



NEWSLETTER - TERM 4, 2024

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Welcome one and all to our final term for 2024. How often do you ask – ‘where did the year go?’ I really noticed the speed a week or so ago when I was asked for copy for sessions I am planning to lead in Term 1 2025. One might say it is a function of (my) age or then again, it may show how brilliantly organised our teams of Coordinators are – and indeed, need to be to ensure all is planned, detailed and loaded or printed in time for all our members to plan their weeks in future months and into next year.



Susie White

In early October a number of members of your U3A Deepdene Committee of Management joined the 2024 State Conference of U3A Network Victoria and U3A Melbourne City at ‘The Green Brain’, RMIT Storey Hall in Swanston Street Melbourne. (Have you ever wondered, as I have, what that large green lumpy sculpture represents as I look from the forecourt of the Museum up Swanston Street towards the University of Melbourne?) The 40th Network Victoria AGM was held in that Green Brain on the first day of the Conference, and then a series of excellent speakers and a range of workshops followed in days 2 and 3, as well as a walking tour in the city, a Yarra Sunset Cruise and a Conference Dinner where Gerald Mansour who was the first, and now former, Commissioner for Senior Victorians, was the speaker.

Of particular note for U3As as organisations was a presentation by Glen Wall, Chair of U3A Australia Ltd. He detailed the Vision and Purpose of our national organisation, as follows –

To promote within the Australian community and to the national government the contribution that the U3A movement makes to positive ageing, and the benefit of lifelong learning to the mental and physical health and social engagement to older Australians.

Glen listed the major achievements of U3A Australia to date as follows:

Advocacy – U3A and Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia Partnership

- Input into Federal Government on issues facing seniors. In particular, access and ability to use technology to age in place – ie in the location of their choice, often in their own home

The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC)

- Established direct contact point for U3A Networks to obtain support to assist their Member U3As’ transition to comply with the new ACNC and Tax office regulations

RMIT University Shaping Connection Co-Design

- Facilitated the sharing of the research with U3A State Networks and commenced developing a national approach to Digital Skills mentoring

NBN

- National support for the Live Life Digitally Connected Program

Keyton Retirement Villages and Pickle Ball Australia

- Support for U3A setting up Pickle Ball groups. (Pickle Ball is a game like tennis, but played on a smaller court with light paddles and low bouncing plastic balls.)

Officeworks U3A Buying Group

- Discount at Officeworks for U3A printing and materials

Telstra

- Digital Mentoring Pilot (Victoria and Qld)

Other speakers included **Dr Norman Swan** – well known to most at U3A Deepdene, who spoke about the ageing myth saying that the environment – social and natural - does play a big role in how we age and how we live;

Dr Joanna Maxwell, Project Director Age Research, Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), whose speech was entitled ‘What’s Age got to do with it?’ spoke about how people are treated and the assumptions that are made about older people; and

Dr Rebecca Nisbet from The Florey Institute (Global Research – Alzheimer’s) spoke about the way that she and her team at Florey work internationally to research the development of, and how to reduce the effects of Alzheimer’s in the brain. While dementia is the overriding name for the disease, it is important that people get a proper diagnosis as they have discovered that there are several versions of dementia with Alzheimer’s being the most common. I was interested to learn from Rebecca that cognitive impairment is NOT a manifestation of ordinary healthy ageing. Cognitive impairment may be due to reversible causes or may indicate early dementia, and it requires careful clinical assessment.

As at all conferences, there were many interesting people to talk to and to discuss the range of interests and activities within the various U3As – from the bigger organisations in the metropolitan areas to small rural groups across Victoria and eastern Australia.

As this is the final Newsletter for 2024, I want to give my special thanks to a number of people who work quietly in the background to ensure all areas of our U3A are operating well. First, there are the Short Course Coordinators who themselves are coordinated by Judy Still as overall Short Course Coordinator. They are Lois Heycox, Suzanne Collings and Helen Page, Margaret Phillips and Andrew Roberts, John Cavedon, Dan Rabinovici, Anna Harley, Fiona Malcolm, Vince Giuca, and Errol Muir. Some of these people also run programs but I mention their names here as they are the people who seek session leaders and often spend quite a deal of time in planning and managing the sessions for each leader. The areas for which they are responsible are listed on the first page of the Program Guide. Kay Axsentieff also works with a team to organise the weekly News and Views sessions, while Pam O’Brien plans and manages the weekly Travel program. I have not mentioned all the Full Year Program leaders here, but I hope you will be aware of their names and areas of work as you look through the Full Year Course Guide. These Full Year Program leaders plan and organise their sessions at least once a week every week, usually across all four terms.

Then there are people who check and proofread the Newsletters and Program Guides to make sure the dates, times and venues all work. Alan Ray checks the legality of Newsletter content, and Joan Anson and John Kidman proofread it. Joan and John also proofread the Program Guides along with Anne Miller, Beth Light, Susan Fooks, and Heather Kelly. Anne Semple contacts all Short Course presenters and finalises their biographical information for introductions as well as the special tech needs for their presentations. Still others set up and assist session leaders with the technical parts of their presentations too. Our thanks to you all and my sincere apologies to those whose names I have missed. Please know that is my lack of knowledge re everyone’s roles, not my lack of appreciation for every voluntary activity you have taken to maintain our U3A Deepdene as a well-oiled, effective and friendly organisation! I know I speak on behalf of all our U3A members when I thank Jenny Cash who looks after so many areas of our administration so capably. Jenny organises a number of others who volunteer for particular areas of administration like the roll marking on Zoom sessions as well as all face to face full year courses. Ilza Dulmanis, along with Rhonda McCaw and Ian Withell, has continued to look after coordination of our hospitality teams during

the past year. I trust most who read this have taken the opportunity to join one of the special occasions where everyone can meet and chat with each other while sharing some of the wonderful goodies the Hospitality Teams have organised.

Finally, I hope you will all enjoy the rest of Term 4 and keep in touch with each other during the Christmas/ New Year break. Please let my ongoing reminders about the importance of social connection for all older people encourage you to make that phone call to invite another U3A Deepdene member to share a cup of tea or coffee or a glass of wine somewhere nearby.

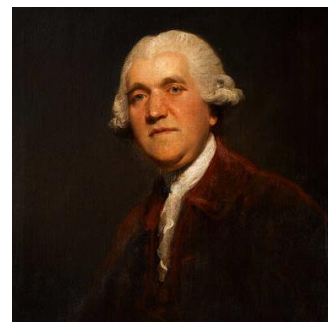
Susie White

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JOSIAH WEDGWOOD AND THE NEOCLASSICAL IDEAL

Many of us are familiar with Wedgwood ceramics, both the dinner sets and the distinctive ‘Wedgwood blue’ pottery dishes and vases which used to grace mantelpieces and dressing tables. Few know the story of the man who made the Wedgwood name famous. He was Josiah Wedgwood, a prodigious figure among innovators, whose unique combination of qualities and marketing genius transformed English pottery and industrialisation.

