

In this newsletter you can find information about the latest happenings in the club.

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President's Report

Unprecedented!

That's THE word for 2020 I reckon! The COVID-19 pandemic has knocked many of us akimbo! I felt in shock when we ceased all activities until further notice in mid-March. Thankfully, since March 17 much has been going on behind the scenes.

With the move to online offerings, **Leigh Martin** has delighted us by "stepping up to the plate" to become a **Zoom Mentor**. Leigh joined the Committee earlier in the year when a vacancy occurred, and took up the role of **Assistant Secretary**.

With the ceasing of our face-to-face activities in March, U3A Network offered member U3As a "**Go Online – Promoting Social Connection**" package deal which included reimbursement for the cost of a Zoom Pro license, printed guides for using Zoom, and training in its use. In addition, Network established "Zoom Mentors" in each region. We are thrilled that Leigh has taken up this opportunity, to the advantage of our U3A.

So far 11 members of the Committee, Group Leaders and Volunteers have joined in training on Zoom, enabling a number of online activities during the lockdown.

This term we have successfully conducted **8 activities on Zoom - What's in a Drink, What Makes a Good Film, Beginners Mah-Jong social catch up, Friday Discussion Group, French Conversation**, three fortnightly **Guest Speakers, Chair Yoga** and a weekly **Happy Hour**.

Around a quarter of our members so far have participated in a Zoom-based activity.



Zoom training for the Committee

As at the end of June we have over 180 members, and we especially welcome two new members **Darren** and **Claudia** who have joined in recent weeks.

We hope that before too long we will be able to start back with some actual – rather than virtual - activities, with appropriate "social distancing". We in our "Third Age" are potentially at risk, and many of us feel somewhat fearful of re-joining face-to-face groups, particularly with the current threat of a "second wave".

Hume Council, Sunbury Community Health, and the Sunbury Football Social Club have advised us that their facilities may not be reopened to us before August. Along with U3A Network Victoria our Committee is considering requirements for safely running community groups in these facilities and our own Building 27 on Jacksons Hill. We need to listen carefully to the advice of the experts and hasten slowly back to "normal".

So, while we look forward hopefully to reduction of the COVID-19 risk and the further reduction of restrictions, let us come together online where we can to renew our social connectedness and take up new learning opportunities.

Also, our AGM is to be held on August 13, please reserve the date. This meeting is planned to be conducted online using Zoom.

I hope to meet you again soon on Zoom!

Jill Dyson, President.

Contact Us

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I urge you to give feedback to Kaye in response to her recent **Survey of Members** on ideas for further activities. We'd love to hear about your interests and passions, and of course we'd love you to offer to share these in a group! Contact Kaye via email at courses@u3asunbury.org.au

The **Art for Fun** group has set up a private Facebook page to share their ideas and art works; some of their work can be seen on our website page: <https://u3asunbury.org.au/art-for-fun-spending-time-during-the-crisis/>



French Conversation on Zoom

What's Happening in our Courses?

A new Courses Team has moved into gear, keeping us informed and entertained with on-line offerings despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The team comprises:

- **Courses Coordinator Kaye**
- **UMAS Coordinator Gab**, and
- **Secretary Jo**.

We thank the team for the great effort they have made since March to keep us in touch and to offer activities on-line. There have been many wonderful links provided in education, arts, music, theatre performances, the Seniors Festival Reimagined, exercise and many other aspects of well-being.

They are also working on providing increased support to Group Leaders, in helping to establish or conduct an activity and in learning to facilitate a group on Zoom if required.



Franki and her snow scene

In term 1, along with our previous groups from 2019, Kaye ran a new short course on the **Control of Micro-organisms in Food**. Little did we know there were so many pathogens that could cause us harm in poor food management: e-Coli, salmonellae, monocytogenes, fungi and golden staph to name a few!!

While this was rudely cut short in mid-March as we were about to refine our hazard management plans, we did learn how to wash our hands well, which has certainly proven to be of use since!

Starting in term 2 via Zoom Gillian ran a short course titled "**What's in a Drink**", a beginner's investigation into the chemistry of solutions, in particular, the remarkable features of water and the chemistry that explains its properties.

(As a participant, and with absolutely no previous knowledge, I found both these short courses to be a safe and fun way to learn a bit about 'sciency things' that I missed out on at school. Highly recommended! Jill.)

