely - no lectures, no 'experts', just open, stimulating conversation. Together, we'll explore the big questions of our time in a respectful, engaging environment where every viewpoint is valued. In each session we will focus on one topic of interest, and participants will have opportunities to suggest and introduce topics in future sessions, if they wish.

Before each session we'll share a short article or video to set the scene. Don't worry if you haven't had time to review it - we'll start with a quick summary to spark the discussion.



Best of all, Lunchtime Conversations fits neatly into your day - held during lunch (Tuesdays from 12.15 to 1.15 pm at Balwyn Park Centre) - so you can easily attend morning or afternoon sessions before or after. Feel free to bring your lunch; tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. There are two remaining sessions for this term, on 11 and 25 November.

You can attend any or all of the sessions - come when you can, contribute as you wish and enjoy the conversation.

We look forward to seeing many of you as we share ideas, challenge assumptions and enjoy the lively company of fellow U3A members!

Vince Giuca



The views expressed by presenters in all our classes are their own views
and not the official views of U3A Deepdene.

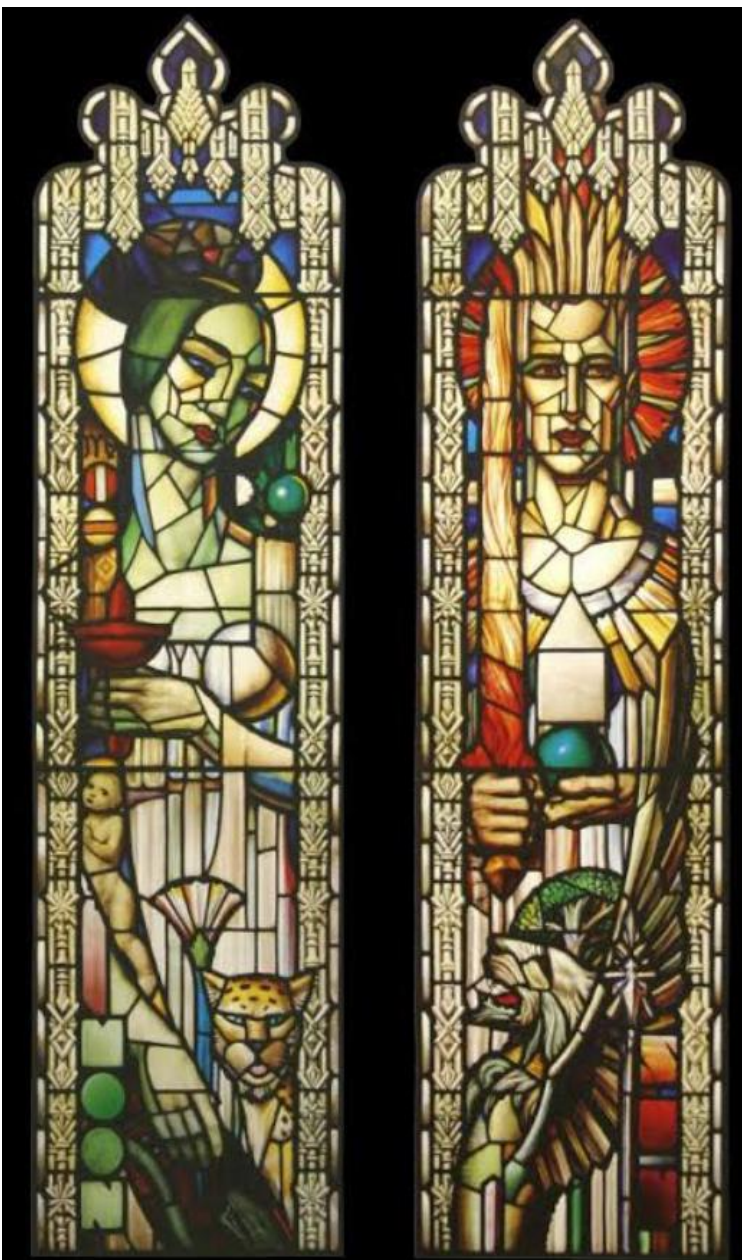
Our aim is to encourage the exploration of ideas in a respectful and
relatively free



CHRISTIAN AND NAPIER WALLER

Dr Bronwyn Hughes is an art historian and independent scholar. In this lecture at U3A Deepdene she discussed her interest in stained-glass history and conservation, focusing on the work of Christian and Napier Waller.