Amanda Dunsmore, senior curator of Decorative Arts and Antiquities at the NGV, gave a spellbinding lecture to the arts group, as she brought to life Josiah Wedgwood, his times and his influential contemporaries. He lived during the eighteenth-century neoclassical period in England. Amanda first set the scene by sketching the contemporary context of the arts, describing how, from around the early 1700s, the late Baroque style was overtaken by the Palladian style. It was a style embracing strict symmetry and balance, invoking a sense of the ideal, following the classical concepts of ancient Greece and Rome. However, from the 1760s onwards the Scottish architect Robert Adam evolved a more flexible style of architecture in his great English country house designs, softening his architectural lines with curves, lightness and grace, and developing a concept of a complete, unified interior style of furniture and decoration in keeping with the architecture. Notable examples were the English country houses of Syon House, Brentford, and Kedleston Hall, the seat of the Curzon family in Derbyshire.



Josiah Wedgwood was born in 1730 in North Staffordshire, and with minimal education entered the family pottery business at the age of fourteen. He began to experiment early with a scientific approach to innovation. He became a partner of Thomas Whieldon, owner of the largest pottery of the day, where Wedgwood was given free rein. One of his early experiments involved a green glaze on table and tea wares, moulded in the shapes of vegetables, with cauliflowers being especially popular. His improved 'creamware' ceramic body was so favoured by the Queen that she ordered a complete set of the dinnerware and by 1766 Wedgwood had been appointed Potter to her Majesty, Queen Charlotte. With a stroke of marketing genius, Wedgwood then changed the name from 'creamware' to 'queensware' and opened a London showroom.

During this time Wedgwood promoted and supported the successful building of the Grand Trunk Canal linking all the potteries on the river Trent with Liverpool on the Mersey. This enabled pottery and the products needed in manufacturing to be easily transported by inland water. The Grand Trunk Canal was vital to the smooth distribution of his wares. Wedgwood forged friendships with men of influence, including Thomas Bentley, a cultivated Liverpool merchant and Matthew Boulton, a leading figure of the industrial revolution. Bentley knew Sir William Hamilton, Ambassador to Naples and collector of ancient Greek vases, who became another significant friend and supported Wedgwood's ceramic experiments.

In the late 1760s Wedgwood and Bentley opened a new factory near Burslem, named Etruria, after the Italian region where many ancient Greek vases were found. They embarked on the production of ornamental vases, specialising in improving black-basalt stoneware, which could imitate antique bronze. Many of the vases were decorated with classical motifs, in the neoclassical taste. Large plaques with classical friezes designed by the leading sculptor John Flaxman were made in jasperware by Wedgwood, and became popular. The friezes of graceful classical figures in white relief were set against the pastel blues and greens of the plaques and were favoured by Robert Adam to enhance his interior decoration.



In 1782 Sir Walter Hamilton, himself a great classicist, brought back to England the famous Roman Barberini vase, having acquired it in Italy from the Barberini family in Rome. Wedgwood was allowed to borrow it to take to his factory to copy, and it was to become the most famous Wedgwood vase, named the Portland vase after the then owner, the Duke of Portland. Wedgwood considered it to be his greatest achievement, a supreme example of his work as artist, chemist, potter and entrepreneur. Flaxman considered it 'the apex of perfection'. It is still in production, and the National Gallery of Victoria owns two eighteenth-century Portland vases. Not only was Wedgwood a pioneer potter, but also a man of great social conscience, a leader in the movement for the abolition of slavery. In 1787 he designed an anti-slavery medallion with the inscription 'AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER?' which helped the movement gain momentum and became the signature image of the abolitionists, worn by both the men and women who supported the abolition of slavery.



Josiah Wedgwood died in 1795 at the age of 64, having contributed to the great eighteenth-century concepts of neo-classicism and the Enlightenment. He lived his life in harmony with the quotation that 'no greater compliment was ever paid from one age to another than the eighteenth century paid to ancient Greece and Rome'.

Gillian Forwood

Images:

Portrait of Josiah Wedgwood by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1782 (The V&A Wedgwood Collection, Stoke-on-Trent)

Dancing Hours plaque, by John Flaxman Jr, c 1778 (The V&A Wedgwood Collection)

Portland vase, 1st edition by Wedgwood c 1790 (National Gallery of Victoria)

THE REMARKABLE SANDREW COLLECTION



Sandra Powell and Andrew King (pictured left) spoke to a small but enthusiastic audience on 14 August and, I think, changed a lot of hearts and minds about the cultural value of street art. Their introduction to art was unusual. In the 1980s they had a fashion accessory business which took them on overseas trips a number of times each year. In London they were introduced to Australian modernist art through friends living there and they discovered artists such as Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, the Boyds, and, after completing a Christie's art appreciation course, they started to collect artists such as Clarice Beckett and Joy Hester.

On another memorable trip to London, Andrew picked up books about Banksy and Blek the Rat and their street art, and they were both hooked. Those books changed their lives. On returning to Melbourne, one of the world's leading street art locations, they sought out street artists here - in particular Rone. Through him they met a group of street artists working from a studio in Collingwood, and having gained their trust, started to buy art from them, purchasing over 60 paintings on their first foray. They learnt about the art and the various artists, and they bought directly from the artists.

Street art started as unauthorised painting of murals on walls, and graffiti. The main focus was art outside, which was free for everybody. However, homeowners and businesses found the works joyful and began to commission works for which they paid. Collectors started buying their work and also commissioning works on paper, canvas and board.

Eventually Sandra and Andrew sold their collection of 70 modernist works to help finance their new street art collection. Over the years they have accumulated 2000 works and have organized street art exhibitions here and overseas, including a hugely successful exhibition of Australian artists in San Francisco in 2011 called 'Young and Free'!

All the artists they first met in Collingwood have gone on to successful full-time careers in art including Rone (many of you would have seen his exhibition in the Flinders Street Station Ballroom) and Adnate, who this year was the Packing Room prize winner at the Archibald with his portrait of Baker Boy.

Three hundred of their art works adorn the walls of their home in Melbourne where they often play host to visiting artists from overseas. The house rules are no tagging – except on the ceiling of the stables. Apparently, a fascinating ceiling!

They shared several interesting and amusing anecdotes including one about a car with exploding fire extinguishers full of paint (used for painting up high). It was a 40-degree day so the windows were open and many passers-by were showered. The culprits were easy to find – they left a very impressive paint trail! Another fascinating story was the secret Banksy exhibition in the UK to which they were specially invited, but only able to find out which town it was in the night before. It was held in a disused theme park, and nothing was for sale. When asked during question time if they had ever met Banksy the answer was 'if you haven't met him, you say you haven't. If you have met him, you say you haven't – we haven't!!'

Finally, Sandra and Andrew are hopeful that a museum of street art will eventually be founded in Melbourne. After many years of negotiations with council, state government, government departments etc they hope it might happen during their lifetime – but are not holding their breath.

Diane Tiffin

THE HENTY COLLECTION

On 16 October Dr Laura Jovic, a curator and professional historian, presented a most interesting, very detailed talk on the Henty Costume Collection recently donated to the Kew Historical Society.