Science for the Curious

The Courses team has just advertised a new beginners **Science for the Curious** series, comprising 5 weekly one-hour sessions commencing on Wednesday July 15. The plan is to run two such courses per term.

You might have never taken a science course in your life, but you are fascinated by how Science explains our lives, so this course is for you! You do not need a background in science, just a keen interest in finding out how things work. Luckily, we can do it by Zoom to start.

The first block is called **Blood for Beginners**, led by Kaye Coates. It will include: what blood does; the components of blood; what happens when things go wrong; and how to decipher blood tests. It will have an interactive approach with lots of time for questions and answers. Kaye has a degree in Medical Laboratory Science, majoring in haematology.

The Courses team welcome suggestions for future blocks in Science for the Curious. Some of the ideas so far are:

- The Ins and Outs of Breathing;
- Physics – The Mechanics of Things;
- Everyday Chemistry;
- Looking at the Sky;
- A Physiotherapist Explains

If you have a passion for a particular area, even if you are a keen amateur, we would love to hear from you as a potential Leader. Contact the team via email: courses@u3asunbury.org.au

Social Seniors

In July, we are running another new course, facilitated for us by U3A Network Victoria, called **“Social Seniors”**, commencing on 7 July for 6 weeks using Zoom.

If you would like to extend your digital skills, broaden your social networks, share your stories creatively, and connect with people on social media, Social Seniors is for you.

Social Seniors comprises 6 x 2-hour workshops to introduce you to a range of simple tools that you can use to produce short films and share local stories with people with similar interests.



U3As experience is that seniors with the following interests have been interested in joining the program:

- Using social media to connect with family and friends
- Genealogy / family history
- Walking groups or local history
- Creative writing or Photography
- Preparing “this is your life” presentations (such as for milestone family events or eulogies)

As well as sharing “digital stories” and discovering social opportunities, this program will help you address any concerns you may have around online privacy, safety and security.

For further information on Social Seniors and to discuss your particular interest areas, contact Jill at president@u3asunbury.org.au

If you need help to login to UMAS to join this or any of our other current offerings or to check your enrolments contact Gab via email on umas@u3asunbury.org.au

Outings and Events

On the 18 February Marlene organised an outing by train to the **State Library of Victoria** to see two of their wonderful FREE exhibitions: The Changing Face of Victoria and World of the Book, including lunch together at the Father's Office restaurant.

In late February, 25 members led by Susan took a **day trip to Williamstown**. Following a ferry ride from Southbank along the Yarra and across the Bay, the group enjoyed lunch at Pier 41, the restaurant at Royal Yacht Club Victoria, Williamstown. Susan wrote a lovely account of the day which can be viewed with photos on our website at <https://u3asunbury.org.au/ferry-to-williamstown-and-lunch-at-the-royal-victoria-yacht-club-26-february-2020/>

On the 5th March we were privileged to have a guided tour of the **Sunbury Global Learning Centre and Library**, only very recently opened. Such a wonderful facility for our local community! Heather from the library even generously provided us with a home-cooked morning tea!



Alan, Jim and Bruce try out a meeting room at the GLC

The **Dining Out** group enjoyed a lunch at the popular Soltan Pepper in Romsey in January, an 'all you can eat' feast at the newly opened Okami Japanese Restaurant in Sunbury in February, and dinner at the Gisborne Telegraph Hotel in March. Unfortunately, the end of term 1 lunch at the Galli Estate had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our term 1 coach outing **Around the Bay** and the planned outing and boat trip on the **Goulbourn River** in May have also had to be cancelled – hopefully only postponed to a later date.

We were also looking forward to morning tea and a recital by the popular **Huffers and Puffers Retirees Brass Band**. See our website for more details of the band – hopefully we will host them again in the future:

<https://u3asunbury.org.au/oct-10th-huffers-puffers/>



We hope to see them in the future

Our **Film and Theatre** enthusiasts kicked off the year in January with an outing to the Sunbury Readings Cinema to see "Little Women" based on Louisa May Alcott's well-known book. Participants enjoyed a meal before the film at the adjacent Itahlia Restaurant. Also in January a large group went to Watergardens to see "A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood", with dinner following at Café Greco. In February we held another 'Ladies Night' at the movies to see "Emma" from the Jane Austen book, with dinner afterwards at Itahlia Restaurant.