Napier Waller was a prominent painter, printmaker, muralist and stained-glass and mosaic artist. His most well-known work is the Hall of Memory, a series of stained-glass windows and mosaics at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. His wife, née Christian Marjory Yandell, was also an artist, but Napier is the better known of the two. Christian's practice included book illustration and design, painting, printmaking and stained glass. Caroline Miley's research and her book, *Christian Waller Stained Glass: Towards the Light* (2022), places Christian alongside Napier as one of Australia's most significant stained-glass artists of the 20th century. Bronwyn contends that much of Napier and Christian's work was, in fact, based on a collaborative partnership, describing them as a 'dynamic duo'.



Detail of the Leckie Window, formerly in Wilson Hall, University of Melbourne, designed by Napier and Christian Waller

Napier commenced studies at the National Gallery Art School in 1913. Christian had begun earlier. They became 'an item' and married on 21 October 1915.

Napier had already enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 31 August 1915. In May 1916 he sailed for England to undertake military training and then served in France from the end of 1916. His right arm was amputated at the shoulder as a result of an injury sustained in action at Bullecourt in May 1917.

While convalescing he learned to write and draw with his left hand, a remarkable feat. He returned to Australia and was discharged in February 1918. A successful exhibition of his war sketches was held in Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and Adelaide during 1918 and 1919.

Bronwyn suggests that the Wallers' first major collaborative exercise was their house in Fairy Hills (a part of Ivanhoe). The house, designed in 1922, has been attributed to Harold Desbrowe Annear, a Victorian-born architect at the forefront of the Arts and Crafts movement in Australia. It was the Wallers' home and workplace, incorporating a studio for their creative practices.

The Wallers were influenced by the Art and Crafts values of English textile designer and artist, William Morris, as well as his home, Red House, at Bexleyheath in London. Napier and Christian had furniture custom made, embellished with painted designs by Christian. A sketch that has come to light suggests that Christian also designed some of the furniture, including a hallstand.

In 1931 modifications to the house were designed by the architect Percy Meldrum. A separate glass studio was attached to the living room and the original studio was converted to a double-height living hall. An adjoining light well was converted to a minstrels' gallery. This allowed the Wallers to hang full-sized cartoons (drawings) for stained-glass works and view them from the minstrels' gallery. As Bronwyn noted, cartoons could also be rolled up and down between the two floors of the studio, making it much easier to work on the details of these drawings. In 1937 a small art studio separate from the house was built for mosaic work and print making.

In the 1920s both Napier and Christian completed illustrations for books, with Christian going on to become a leading Australian book illustrator. Her illustrations for an edition of *Alice in Wonderland* (1924) won high praise. She purchased a printing press to produce her own limited editions.

Napier's talent was recognised in his commission of murals for the Melbourne Town Hall and the Menzies Hotel, both in 1927. Napier had been employed by William Montgomery, a leading stained-glass artist. When Montgomery died, his widow suggested that Napier complete a major commission – the Stevens Window for Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne. She employed Christian to assist with cartoons for the Warriors' Chapel at the Bathurst Anglican Cathedral.

The Wallers travelled to England and Ireland in 1929 to study stained-glass design and making, and to Italy to study mosaic practice. In London they worked at the premises of Whall & Whall, the leading Arts and Crafts stained-glass makers in England. In Ireland, Christian absorbed Irish culture and history which, together with her deep spirituality, influenced her later works. The couple returned to Melbourne in 1930 to focus on stained-glass and mosaic making.

Bronwyn suggests that Napier's name was more likely to secure commissions, although Christian would collaborate on most of these works. For example, the window for St Matthew's Anglican Church (c. 1929–1930) at Geelong East was attributed to Napier by *The Argus* newspaper, although Bronwyn suggests it was in fact Christian's work. There were only relatively few occasions where their work was attributed as a collaboration between the two, one being the stained-glass windows for All Saints' Chapel at Geelong Grammar School.