In her professional role, Dr Jovic was asked to provide a significance assessment for the Henty Costume Collection, donated by the descendants of Francis Henty, a wealthy sheep grazier from Merino Downs in the Western District of Victoria.

At the centre of the collection were the beautiful costumes worn by Mary Anne Henty and her daughter Alice. These were worn between 1842 and 1880 but were also passed down and worn by other Henty daughters and grand-daughters. The garments were professionally made and some were remodelled as they passed through the subsequent generations of the Henty family. For example, Alice's 1875 wedding dress was later worn by her great grand-daughters for their own weddings in 1943 and 1944.

Dr Jovic provided fascinating background detail on the Henty family who originally settled in Tasmania then moved across Bass Strait to Portland, in 1834. The Henty family also had strong links with the Kew area where there is a Henty Street and many of their descendants are buried in the Kew Cemetery.

The women of the wealthy Henty family carried the burden of respectability, and their exquisite dresses and accessories reflected this.

This was a fascinating, beautifully illustrated talk by Dr Jovic. The depth of research about the exquisitely made dresses and accessories provided us with a very welcome window into a bygone era in Victoria's costume history.

Barbara Steele



Examples of beautiful Henty costumes, photographed by Dr Jovic at Villa Alba

As many of you will know, we often take photos of our members at various classes, outings, and social functions. If you do not wish to be photographed would you please let the photographer know, and step aside. U3A Deepdene makes every effort to obtain the consent of members to their photographs which appear in this online Newsletter.

MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Approximately 60 U3A members were privileged to attend a most informative and inspirational talk given by Maria Cartwright (pictured below at BPC) about Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).



Maria, a nurse and midwife, has been actively involved with MSF since 1996. She has served on 16 overseas missions with MSF. We learnt about some of the challenges and rewards in her role as Head of Mission and Medical Co-Ordinator on these placements. More recently she has served on the MSF board and is still actively involved in the organization.

MSF is an international humanitarian organisation which is not-for-profit and independent. It is the largest emergency medical agency in the world and it provides medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics and disasters.



The organisation prides itself on its neutrality and impartiality. By being independent from political interference, the organisation can advocate more effectively for the people whom they are trying to help. For example, they can negotiate with Big Pharma about reducing prices of much needed medications.

MSF is a very practical organisation. It asks the question 'Who needs the help most?' It can mobilise very quickly and efficiently to assist populations in distress, eg in natural disasters, wars, epidemics or when people are displaced. MSF can respond quickly and provide initial medical care, sanitation and nutrition. Maria spoke of vast storage areas in France, Africa and elsewhere, which can be mobilized, whatever sorts of kits are needed quickly. An example of this would be cholera treatment kits.

MSF actively seeks assistance from local staff, and in fact, 80% of their workforce is from the local area where they are working. These local staff members receive valuable training and provide excellent local knowledge. Resources are left behind when MSF withdraws from an area to continue their good work.

All sorts of professions are needed for MSF's work: doctors, nurses, admin. and logistic staff, psychologists, water and sanitation experts, tradies such as electricians and mechanics, medical anthropologists and epidemiologists.



Some of the figures mentioned by Maria about MSF were mind blowing: They have been/are involved in more than 70 countries. In 2023, they provided 16.5 million consultations, 337,000 births were supported, there were 493,900 mental health consultations, 1.9 million emergency room admissions, 4,623,700 vaccinations administered and 62,200 survivors of sexual violence were treated. They have a worldwide workforce of 50,000+ staff.

The Australian branch of MSF sends approximately 150 staff to field missions every year. They go to places such as the Sudan, Yemen, Gaza, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone and Latin America.

Maria spoke of the challenges faced in the world in 2024 which are creating more work and more concern for organisations like MSF. Some of these challenges include: Security and Safety, Climate Change which is contributing to more natural disasters, the spread of diseases such as malaria, unrest within states as well as inter-country conflict, large numbers of displaced people moving around the world, lack of respect

for humanitarian space eg bombing of hospitals, lack of respect for the rules of war and fewer people volunteering because of personal economic constraints.

MSF in Australia has an income of around \$100 million each year, largely from individual donations. 80% of this money is used in the field and 20% goes on administration costs.

All U3A members present at the talk left far better informed on the work of MSF. I am sure all were impressed by and in awe of the 'can do' attitude of the organisation as outlined by Maria.

Thank you, Maria, and Well Done! Médecins Sans Frontières.

Wendy Ray

PREVENTION OF FALLS AND FOOT HEALTH

Matthew Dilnot delivered an interesting and enlightening presentation to 70 members of U3A, providing valuable knowledge on health and the vulnerabilities we face as we age.

With a broad background in podiatry, Matthew practices at the Melbourne Foot Clinic and is an academic at La Trobe University. He has knowledge and experience in consultancy and academia and has authored books on podiatric biomechanics and treatment. He is also a past president of the Australian Podiatry Association, with particular interests in lower limb strengthening, high-risk medical care, nail and wart surgery, diabetes management, and nail restoration.

Presentation

The statistics on falls in Australia are frightening! Each year, 30-35% of Australians aged 65 and older experience a fall, and this figure increases to 40% for those aged over 70. Falls often result in serious injuries, including fractures and head trauma. Alarmingly, there are 18,700 hip fractures annually, with an associated mortality rate of 20-25%. Additionally, 50% of individuals who suffer from hip fractures are unable to regain their previous level of function.

Matthew shared a 37-point plan aimed at preventing falls and promoting foot health. This plan included exercises that are both effective and easy to incorporate into daily routines without being too onerous. He also presented a range of diagnostic tests he uses to assess an individual's strength and balance, along with exercises to address any deficiencies identified.

The talk was a wake-up call for many attendees and judging from the long question-and-answer session, there was great interest from the audience in putting into practice the advice that Matthew so generously provided and solutions that they could follow.

To further assist, Matthew made his PowerPoint presentation available so that participants could continue practising the exercises at home.

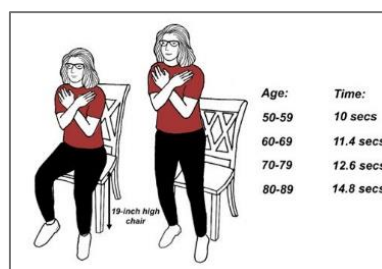
Overall, Matthew gave hope and direction to the audience to improve their health and wellbeing.

Helen Bruckner

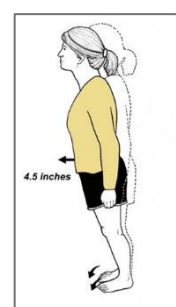
One foot balance



Sit to stand



Forward lean



U3A DEEPDENE RECORDER ENSEMBLES

U3A is the ideal environment for helping amateur recorder players make music together. The recorder is such a versatile and accessible instrument, with an endlessly varied repertoire.

U3A Deepdene has the largest number of enrolments for recorder playing of any U3A in the Eastern suburbs, because classes are available at all levels - from those beginning their journey, through those reacquainting themselves with the instrument or playing music, to those who have played for many years.