In March a group of 11 went to the Mount Players Theatre in Macedon to see "Switzerland", a play by Joanna Murray-Smith, a psychological thriller about Patricia Highsmith (who wrote the Ridley books), with lunch at a nearby cafe in Macedon.

At this stage only online events are being conducted – many of us are so missing the monthly Dining Out group!

But it's been great to have a social catch up with members at the weekly Happy Hour on Zoom, on Fridays at 4pm.



Ready for Happy Hour on Zoom!

Guest Speakers

In February we had a very interesting local speaker, Neil Addison, on the **Origins and History of Freemasonry**, which dates back to the 1630s. As Freemasonry grew around the world, a constitution was drawn up setting out all Freemasonry practices and rituals and requirements for entry and for progression through the ranks. Today the Freemasons have changed into a helping, philanthropic and community-minded organisation, while some of the ancient rituals are still retained.

In February we also hosted over 80 participants in the **RACV and Hume Council funded "Years Ahead" program**, a single session road safety program especially designed for older drivers.

Speakers were very informative and encouraging: RACV encourages all drivers to continue responsible driving for as long as they are safe. The Years Ahead program is designed to give people information to help them achieve this.

This session was a collaboration between Hume City Council, RACV, and U3A Sunbury with the generous donation of facilities by the Sunbury Football Social Club. It was provided both to U3A members and members of the public free of charge.



President Jill with two of the Years Ahead presenters

In March **Rob Hyatt** from the **Koorie Heritage Trust** spoke about his role as Manager of the Trust and the range of education programmes and activities that are available. The Trust holds "the only public collection in Victoria dedicated solely to Koorie art and culture, comprising artefacts, pictures and photographs as well as oral history...".

In addition, they showcase the work of young and emerging Victorian Aboriginals, have guided walking tours and offer comprehensive educational and cultural opportunities. Rob was most generous in answering many questions and giving us the opportunity to learn more about the Victorian indigenous way of life. Learn more at their site: <https://korieheritagetrust.com.au/>

Since March the Events team have risen again to the COVID-19 challenge, despite having to cancel our planned trips, and it is wonderful to see our revised Guest Speakers sessions underway in the new online format via Zoom.



Ross and Participants at our first Guest Speakers on Zoom

In March we welcomed **Ross Martin** who gave us a most interesting talk on the participation of **Australians on the Western Front in France in World War I**. Ross told us about the significant contribution of Australian soldiers to saving *Villers-Bretonneux* in France and the on-going connection they have with Australians today.

The children of the little village were especially indebted to Australia: after the war it was money donated from school children in Victoria that paid for the rebuilding of the village school, renamed "Victoria School". A Town Hall plaque recalls the sacrifice of 1200 Australian soldiers in the area, and the main street is Rue de Melbourne.

During the Australian bushfires in January this year, the Mayor of Villers-Bretonneux, Patrick Simon, organised fundraising online to help, which raised over €22,000. Sadly, in May, this gentleman died at the age of 64 from COVID-19.

On June 4th over 20 participants on Zoom enjoyed hearing **Bruno Lettieri** speak about his life, his values and stories gleaned from conversations with many well-known writers and personalities.



Bruno at a Twilight School evening

Bruno has a long-standing connection with Sunbury as a former teacher in the adult Creative Writing classes held at Victoria University on the Hill, and at the Twilight School, a community-based project held at Rupertswood that Bruno initiated and steered. Bruno now freelances at festivals and libraries as *Bruno Goes Everywhere*.

Bruno now lives part time in Australia and in Bali with his partner. His interviews and photos and upcoming events can be found at brunogoeseverywhere.com

At the third Guest Speaker session for this term we welcomed 3 guests from the **Walter and Eliza Hall Institute** who told us about their important research work across a wide spectrum of medical areas including cancer, immunology and viruses, including COVID-19. We learned of the long education and training path many researchers take, and the high regard in which the Institute is viewed world-wide. Read more about the Institute on their site: <https://www.wehi.edu.au/>

Many thanks to the volunteers and members who have contributed to the success of Events and Speakers this half year, especially **Marlene, Lesley, Susan, Beris, Ena and Renate**.

We look forward to more interesting speakers in months to come – if you have some suggestions for our Speakers and Events team to follow up, contact them at events@u3asunbury.org.au

Committee and Volunteer Matters

We are delighted to welcome **Beris Cook** to the Committee. Beris has been a member of our club since 2017 and an active member of the Events team. Beris will look after our asset register and equipment. Thanks for volunteering Beris!