Christian's influence can be seen in the iconic mosaic, *I'll Put a Girdle Around the Earth* (1933) for Newspaper House, Collins Street, Melbourne, both in terms of its iconography and its making. According to Bronwyn, the Leckie Window at Wilson Hall, University of Melbourne, was the high point of their collaboration, not only for its symbolism relating to the creation of the world, but also its stunning artistic beauty.

A rift developed between Napier and Christian, and as a consequence Christian chose to travel to America. After the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 she was encouraged to return to Australia. She continued her own stained-glass commissions for several churches, working at her studio in Fairy Hills. By 1948 she had completed over 50 stained-glass windows. As Christian's health deteriorated, Napier helped her with commissions and with the running of the household.

Christian Waller died in 1954 at the relatively early age of 59. She predeceased her husband by 15 years, with Napier dying in 1972, aged 72. Napier married his studio assistant, Lorna Raeburn, in January 1958. Bronwyn noted that in the period after Christian's death, a difference in Napier's work became evident, particularly in its iconography.

As a final act of symbolic collaboration between the pair, Napier recreated the window *Christus Rex* (1934), which had been in St Paul's Anglican Church, Frankston, but destroyed by fire in 1957. Napier used Christian's original cartoon to reconstruct the window around 1960.

In recognition of their partnership, the National Trust has renamed their home and workplace (formerly known as Napier Waller House) Waller House – a fitting tribute to two of Australia's most significant stained-glass artists of the 20th century.

Aliya Porter



*Christus Rex, designed by Christian Waller c1934.
Remade from the original cartoon by Napier Waller in the 1960s.
Photographer: Vlad Bunyevich*



U3A RECORDER ENSEMBLES - CONCERT AND BLOW-IN

On Friday 19 September, U3A recorder ensembles from Deepdene, Nillumbik and Banyule participated in a combined concert for family members and friends at Balwyn Park Centre.

The event commenced with a warm welcome and introduction by Pam Jagger, the administrative representative for the U3A Deepdene Advanced Recorder Ensemble (also known as the U3A Deepdene Dashers).

U3A Deepdene Intermediate Recorder Ensemble performed 'Never weather-beaten sail' by Thomas Campion, accompanied by Trevor Trotter on lute, followed by 'The long day closes' composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan and arranged by Helen Hooker.

Nillumbik U3A presented 'Cantique de Jean Racine' by Gabriel Fauré.

U3A Deepdene Duet – Sue Moloney and Yvonne Clarke – performed 'Edi beo thu Hevene Quene', an anonymous English piece from the 14th century.

U3A Banyule presented 'De Klokken van Haarlem' by John Pyke Hullah (1812-1884) and 'Air in A Minor' by John Jenkins.

U3A Deepdene Dashers performed 'Gute Nacht' from *Jesu meine Freude* (BWV227) by Johann Sebastian Bach, followed by the English folksong 'The Springtime of the Year', arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams.



From top: bass, tenor, alto/treble, soprano/descant, and sopranino recorders

BLOW-IN ENSEMBLE

Following the concert, players from all three U3A recorder groups joined together for the Blow-in, forming a large ensemble that featured a variety of recorder sizes, including sopranino, alto, tenor, bass and contra bass. Each instrument, larger than the last, contributed to a rich sound evocative of a pipe organ, complete with pedal tones, performing 'Early Tasmanian explorers' by Frances Wheeler, conducted by Jacqui Harrison. This was followed by 'Alleluia' by William Boyce, arranged by Helen Hooker and conducted by Viv Spencer. The final piece was 'Bye Bye Blackbird', composed by Ray Henderson with lyrics by Mort Dixon, and arranged for recorders by Cecil Sharpe, conducted by Viv Spencer.

After the Blow-in, refreshments were served and shared with the audience, which included Francis Wheeler (composer), family members, friends and, from the U3A Deepdene Committee, President Philip Russell, Secretary Helen Christie, Jenny Cash and Trish Lele.

Viv Spencer



SCINTILLATING SPRINGTIME

It was a busy 2 weeks between terms, with our well-supported usual events of Travel via Zoom, thanks to Pam O'Brien, who always does a wonderful job of hosting the presenters. Victor Caune and Richard Hume – thank you for all your preparation and efforts. Our coffee catch-ups at both Snow Pony and Extracted Café were well received – thanks to Kay Axsentieff for hosting the latter.