On Friday, 20 September, approximately 50 recorder players gathered at BPC for a Celebration of Recorder Playing at U3A Deepdene.



This was an opportunity for the different ensembles to play to each other and then join together and play music as one large ensemble.

The feast of musical items ranged from early music through Renaissance, Baroque and folk tunes to more modern pieces. There was even a Tango thrown in for good measure.

It was pleasing to have a good number of bass players available, as well as two great basses, which added to the depth of sound especially in the combined ensemble.

As the program progressed, nerves dissipated and the joy of making music together came to the fore. At the end, by popular demand (from the players themselves) there was a repeat performance of 'The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond'.



Many thanks to the group leaders, Yvonne Clarke, Jacqui Harrison and Viv Spencer for preparing the ensembles and special thanks to Viv for conducting the Combined Group.



When the music stopped it was time to socialise over a cuppa and reflect on what had been achieved. Looking around the room there were many happy faces and a buzz in the air. Music had worked its magic again.

Pam Jagger

Coordinator Advanced Recorder Ensemble

FROM VIOLIN GROUP TO STRING ORCHESTRA



From Margaret Wu:

The violin group has now evolved into a string orchestra, with violins, viola and cellos. We are also fortunate to play some fiddle tunes with an accordion accompaniment. It has been great fun!

SEAN TURNELL: UNLIKELY PRISONER

Who is Sean Turnell?

Recently participants at News & Views were privileged to learn first-hand about the shocking experience of Sean Turnell, who describes himself as an ‘unlikely prisoner’. Sean explained how he became a victim of Myanmar’s political turmoil following the 2021 military coup; he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, culminating in his imprisonment for more than two years. To the surprise of most of us enthralled by his presentation, which included poignant anecdotes, he came across as rather cheerful, even affable and in no way embittered by his appalling experience.



Sean is an economist who specializes in development economics and financial systems, with a particular passion for understanding Myanmar’s economy. He was previously an Adjunct Professor at Macquarie University and is now with the Lowy Institute. His passion for Myanmar led him to serve as an economic advisor to the National League for Democracy government led by Aung San Suu Kyi. Sean explained to the group how Aung San Suu Kyi had learnt about his economic research on Myanmar while she was under house arrest, the result of an earlier military coup. She subsequently invited Sean to join her in Myanmar in 2016 to assist her reform Myanmar’s economy away from a ‘Stalinist Cronyist’ model toward a more open, market-based model linked to democratic institutions and

the rule of law. However, we learnt just how difficult the reform process was because of the deeply entrenched role of the military, which is enshrined in the country’s constitution.

Sean described how his relationship with Aung San Suu Kyi was mutually respectful but became complicated after the military’s pogroms against the Rohingya minority in late 2016 and 2017 and how her government mishandled this, which led to a decline in her international reputation. However, he remains staunchly supportive of ‘The lady’.

Charges against Sean and his time in prison

On February 1, 2021, a military coup ousted Suu Kyi’s government and instigated a violent crackdown on dissent. Sean was arrested five days later. Sean told us of the conversations he had with various colleagues, during this five-day interregnum, concerning whether he might be arrested and should he leave immediately, but he did not want to appear to be the ‘the privileged white guy running away’!

Sean was charged under Myanmar’s Official Secrets Act, a law that criminalizes the unauthorized possession and sharing of state secrets. The military regime alleged that he possessed confidential government documents and had passed them to foreign entities. He was accused of being a member of MI6, perhaps the Myanmar military were not familiar with ASIO, he mused!

Sean spent nearly 27 months in detention, primarily in Insein Prison in Yangon, with less time in Naypyidaw Prison, in the nation’s capital during his various trial sessions. Insein Prison is notorious for its appalling conditions, characterized by overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to healthcare. Sean described in graphic details the extent of the deprivation and hardship, the terrible food, the sounds of other prisoners being tortured and the presence of his companion rodent when initially interned in a tiny windowless cell, the largest rat he had ever seen! Despite the physical hardships, he explained that the mental challenges were more daunting. He spent long months in solitary confinement and described how he tried to keep his sanity by preparing mental lists of such things as the names of America’s 50 states, and US presidents and Australian prime ministers, in chronological order.

Perhaps the saddest part of Sean’s presentation centered on his description of his friendship with a prisoner he called Jacob, a Muslim who befriended and protected Sean when Sean was initially in Insein

Prison. After returning from Naypyidaw Prison at the conclusion of his trial Sean learnt that Jacob had been bashed to death by the prison guards. Sean was devastated to learn this and sank into a serious melancholy.

The Trial, his subsequent release and coming home

Sean's trial was held in Naypyidaw, beginning in August 2021. He faced multiple hearings over many months under the Official Secrets Act and additional charges related to alleged violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Law. Sean described the trial process as farcical being denied access to a translator and not being able to consult with his lawyer in private. Sean shared several rather comical anecdotes from the trial including one where he was presented with a document marked 'Confidential', written by him that he had in fact stamped Confidential and was told by the Court he should not have had it in his possession! Sean emphasized that no one ever gets off; there is a 100% conviction rate. In September 2022, Sean was sentenced to three years in prison.

Sean was released from prison in May 2023, along with hundreds of other prisoners, as part of a general amnesty announced by Myanmar's military government. This amnesty was ostensibly aimed at reducing prison overcrowding but was seen as a response to mounting international pressure.

Sean paid tribute to his wife, Ha Vu, along with Australian officials, the Australian government, and human rights organisations, which all played a crucial role in keeping his situation in the public eye, ensuring that his plight was not forgotten amid the political chaos in Myanmar.

On 2 May, 2023, one of the more friendly prison guards told Sean he had 10 minutes to pack his things. He described the next 24 hours as surreal. Whisked to Yangon International Airport by bus then onto a Myanmar National Airlines plane and flown to Bangkok with a group of Australian diplomats, but unable to relax on that flight because it was Myanmar's national carrier under the control of the military. Then into the first-class lounge before boarding a flight to Melbourne, the first available to Australia. Upon arriving in Melbourne, he was then loaded onto the Prime Minister's plane and flown home to Sydney. What a shocking end to a shocking 27 months!

Although Sean still experiences the occasional panic attack, his indomitable spirit prevails and he reminded us more than once how lucky we are to live in Australia.

Ken Wilson

THE VOICE: A REFLECTION A YEAR ON

We welcomed Professor Andrew Gunstone to Balwyn Park Centre on 21 October, when he discussed his newest book to a very interested audience: *Reflections on the Voice – during and after the campaign*.



The Referendum on The Voice had been foreshadowed for a long time. Australia is almost completely alone as a colonised nation which has never had a treaty or agreement with its original inhabitants. Countries like Canada and New Zealand did this long ago. There had been a number of bodies in the Australian community working towards reconciliation over several decades, resulting over time in statements such as the Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2017. It seemed Australia was now ready for this proposal which, after all, was only to create an advisory body to the Australian Parliament on matters concerning the Indigenous people, and even then, that advice would not be binding.