Three new volunteers have also joined us: **Carole Gray** will take over from Kris in the Membership Secretary role, **Ann Potter** has taken on the challenge of Webmaster, and **Kaye Coates** has taken on the role of Courses Coordinator.

We take this opportunity to thank two former members of the Committee who have stepped down for personal reasons: **Liz Coady** and **Bev Collins**. A number of our Committee will also be retiring at the AGM - **Mary Wicks, Kris Berkes, and Marlene Cann** - and will be sadly missed. All have made significant and valued contributions to our club, sincerely appreciated. We hope we will continue to see you joining in our club activities.

Don't forget our Annual General Meeting is on August 13, an opportunity to consider joining the Committee for 2020-21.

Our Committee and Volunteers are crucial to the sustainability of our club. If you'd like to offer to volunteer, be it as a Group Leader, a Committee Member or a valued helper in other ways, we'd love to hear from you!

Projects in Progress

Five members of the Committee have joined in the **Building Community Engagement Project** together with other U3As in the Northern Metropolitan region under the guidance of Glen Wall, one of the Vice Presidents of U3A Network Victoria and President of U3A Whittlesea.

Mary Wicks, Marlene Cann, Bernadette Young, Leigh Martin and myself are participating in this project.

This project aims to build the sustainability of our club though broadening our connections with our key stakeholders and with other like-minded community organisations in the local area.

There are quite a few groups that interest seniors around Sunbury, and being interconnected with them helps us to become better known and to extend our membership in ways that best suit our community.

We are excited to collaborate with Sunbury Community Health (SCH) as recipients of a **Hume Council COVID-19 Partnership Grant** to assist in helping isolated Seniors in Sunbury to become more connected.

Together with volunteers from SCH, the Sunbury Neighbourhood House and the Sunbury Police Community Register, we aim to connect with Seniors in a variety of ways: face-to-face, telephone, via publicity and the media and through collaboration with other support organisations and clubs.

Many of you belong to more than one such organisation – maybe Probus, the Salvation Army, Freemasons, Legacy, Church or Sporting or Book groups etc – and we'd love to hear from you to discuss how we might work together on this project.

In addition, Sunbury U3A will offer the aforementioned **“Social Seniors” course** to both U3A members and local senior members of the public.

If you know of an older person in Sunbury who is particularly isolated, or would like to become more confident using digital technology to connect up with family or friends, contact Jill to discuss how we might assist.

Member Profile – Marlene Cann

Trev and I came to Sunbury about 11 eleven years ago after I retired from Social Work and we wanted to get away from the constant threat of bushfire in the Belgrave area where we lived for 24 years on an acre bush block. We were evacuated three times over a six-month period and the bushfire season was getting more troublesome and over a longer period of time each year. We were really lucky that our daughter and 3 grandchildren lived in Gisborne so that is what drew us to the Sunbury area.

We have not been disappointed. Apart from migrating to Australia 47 years ago, I believe coming to Sunbury was our best move. We love it here. People are friendly and welcoming, it is close to Melbourne which we love, and yet it has a beautiful country community feel.

Both Trev and I really enjoy being involved in the community, which is a great way for making new friends. We are part of the Heart Foundation Walking Group, the Sunbury Seniors Wednesday afternoon Table Tennis Club which we established about 6 years ago, Probus and of course Sunbury U3A.



Marlene and Jill at the 2018 AGM

Being part of Sunbury U3A has been great, although in the past, it was a lot of hard work at times. I was the Secretary for 3 years, have been part of the committee for about 7 years, the leader of the Book to DVD for many years and Trev and I organized the Morning Musical Group and the Movie Club.

Now with Lesley I arrange the Thursday morning Guest Speakers Group and together with Beris, Susan and Ena I am part of the Events group that organizes outings and Events for our members, which is really rewarding and great fun.

My most recent love is our Square-Dancing Group which Lesley and I organized together. We have a ball. We laugh a lot, mostly at ourselves and get some exercise too. The group is marvellous, no-one takes it too seriously, it is all about having fun and getting to know each other. Just before the lockdown we were starting to go to Square Dancing on a Saturday night with a meal beforehand. Happy days.