Our tour of Arts Centre Melbourne was inspiring. It was designed by famous Australian architect Roy Grounds, who was highly regarded, and designed many other iconic Melbourne landmarks, such as the National Gallery of Victoria and Hamer Hall, and many residential projects. He is noted as being at the forefront of the development of Modernism in Victoria. He went into partnership with Fredrick Romberg and Robin Boyd in 1953.

The tour offered a unique opportunity to explore Australia's largest performing arts venue. Beneath the city's iconic spire, we learnt of the rich history, striking architecture and interior design of Hamer Hall and the Theatres Building. Hamer Hall is known as Melbourne's premier venue for orchestral performances, with six levels of opulent gold and amber interiors. We saw inside the exclusive Truscott Lounge, and the grand, cave-like auditorium – designed with the use of colours to reflect Australia's gemstone deposits. We saw the famous Green Room, and the bathroom constructed for Princess Diana's visit in the 1980s. (No, she didn't use the bathroom!)



Arts Centre Spire

From there we crossed to the Theatres Building, home to three of Melbourne's most beloved theatres. Featuring richly textured foyers and grand performance spaces in stunning shades of ruby and mauve, each foyer space and auditorium has its own distinguishing features.

This tour is so worthwhile. I suggest we keep an eye on the planned refurbishments and perhaps revisit in a year or two.

We had a really interesting visit to the National Gallery of Victoria to see 'French Impressionism', which was beautifully curated – amazing colours and stunning artworks – followed of course by lunch at Teatro, which gave us an enjoyable opportunity to discuss what we'd seen and, of course, give our own 'impressions'.

Lunch at William Angliss – Great Chef's Program: Ben Pollard, ex Rockpool, Spice Temple, Supernormal, Gimlet, Cumulus, Cutler & Co, to name a few! Seventeen of us were lucky enough to enjoy this event – a beautiful meal with paired wine, giving the students at William Angliss the opportunity to display their skills in a silver-service setting. The food was outstanding, service was excellent, and it was also a great opportunity to get to know some U3A members a little better.

Beth Perrigo did a wonderful job of a guided walk around Middle Camberwell – the Golf Links Estate – adding interesting points regarding Barry Humphries' dad, who built many of the interwar houses in the area. Thanks Beth.

Celia Dynon kindly hosted a group to visit the McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park. Apparently it was a wonderful place to tour, with numerous sculptures in the park, plus the indoor gallery. Lunch was well received; and as our group was dining there, entry was free – an added bonus! Thanks Celia.

A visit to Mont De Lancey at Wandin was a fantastic day – so much history and memorabilia. It is a wonderful property to visit, with a blacksmith’s forge, a separate kitchen with stone slabs, the homestead of course, a vintage milking shed and a machinery workshop, all surrounded by breathtaking views of the surrounding hills. Our guide, Cliff, was knowledgeable, chatty and up for answering a question or three! The gift shops had lots of handmade local crafts and the staff there have long-term associations with either the pioneering Sebire family or locals. Definitely it was cooler than Melbourne, but nevertheless a memorable day. Thanks to Geoff Deason for this suggestion and our car-pooling drivers too – without you, people would miss out.

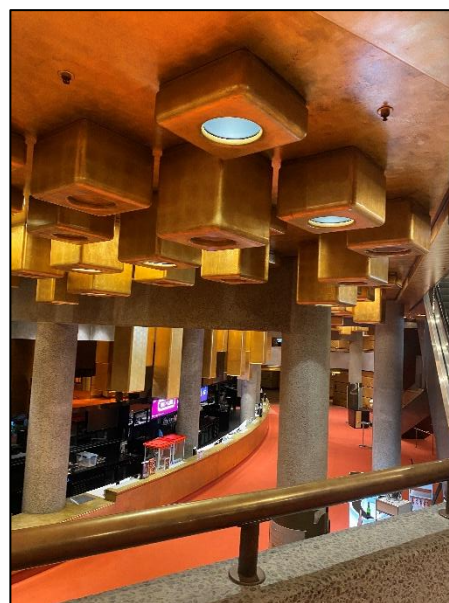
Just a note: Two of the events in this program required car pooling – if you are able to offer to drive, please let me know when you first read the program. Equally, if you require transport – it’s quite a significant juggle and it makes the arrangements much easier if we know early.