There were some matters which in hindsight the referendum's supporters may have regretted, such as selecting Qantas as a sponsor at a time when that company was deeply unpopular. Still, it was recognized that rejection of any such proposal would be disastrous, so every care was taken to present it as simply a matter of fairness and equity.

Almost without warning, this careful approach was overwhelmed in a strident campaign of opposition which was fractured but very effective. Social divisions were exploited, none too subtly, and reasonable debate vanished in the turmoil. There were vociferous and well publicised comments from high-profile opponents. Amongst other things, the campaign tacitly encouraged racism, a latent problem never resolved in Australia despite the fact that one in four Australians now have a parent born overseas. It was suggested that a 'yes' vote would be a vote against justice, that undue influence would be granted to a minority, and that the rights of the majority would be eroded.

The referendum was lost, although in general it was approved in the inner suburbs of the capital cities, falling off considerably in the outer suburbs, then regional and rural communities.

Why did the referendum fail? Many saw no need for the Voice. The need to think was excused in the extremely effective 'If you don't know, vote No' campaign. Established beliefs meant people did not want to listen to any point of view which differed from their own. Census returns over 20 years have shown up to one third of Australians had never accepted the idea that Indigenous people still face prejudice. They also show 40% of Australians believe that in matters of health, education and employment, Indigenous Australians were as well, or even better, placed than other Australians. There was a perception that they have the same rights as the rest of the population, but no understanding that while this gives legal equality it does not give equity, the equal opportunity to access those rights; Professor Gunstone went on to assess the aftermath. It was devastating for Indigenous people and their supporters. They had to take time to grieve. The whole matter had unexpectedly become very hurtful to them. Early support had been overtaken by political expediency and opportunism. Even organisations such as universities, expected to support it, had often been equivocal.

There is still a great deal of work to be done. Other ways must now be found to convince the majority that change is in fact necessary, though perhaps not through a referendum. Australians have rejected most such proposals for constitutional amendments, approving only 8 out of 45 referendums since federation. But after the rejection of this referendum, with the divided and hardened attitudes which it produced, it will now take much more time.

Frances Clancy

Professor Gunstone's latest book, Reflections on the Voice - during and after the campaign, is the first to explore the lessons from the Voice Referendum for our ongoing national reconciliation journey. It can be purchased through Federation University's store for \$22, a saving of over 35% from the retail price, with all proceeds from these sales going to a First Nations PhD scholarship on truth-telling.

4 SEPTEMBER - A CELEBRATION OF SPRING AT BPC



GARDENS IN THE UK - MUNSTEAD WOOD AND GREAT DIXTER

Through pictures and text, we were taken on a tour of both these famous National Trust properties by U3A member Judy Still.



Munstead Wood

Garden designer and artist Gertrude Jekyll acquired 15 acres of woodlands opposite her mother's home, Munstead House, in 1882. Her plan was to grow new plants and build a garden nursery. She was fortunate to meet up with architect Sir Edwin Luytens and together they created the most beautiful arts and crafts house (1896-7) and garden. Her wish was that the house should blend in with the garden.

The entrance to Gertrude's property is from Heath Lane through the south lawn and on to greenwood walk then the summer garden. She loved rhododendrons, hydrangeas, azaleas and daffodils, all of which are still on abundant display in her garden. Her summer garden features a stone wall – 200 x 145 foot wall which makes up the main flower border, and at the back of this she planted spruce to protect the garden's more fragile plants in the frosty English winters.

The daffodils were planted in the grasses in drifts to represent a flowing river and to ease the transition from the woods to the garden. Herbaceous borders and primrose walks feature as part of the classically English garden.

The original birch trees previously planted as part of the woodlands remain. The paths made of green sand still allow access for visitors.

Great Dixter

Again, Sir Edwin Luytens designed the Great Dixter manor house for businessman Nathaniel Lloyd in 1910. It incorporated the old 15th century house and the surviving part of the 1450's Great Hall. It was completed in 1912.



Luytens was very involved in the garden's creation, planting yew hedges to define the different areas. The attractive entry to the property leads through meadow grasslands which encourages the growth of native wildflowers and as a bonus avoids mowing. York flagstones were used to create level walking paths which allow easy access. Luytens used curved and angled steps to move from one area to the next and again, as in Munstead Wood, he made his signature archways as entry to different parts of the gardens. Nathaniel and Daisy's family of six children all grew up on the property, developing a deep attachment to both house and garden.

Their son Christopher remained at the property until his death at the age of 85. During that time he maintained it, replacing the diseased rose garden with flaxes, tropical plants and cacti, and creating a blue walled garden. During his stewardship this garden became an educational resource giving horticultural students free board for ongoing work in the gardens. The fruit and vegetables gardens provide food for the property's restaurant.



Both Gertrude and Christopher wrote extensively about their gardens over many years. Both houses and gardens are Heritage listed at these properties.

Liz Brown

BELGIAN GARDENS: A HIDDEN TREASURE

A number of members gathered on Thursday morning, 17 October for an enlightening talk with photos, given by Su Laird on Belgian Gardens entitled 'A Hidden Treasure'. This talk was composed after Su had enjoyed a tour with Australians Studying Abroad in June.

Belgium is a densely populated small country with a Botanic tradition and many notable garden designers and landscape architects. Su's talk focused on looking at the work of several influential garden designers, with examples of their work. An interesting feature in many of the gardens were hedges which are used as wind breaks because Belgium, being flat, experiences strong winds and an abundance of rain.



Jaques Wirtz, a doyen of landscape architecture, is particularly noted for his use of evergreens clipped to create undulating 'clouds' of foliage, creating a green architecture that lasts all year, together with a restrained palette of herbaceous plantings. He believed that his gardens should preserve and enhance the spirit of place, rather than stamping his own mark on the landscape. Wirtz experimented with natural grasses blending into the countryside. His gardens also feature simple rectangular pools, like sheets of water, reflecting the surrounding plants and sculptures. He

also designed the Jubilee Gardens at Canary Wharf in London which are entirely elevated as a roof garden with all the constraints that this site created.

Piet Blanckaert, one of Belgium's most important landscape architects, was inspired by the great English architects, and designed the Flanders Fields Memorial Garden at Wellington Barracks, London. Its seemingly simplistic design is full of meaningful features, a monument dedicated to the participants of WW1. We viewed other examples of his designs which displayed garden rooms, with a riot of colours and also featuring stunning roses and beautiful salvias.



Another designer who used garden rooms to good effect was Alain Dor creating unique spaces with sculpted hedges and pleached mulberry trees. Playful windows were integrated in the hedge walls creating vistas with a classical simplicity. Other gardens displayed a jumble of forms with coloured foliage and were not overly conventional.



Other designers mentioned were Erik Dhont, Chris Ghyselen and Rita Gybels.

Su summed up by explaining that Belgian gardens reflect a distillation of the best of garden design in other surrounding countries, but with unique characteristics governed by the spaces and climate, and showed the imaginative nature of the designers. An interesting and informative talk was enjoyed by the members who attended.

Heather Turner

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 relatively free environment.