What does Sunbury U3A mean to me? It is a great way of getting involved and building a community, meeting and getting to know new people, building friendships, sharing fun, learning something new and challenging yourself.

Whilst I have had many beautiful moments in Sunbury U3A, one that stands out is our Guest Speakers "In Celebration" for Mary Wicks. Mary, together with Lorraine Donohue, had for 10 years arranged the speakers for the Guest Speakers Group, she was a past President, long term member and committee member and importantly, had been honoured for her many years of community work in Sunbury by being granted an Australia Day Award.

We came together as a "group" to honour Mary's achievements but also show her our love, respect, friendship and thanks for everything she had done for both Sunbury U3A and also our Sunbury community. It was a lovely occasion and I hope you enjoyed it Mary.

[Ed: how typical of Marlene, to end a profile with a tribute to someone else! Such a warm-hearted and giving member of our club, thank you for all you do Marlene!]

Congratulations are in Order!

Although our dancing classes have had to cease, we are very happy to hear that two of our Ballroom and New Vogue Dancing group have recently "tied the knot". **Congratulations to Marcia and Kevin** – here is a tribute from group leader Michael Allan:

Wedding Bells for Marcia and Kevin.



The Happy Couple on their Wedding Day

About 12 months ago I happened to meet Kevin Hale in Sunbury. Kevin and I were work colleagues from Ansett Engineering and in conversation Kevin asked if Margaret and I were still dancing as he had started to dance and was keen to keep learning. So I gave him the details of our U3A "Rainbow" dancing group and a few weeks later he and his dance partner, Marcia, came and had a dance with us. From that beginning they both joined Sunbury U3A and have been enthusiastic regulars with us since then.

Marcia was living in Melton at that time and they were also dancing with a group from the Senior

Citizens club there. They introduced Brian Swift, another member of that group, who has also joined Sunbury U3A and become a regular at our dances. They have all fitted into our group very well and become valued members and in turn introduced some of us to a friendly monthly evening dance at Melton which we have enjoyed and will do so again when life returns to normal.

Late last year Marcia and Kevin went on an extended cruise of the Mediterranean and Scandinavian waters. They came back thoroughly enthused with their experience, so much so that Marcia was very proudly showing off a sparkling engagement ring, with a wedding date set for April 25th.

They decided that not withstanding the virus lockdown they would go ahead anyway and so the sun shone for them on the 25th at the Church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Sunbury. It has been heart-warming to see Marcia and Kevin so happy together and we all wish them great happiness, good health and lots more dancing in their future.

Michael Allan.

Ed: And while we're on the dancing group, sorry to hear that Rita recently had a fall and broke a rib, we hope she is recovering well. She has been known to be a bit more active! Here she is clowning with fellow Rainbow Dancer Cindy.



Cindy with Rita Bewitched!

And to cheer us up even more...

FEELING OLD AGE?

The boss walked into the office one morning not knowing his zipper was down and his fly area wide open. His assistant walked up to him and said, 'This morning when you left your house, did you close your garage door?'

The boss told her he knew he'd closed the garage door, and walked into his office puzzled by the question. As he finished his paperwork, he suddenly noticed his fly was open, and zipped it up. He then understood his assistant's question about his 'garage door'.

He headed out for a cup of coffee and paused by her desk to ask, 'When my garage door was open, did you see my Jaguar parked in there?'

She smiled and said, 'No, I didn't. All I saw was an old minivan with two flat tyres.'

I was in the McDonald's drive-through this morning, and the young lady behind me leaned on her horn because I was taking too long to place my order.

"Take the high road," I thought to myself. So, when I got to the first window, I paid for her order along with my own. The cashier must have told her what I'd done, because as we moved up she leaned out her window and waved to me and mouthed "thank you" - obviously embarrassed that I had repaid her rudeness with a kindness.

When I got to the second window I showed them both receipts and took her food, too. Now she has to go back to the end of the line and start all over. Don't honk your horn at old people.

A senior citizen said to his eighty-year old buddy: 'So I hear you're getting married?' 'Yep!' 'Do I know her?' 'Nope!' 'This woman, is she good looking?' 'Not really.' 'Is she a good cook?' 'Naw, she can't cook too well.' 'Does she have lots of money?' 'Nope! Poor as a church mouse.' 'Well, then, is she good in bed?' 'I don't know.' 'Why in the world do you want to marry her then?'

'Because she can still drive!'

Thanks Bob.