Till January, any suggestions for visits or lovely things to do are very welcome.

Anne Kemp



Arts Centre tour group



Interior of Hamer Hall



Hamer Hall lobby ceiling



Truscott Lounge in Hamer Hall



THE U3A DEEPDENE PRACTICAL AND CREATIVE ARTS CLASSES

are excited to announce that they are holding an exhibition
to showcase their work.

It is to be held on

WEDNESDAY 26 AND THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER

9.30 am - 3.30 pm in the upper level of Balwyn Park Centre and in Room 1

The exhibition arose and grew from the query:

'What do members of U3A know about what we do?'

This a great opportunity to come along and find out the *What* and the *Why!*

Family and friends are welcome to join you.

Displays represent the work of absolute beginners to those more experienced. It will include work in progress and some demonstrations by class members too.

It might even inspire you to have a go yourself!

Put the dates in your diary and enjoy the opportunity to be intrigued by and appreciate what the classes do.



AUSTEN IN PICTURES

Emeritus Professor Dr Chris Browne, who gave this presentation, is a retired medical researcher who spent most of his working life at Monash University. He has been a book collector for more than 50 years and during that time has put together a personal library of nearly 15,000 books. His main interests are 19th- and early 20th-century English literature, children's books and fine illustrated books. He has particularly strong collections of Jane Austen (many rare editions), Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens and Rudyard Kipling.

Chris's love affair with Jane Austen's novels began at the age of 17 when he was trying to impress a girlfriend. It helped that he was born in Hampshire, as that is where Jane Austen was born.

His talk at U3A Deepdene focused on Jane Austen and the history of illustrations that have featured in her many books. His various talks to different groups this year were to mark the 250 years since her death. Further, he said he and 3 others had raised \$100,000 to donate a first edition of *Emma* (1815–16) to our State Library in commemoration of the anniversary.

The first editions of Austen's books, published in 1811–1817, did not have illustrations. At that time reviewer Sir Walter Scott said Austen offered the best descriptions of the characters as they went about their everyday lives. Chris asked us to consider the narrative in dialogue without pictures, through which, for example, we could imagine Mr Darcy from the description as tall, handsome and with a disagreeable countenance.

By 1995 in the BBC TV series of *Pride and Prejudice*, Colin Firth as Mr Darcy became a legend in his wet shirt (so different from the character he played in *The Secret Garden*). The dialogue for this impressive series was taken directly from the book.



Adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* for the stage appeared in 1906, 1928, 1929 and again in 1930. In 1936 there were three editions of plays based on the work, including one by A A Milne of *Winnie the Pooh* fame. Unfortunately, this version was ousted by another one.

The first time Jane Austen's name appeared on any of her books was a French translation in 1821 – *La Famille Elliot*, the French name for Austen's *Persuasion*, which was also the first edition of an Austen book to have illustrations.

In 1832 cheap editions of Austen's books, published by Richard Bentley publishers, became available and priced at 6 shillings. As a result, the novels became extremely popular.

In 1870 in England, a life of Jane Austen by her nephew was published by Bentley, along with reprints of all her books. The only illustrations at this time were frontispieces. Then in 1892, 10-volume sets of the books became available. Many illustrated editions appeared between 1880 and 1914, a period that is regarded as the Golden Age of book illustration.

Chris explained that Hugh Thomson, employed by the George Allen firm to illustrate the famous 'Peacock' edition of *Pride and Prejudice* in 1894, was regarded as a great illustrator because he got everything, including the furniture, clothes and characters, exactly right. These books are now worth \$10,000 each. Colour was introduced in 1898.

None of Austen's books were published for 15 years after her death in July 1817. Another lull occurred during and after the First World War. In the following years, the illustrations became cartoonish.

Chris said there are many interesting editions available of Austen's books from the 1930s to the 1960s in attractive dust jackets, and these are cheaper than the earlier editions of novels and easier to collect.

Elizabeth Brown

CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND XI JINPING

For the large number of attendees, this talk was a great opportunity to see Gerry Engwerda in person, after seeing him on Zoom for his many informative U3A presentations over the years, backgrounding international affairs.