FOOTY QUIZ AND LUNCH AT BALWYN PARK, 12 SEPTEMBER



Great company, delicious food, lots of fun. Most AFL teams were represented, with Hawthorn supporters dominating.

Significant winners: second row, left: Chris Williamson won the tipping competition; third was Peter Ogier (second placegetter, Tina Yap, was unable to be present); and main photo, centre: Hugh Bucknall won first prize for best dressed – Hawthorn’s Wizard!!

CHESS AT U3A DEEPDENE

The game of chess has a very long history - perhaps dating back 1500 years under a different name and in another part of the world. Over the years, a number of its rules have been modified, but its allure to both strategic and tactical thinkers has not diminished. Yes, it is an ancient game, but for U3A Deepdene, Chess is the most recent of games offered to our wonderfully diverse members.

At this stage, our group is still small, but growing. We have some beginners and some quite experienced players, but no Grand Masters. Each game requires only two players, and this has provided an opportunity for the experienced to give some of the newcomers one on one introductions to the game. Win or lose or even 'draw', chess offers a bit of a cerebral workout.



In many households, chess is typically played between spouses or a parent and child or just a couple of friends getting together regularly. The limitation of this is that our opponents' tactics become too predictable over time. The diversity of a group which meets in person gives everyone a chance to experience different approaches and challenges - in a friendly atmosphere.

Currently, our group has a diverse spectrum of experience ranging from absolute beginner, to a few who regularly get a chance to test their skills.

The reason that led me to initiate the group was that I had no regular face to face enthusiasts with whom I could play. I had relied on playing against strangers on the internet. The problem with that is the opponent was often in another time zone somewhere on our planet and one might have to wait a long time between each move. Unlike active sports, it is sedentary and allows some of our members to enjoy playing with grandchildren.

Anne Whittenbury
Chess Group facilitator

BALLET

Julie Matheson, a member of the ballet class writes ...



I have recently spent a session photographing Kalman Warhaft's Classical Ballet class at U3A Deepdene for the *Art Against Ageism* Competition run by Australian Multicultural Community Services, which aims to use art to change negative stereotypes of ageing and celebrate beauty and diverse capabilities of Senior people. I titled the photo 'Joie de Vivre' as it reflects our shared enjoyment of the class. I was thrilled that this project was warmly supported by our teacher, Kalman, the members of the class, and the committee of U3A Deepdene. I thank everybody very much indeed.

SPRING FLING

The Spring Fling vacation program included two **Zoom Travel presentations**. Congratulations and thanks to John Cavedon for sharing his wonderful collection of photos 'Italy by Train'. John also shared some useful travel tips with members who are considering a similar journey.

Beth Perrigo had special photos of her 14-day trip in 'Turkey', which she enjoyed in 2023. She is to be commended on the terrific historical research that complemented the photographs.

Both zoom sessions were hosted by Pam O'Brien.

The Hawthorn Town Hall Gallery current exhibition with an expert guide was enjoyed by all who participated. There was group participation with many questions asked.



Alana, the Gallery's Curator is not an historian but was helpful with the knowledge she did have of the original Town Hall and Chandelier Room.

Sandie Beswarick

The Melbourne Gaol experience was interesting and informative. The building itself is certainly worth viewing. However, we agreed that it was also quite depressing when reading the stories of past inmates. The conditions they were held in were hideous. However, it is good to know that times have changed and prisoners now have at least a chance of rehabilitation: not so in those times!

We spent the first hour wandering around the main Gaol. (Guided tours are available for 15 plus visitors, but our group was considerably smaller.)

At 12.30 we went next door to the Watch House where we joined several other visitors. We were met by a 'sergeant' and were treated like pre-trial prisoners. The sergeant had a voice that could project from here to St. Kilda! She shouted our instructions: 'backs to the wall, shoulder to shoulder, and call me sergeant at all times'! It was a lot of fun and the highlight of the visit.

We made some purchases at the shop and went our separate ways around 1.45.

Bev McKern

Meander and a Meal



On a lovely sunny Melbourne morning our group met at Camberwell Station to meander to Read Park and Boroondara Park, then we strolled along a section of the Anniversary trail to Riversdale Park. We continued on to Brinsley Reserve (see photo) and meandered along the Railway Walk chatting to each other, and on to Sofia for lunch. The members of the group who stayed for lunch enjoyed the meal and conversation very much indeed.

Beth Perrigo

On 3 October thirty members from U3A Deepdene visited **Historic Castlemaine**. The day started on a good note with all our participants arriving early. The conductor very kindly held other passengers back, allowing us to have first choice of the seats (name tags make a big difference!).

After a leisurely trip through the countryside, we arrived in Castlemaine to be met by our guides from the Historical Society. We split into two groups and headed off on a tour of the business area, noting the many historic buildings and churches as we passed by.



After two hours of walking, our last visit was to the old renovated Market building, which houses many works of art. We then said goodbye to our guides before going to the nearby Cumberland Hotel for a refreshing and filling lunch.



The nearby Art Gallery houses some hidden gems with many paintings as well as a museum in the basement (this is a must see if you are in town). Some of the more fit members continued the walking tour on their own, while others returned to the railway station for a leisurely trip back to Melbourne.

John Gooding

KenDon Museum visit

This museum is unique in that it holds mostly Australian pottery of the 70s and 80s. Many potters are well represented with a series of pots which show the progression of their work over time, and new influences and techniques.

This Museum is in a private house in Prahran and because there is so much pottery to view, numbers were limited to 8 people at a time. After the visit we went to a café across the road to the Red Moon Art Glass Gallery - displaying quite spectacular art glass. The work of another potter, Ted Secombe, was on display because of his glazes. The coffee and sandwiches were delicious too – recommended!

The Skepsi Gallery was visited to see that there are two potters - Owen Rye and Susan Meekin - continuing the work of those displayed at the KenDon Museum.

A second visit was organised for 4 October as the 25 September visit was oversubscribed. It was led by Errol Muir. All six persons who participated in the visit enjoyed the experience. Errol has been instrumental in U3A Deepdene being able to visit this unique and wonderful Museum. (A further visit is being proposed for November. Look out for the specific date.)

The Art of Botanical Illustration (TABI) visit

This amazing exhibition is held in a small house beside La Trobe's cottage called Domain House and was attended by 12 U3A Deepdene members.

There were over 100 paintings on display and an artist in residence demonstrated how to paint these intricate art works. There was a variety of subjects; the winner was an aged globe artichoke, another favourite was a clove of garlic, as well as the beautiful flowers and leaves – some spring fresh, others autumn aged. The majority were watercolours but there was also pencil (graphite), crayon and coloured pencil.

After exploring the art works some of the group went to the Observation Café (outside) for coffee.

Lois Heycox

On a very pleasant Friday morning over the Term 3 vacation a group of 14 (all ladies on this particular occasion) enjoyed some lively banter, and much laughter, over a coffee and cake at the new Town and Country Cafe in Glenferrie Road, Kew. Seated in the private room referred to as The Shed, everyone mingled and moved around catching up or meeting some new friends, with conversations ranging from their thoughts on the US Presidential candidates and debates, movie and theatre recommendations, the sessions they participated in at U3A, to health issues and of course travel stories. A very pleasant morning was had with all leaving more the wiser and happier for their experiences.