Gerry's talk covered Xi's family background – the tumultuous childhood and adolescent experiences that shaped his character and political thinking; the remarkable economic achievements of China under Xi's rule; the way the Communist Party maintains control; and the domestic challenges facing China in the future.



Gerry Engwerda

As the son of one of China's most esteemed Communist elder statesmen, Xi's early childhood in Beijing was one of luxury and privilege, but it came to a traumatic end when he was 10 years old. His father was blacklisted and imprisoned, a victim of factional warfare. Xi's mother, who refused to denounce her husband, was beaten and consequently ostracised and sent to a detention centre. Xi was sent to live with an aunt and uncle, who found it difficult to handle him and he was frequently picked up by police. During the Cultural Revolution, aged 13, he was threatened with death by Red Guards and sent to a labour camp in the country for rehabilitation. There, he worked with the peasants and lived in a cave. Despite being tormented as a 'princeling', he settled down and worked hard, demonstrating leadership qualities and developing his characteristic inscrutable personality.

During this time, his family faced further tragedy when his sister committed suicide. After seven years, Xi returned to Beijing and studied chemical engineering. He finally made his way into the Communist Party after eight failed attempts to join, because of his father's disgrace. Following his father's political rehabilitation – his father remained a committed party supporter despite its treatment of him – Xi made his way through the ranks and was appointed mayor of Shanghai, to clean up corruption; he was able to restore the city's financial status. In 2007 Xi was put in charge of party matters and security and in 2008 he was appointed Vice-president and given the challenging task of organising the Beijing Olympics. These were such a success, enhancing China's international image and arousing patriotism, that they paved the way to his appointment as Supreme Leader in 2012, ten years after his father's death.

Under Xi's reign, China's economic, social and military transformation has been dramatic. Seven hundred million people (about half the population) have been raised out of poverty. Beijing has now displaced New York City as the billionaire capital of the world. Membership of the Communist Party is tightly controlled, so that it only accepts party loyalists and only 6 per cent of Chinese people belong to it. Political power, influence and social status reside in the party, which elects the leadership group that appoints the 25-member Politburo, which decides policy directions. While Mao believed that the people should control the party, Xi believes the opposite.

Xi has always been aware of the dangers of instability. He saw the chaos created in the Soviet Union after Gorbachev's Perestroika liberalisation reforms, the student protests that led to the Tiananmen massacre in 1989, and he was alarmed by the Arab Spring in the Middle East. To prevent such political unrest occurring in China again, Xi has taken measures to ensure the party controls all aspects of Chinese society by placing Communist cadres in firms and organisations right down to the village level, many of whom act as spies. There are surveillance cameras everywhere and facial recognition is used to monitor citizens. Xi created a social citizenship card with a points system of rewards for patriotic behaviour and penalties that impact on lifestyle and employment opportunities.



Xi Jinping

Xi has introduced a form of one-person rule similar to Mao's. He has made it clear that there is no place for democratic or human rights in China and has clamped down on dissent. The internet and media are tightly controlled and all schools teach 'The Thoughts of Xi Jinping'. The Communist Party is an omnipresent but invisible presence at all levels of Chinese society, with members of the party required to be on boards of companies and law firms. He has implemented a widespread anti-corruption purge, particularly in the military, and recently sacked two generals. China is flexing its military muscle, particularly in the South China Sea and is becoming more nationalistic and xenophobic, as evidenced by the popularity of anti-Japanese movies.

Despite its phenomenal economic success, China faces serious challenges. A major problem is its declining birthrate as a consequence of the one-child policy introduced by Mao, which ran until 2015. The government's efforts to encourage couples to have more children have not really won over many Chinese and the population imbalance between young and old is growing. By 2025 it is predicted that the old-age pension fund will run out, due to shrinkage of the tax base.