Kay Axsentieff

U3A Deepdene Vacation programs give us an opportunity to go on half day outings or day trips. Do you as a reader of this article have a suggestion for an outing to be enjoyed during the January Vacation? If so, please contact Anne Kemp: anne.kemp462@gmail.com

ENTERTAINING PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

Once a month at Alston Halls a group of motivated members meet to chat and give reasons for their ideas on chosen topics selected to be explored. This is an opportunity to discuss big ideas and concepts, and share thoughts about events and happenings in our everyday life.

Working in a community of enquiry, we began with the topic 'Forgetting and Remembering', a topical choice for our age group. We shared the picture storybook, *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*, a story about a young boy visiting a retirement home where residents are trying to remember, but always have a reference to the topic. This led us to talk about memories.



In our second session we discussed Mind and Brain. Are these the same? How are they different? Where is your mind? And many more questions. This provided for stimulating discussion with varying responses.

Our third session focussed on Friends. A Barry Humphries quote 'No such thing as a stranger, just a friend you have not met yet.' We explored the questions 'What is a friend? Are there different kinds of friends?' This was an engaging and most thoughtful topic.

The fourth topic chosen was 'Thinking'. We created a mind map of the different kinds of thinking. Do we think in words? Can we stop thinking?

The last session for the year was 'Dreams and Daydreams'. This provided lots of pooling of ideas and talk.

The group learnt how to structure philosophical questions, such as 'tell me more about that', 'can you elaborate?', 'Am I correct in thinking that you are saying ...?' They understood the concept of being able to agree, disagree or not to be sure when listening to others' thoughts.

These sessions provided a time to reflect, to be open-minded to others' ideas, think critically and ask relevant questions. Chosen topics have been examined in a deep and meaningful way and the class members should feel proud of their contributions and respect for others' thoughts.

Bev Steer

STROKE - PREVENTION IS BEST

As part of the Health and Medicine information topics offered during the Term 4 program at U3A Deepdene, Peter Hopgood, a volunteer from the Stroke Foundation, gave a presentation, *Stroke – Prevention is best*.

Peter spoke from personal experience about the major stroke he had in 2018 and his path to recovery. One evening, Peter was making his way back to bed after getting some cough medication in the kitchen. His wife, a nurse, hearing a crash in the lounge room found Peter semi-conscious against a cabinet. The right side of his body was paralysed and his speech slurred. She recognised that Peter had suffered a stroke and immediately called 000. He was taken to Box Hill Hospital for a CT scan and treatment for the blood clot on his brain. As the treatment was not successful, Peter was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital for emergency surgery. Peter was encouraged to be awake during the procedure rather than being anaesthetised so that doctors could see exactly where intervention was required to remove the blood clot on the left side of his brain. Peter explained that the surgeon used his groin as an entry point for the probe that would dislodge and then remove the clot.



Unable to swallow, talk or walk after the stroke, Peter underwent six weeks of rehabilitation to regain these abilities to levels that would allow him to return home. Rehabilitation then continued. As Peter commented, 'You don't get off scot free from a stroke. There's always some penalty'.

Today, Peter wants to help others by volunteering to give talks on stroke prevention for the Stroke Foundation. He loves life and amongst other things, looks forward to an annual caravan trip with his wife so that they can escape Melbourne's chilly winter and enjoy the sun in Queensland.

In his presentation, Peter explained the types of stroke, signs of stroke, the impact of stroke and how to reduce the risk. There are two types of stroke. The first, the more common, is known as an ischaemic stroke and is due to a blockage in an artery of the brain. The second, a haemorrhagic stroke, is a result of bleeding into the brain from an artery.

Some people may experience a temporary blockage in an artery, a transient ischaemic attack (TIA). The signs are the same as for stroke and disappear completely in a short period of time. Often, they are only present for a few minutes. A TIA should not be ignored. After a TIA, your risk of stroke is higher. Call 000 immediately.

The signs that stroke has occurred are easily recognisable.

The key is to use the acronym – FAST

Face drooped on one side

Arm/s cannot be raised

Speech may be slurred, the person may be confused

Time is critical. There is a window of time for effective medical intervention and to aid recovery.

Stroke is always a medical emergency. If one or more of the signs is evident act **FAST** and call 000 to get to hospital quickly.

The effect of stroke depends on which hemisphere or side of the brain and which lobes are impacted, and the severity of the injury. A left hemisphere stroke affects the right side of a person's body while a right hemisphere stroke affects the left side. There may be physical impacts such as the ability to walk or swallow; cognitive effects; impacts on ability to communicate and emotional changes.

The good news is that 80% of strokes can be prevented.

While some risk factors can't be changed such as being older and male, having a family history of stroke or already having had a stroke, there are actions that we can individually take to lower the risk of stroke:

- Have an annual heart health check with your GP. High blood pressure (hypertension) is the biggest risk factor for stroke. Your GP will also check for an irregular pulse (atrial fibrillation), your cholesterol levels, and for Type 2 diabetes. All are risk factors for stroke.
- Eat well
- Stay active
- Avoid alcohol
- Quit smoking
- Share the **FAST** message with family and friends

For further information on stroke - go to www.strokefoundation.org.au

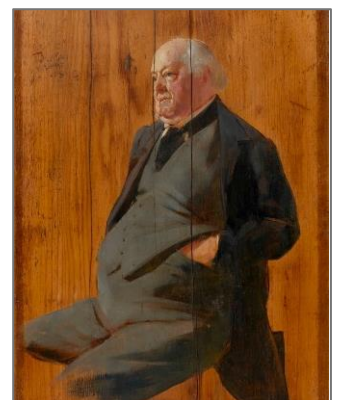
Our thanks to Peter for sharing his personal experience of stroke and opening our eyes on how we can take action to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery.

Aliya Porter

GEORGE COPPIN

Graham O'Rourke's talk on the actor George Coppin raised the curtain on the remarkable life of one of 19th century Melbourne's most colourful and significant citizens. Coppin's name is familiar to Melbournians because of the streets named after him in Richmond, Hawthorn, Malvern East and Sorrento but Graham highlighted why he deserves much greater recognition. Not only was Coppin an actor but he was also a theatre owner, an impresario, a hotelier, a land developer, a philanthropist, a member of parliament and a prominent public figure whose legacy left a lasting mark on the city.

The son of itinerant actor parents whose troupe performed in makeshift theatres in English villages, George Coppin was an accomplished comic actor. Aged twenty, after performing in Dublin with an American actress, Mrs Maria Burroughs, he ran away with her to try their fortune in the Australian colonies. George and Maria arrived in Sydney in March 1843 with celebrity status, having a lucrative season at the Royal Victoria Theatre and earning up to £50 a night each. Coppin became the manager of the theatre and bought a hotel in Pitt Street. The hotel venture failed and they were forced to resume their acting careers. After successful seasons in Launceston and Hobart where Coppin pirated a theatrical company to take to Melbourne to perform, he was able to repay his debtors in full.