Another major issue threatening China's social cohesion is the big gap between rich and poor, particularly between urban and rural dwellers. Xi is aware of the incongruity between conspicuous displays of affluence and socialist principles and warns of 'crimes of prosperity'. He instituted a sweeping anti-corruption campaign and purged party officials. He realises that private firms contribute 60 per cent of GNP and 70 per cent of innovation, and he doesn't want them hobbled; but he requires them to be 'patriotic capitalists' and has created a scheme of philanthropic giving. He cut real estate speculation and expanded the stock of affordable housing, and abolished rural taxes. Despite these reforms, the gap remains and many dissatisfied young people now yearn for the time of Mao, when all were meant to be equal. Xi is pinning his hopes on artificial intelligence and robotics to build China's future prosperity, but particularly for those who have migrated to the cities in search of work, only to find themselves in long queues for jobs in the gig economy, the future is not so bright.

The final problem is the issue of succession. Because Xi has surrounded himself with an older generation of loyalists through fear of challengers, it will be difficult to face up to the need for change and admit mistakes like Tiananmen if the country is to adapt to future challenges.

David Crawford



A QUIZ FOR YOU

Now that you have read this wonderful newsletter, with coffee cup in one hand, here is a little quiz. The page numbers for the answers are printed in bold.

Unfortunately, there is not a prize of a return trip for two to Antarctica for 10 correct answers!

1.	Where is the defibrillator at Stradbroke Park?	Page 4
2.	Which person born outside England was present at the founding of Van Diemen's Land?	Page 6
3.	Which female member of U3A Deepdene played university football?	Page 7
4.	What is Shazam?	Page 10
5.	When did the De Havilland DH9 biplanes arrive?	Page 12
6.	Who were the Coleman Commercial Cuties?	Page 13
7.	Who wrote "La famille Elliot"?	Page 28
8.	What is the name of the smallest recorder?	Page 24
9.	When was the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research founded?	Page 17
10.	Which famous artist had his right arm amputated?	Page 22

With thanks to Alan Ray



SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

WISHING YOU ALL HAPPY READING, SEASON'S GREETINGS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



Bea



Heather



Pam



Susie



Megan



2026 DATES

U3A Deepdene Term Dates 2026

	U3A Deepdene	Schools
Term 1	Monday 2 February to Friday 27 March	Wednesday 28 January to Thursday 2 April
Term 2	Monday 27 April to Friday 19 June	Monday 20 April to Friday 26 June
Term 3	Monday 20 July to Friday 11 September	Monday 13 July to Friday 18 September
Term 4	Monday 12 October to Friday 4 December	Monday 5 October to Friday 18 December

Public Holidays 2026

Monday 26 January	Australia Day
Monday 9 March	Labour Day
Friday 3 April	Good Friday
Sunday 5 April	Easter Sunday
Monday 6 April	Easter Monday
Saturday 25 April	Anzac Day
Monday 8 June	King's Birthday
Friday 25 September*	Friday before the AFL Grand Final*
Tuesday 3 November	Cup Day

** to be confirmed*

Source: business.vic.gov.au

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U3A DEEPDENE INFORMATION AND SPONSOR DETAILS

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T: 9817 7736(AH) 0408 019 815
E: u3adeepdeneinc@gmail.com
W: www.u3adeepdene.org.au

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

See our website for details of courses: www.u3adeepdene.org.au

The Program Guide for Term 1, 2026 will be distributed during the week commencing 24 November.

Enrolments for 2026 start on Monday 1 December.

TERM DATES 2025:

- Term 1** Monday 3 February to Friday 28 March
- Term 2** Monday 28 April to Friday 20 June
- Term 3** Monday 21 July to Friday 12 September
- Term 4** Monday 13 October to Friday 5 December

FUNCTIONS:

2025

- 12 November Wednesday Special
- 3 December End of Year Celebration
- 12 December Tutors' Lunch

2026

- 4 February Wednesday Special – watch emails for details

JAUNTY JANUARY VACATION PROGRAM: 19 January – 30 January

Information is not available at time of publication however please watch for emails.

THANK YOU:

Many thanks to all contributors to our Newsletter: writers, photographers, and proofreaders. Your support is greatly appreciated.

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Liz Brown, Tim Hodgetts, Anne Kemp, John Kidman, Errol Muir, Pam O'Brien, Peter Ogier, Susan Parajuli, Philip Russell, Anne Whittenbury, supplied by the contributor or presenter, or in the public domain.

NEWSLETTER EDITORS:

Bea Hardman, Heather Kelly, Pam O'Brien, Susie White and Megan Williamson.
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WE THANK OUR SPONSORS:



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