George Coppin
by Tom Roberts

The couple moved to Adelaide in 1846 where Coppin prospered by building and buying theatres and purchasing hotels. Maria died in 1848.

The exodus of much of Adelaide's population to the Victorian gold rushes in 1851 proved financially disastrous for Coppin and he went bankrupt. He tried his luck on the goldfields at Castlemaine but only

lasted two days. He went to Geelong and resumed his acting career to entertain diggers on the spree with his bawdy characterisations. His parody of Lola Montez's spider dance culminating in Lola coming on stage threatening to horsewhip him brought the house down. Coppin, finances restored, was able to return to Adelaide to again clear his debts.

In 1853, Coppin visited England to perform and engaged the great Shakesporean tragedian, Gustavus Brooke, to tour Australia. He commissioned a prefabricated iron theatre which was shipped to Melbourne to become the Olympic Theatre. Brooke's performances were a sensation. Coppin and Brooke formed a short-lived partnership and purchased the Theatre Royal, Astley's Amphitheatre (later the Princess Theatre), the Cremorne Pleasure Gardens, and a portfolio of hotels. From then on, Coppin devoted most of his time to theatre management and running his businesses rather than acting.

In 1862, Coppin built the Haymarket Theatre, incorporating the Apollo Music Hall and brought out the leading Shakespearean actor, Charles Kean, to perform with great success. A feature of the Apollo Music Hall was its magnificent stained glass 'Shakespeare window' commissioned by Coppin which now adorns the State Library's Reading Room. Coppin bubbled with ideas for new business ventures. In Melbourne in 1846 he bought the schooner 'Apollo' (after which Apollo Bay was named) which carried goods along the coast to Port Fairy and Portland. When in Adelaide, he bred and owned racehorses, imported ice and luxury goods from Massachusetts and invested in copper mines. In Melbourne, he opened an ice-skating rink at his Olympic theatre and later set up Turkish baths and Australia's first roller skating rink.

One of Coppin's pet projects, but most financially draining, was his purchase of the Cremorne Pleasure Gardens on the bank of the Yarra in Richmond in 1856. It was Melbourne's major public attraction with a bowling alley, dancers and trapeze artists, firework displays and panoramic depictions of historic events like the eruption of Vesuvius and the Battle of Sebastopol. It was where the annual Eight Hour Day March culminated and from where Australia's first manned balloon flight took off. For its menagerie, Coppin imported camels which he later sold to the Burke and Wills expedition. Patrons were transported by riverboat or by train to a purpose-built railway station.

Coppin was also a major land developer. In 1869 he subdivided the St James Park area in Hawthorn and purchased the property 'Invergowrie'. He broke up the large landholdings naming two streets, Coppin Grove and Shakespeare Grove. He was also instrumental in developing Sorrento, where he had a seaside home, as a tourist resort. He constructed a tramway from the port to the back beach, built the Continental Hotel and formed the Sorrento Queenscliff Steam Navigation Company, to ferry people up and down the coast to and from Port Melbourne.

Although a somewhat ruthless businessman, Coppin was renowned for his philanthropy. He helped found the Victorian Humane Society and the St John Ambulance in Melbourne. He established Gordon House for homeless men and the Old Colonists' Association of Victoria Homes in North Fitzroy to provide affordable housing for needy early settlers.

He became a Richmond councillor in 1858 and later a member of parliament, serving in both the Victorian Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. One of his important reforms was the introduction of post office savings banks. Other public offices he held included as director of the Commercial Bank of Australia and president of the Carlton Football club.

Coppin died in 1906, aged 86. He was married twice; first in 1855 to Harriet Hilsden (Gustavus Brooke's sister-in-law) and then in 1861 to her daughter, Lucy Hilsden, who survived him with their two sons and five daughters.

David Crawford

SLOW STITCHING WITH ANNE SEMPLE

In case you haven't heard of Slow-Stitching ...

There's been a burgeoning interest in the Slow Movement in recent years. We might have heard of Slow Cooking and even Slow Looking in art galleries, but what of Slow-Stitching?

I asked members of our group to respond individually to a few questions about their involvement with Slow-Stitching, followed by discussion. Their responses have informed this article which includes a few direct quotes too. But I'll let the selected images tell the story of what our group has created and achieved so wonderfully. Let your eyes dwell.

What is Slow-Stitching?

Simply put, Slow-Stitching is a way of hand stitching together bits of fabric of any shape, size, texture, origin or colour on a base layer, to create something new. The pieces of fabric can be cut or torn from stashes of



Fig 1: Playing with bits: free flow scrappy piecing, techniques of attachment before stitching (SW, and JSI bottom R)

left-over material, old clothes, textiles, doilies, tea towels, old embroideries and lace, even upholstery and curtain fabric swatches. They are arranged randomly or purposefully and are hand-stitched together in various ways using whatever kind of thread is available (Fig 1). It's surprising what might be found tucked away in one's personal 'stash'. Op shops, friends and fellow members are great sources too.

The pieces can remain simple and unadorned (Fig 2). They can be structured or focussed on a theme, or even project orientated (Fig 3).



Fig 2: (L – R): Simple stitch sampler (AS), Rainbow tags (MA); 'I hate winter' mood piece (JSm); Simple elements (AS)



Left - Fig 3: Structured designs and purposeful projects: beautiful fabrics and colour themed (JSI), shades of a colour and abandoned lace (JSm), all stitched simply

Right - Fig 4: Pages of a fabric book reveal rich textures, embroideries and assorted embellishments (SF)



But some stitchers might choose to embellish their work variously with surface embroidery, buttons, beads, lace and more (Fig 4 and other). They could be assembled in a fabric book, attached to a card, and maybe even framed (Fig 5 Top), or not at all.

Origin

But oversimplification denies much about the origins of Slow-Stitching. They lie in a utilitarian past, born of necessity. Mending and darning, re-purposing worn out items and clothes might be familiar to many. In my own immediate post-war experience in the UK my mother made my school coat out of an old, dyed blanket beautifully sewn. Here we know of waggas (bushmen's blankets) made out of sacks or other materials stitched together, and there is a long history of patchwork quilts too.



Slow-Stitching can draw on the traditions of other cultures: the methods of reworking and repairing textiles and old clothes as in Sashiko and Boro from Japan; Kawandi quilts from NW India consist of scrap fabric and layers of old saris hand stitched together on backing (Fig 5).

Left - Fig 5: Kawandi Style quilt: spiral piecing from outside in. Corner folded over (top) to show running stitch attachment to a backing (c152cm x 180cm) (MA)

Needs and opportunity changed over the years. Utilitarian patchwork quilts, for example, branched to become more ornamental. Richly embroidered fabrics and embellished crazy quilts indicated social status – the greater availability of leisure time and the finances to purchase rich fabrics. Mass production and attitudes of the throw-away society, and instant consumerism arrived. Who does mending these days?

Why Slow-Stitching?

Experiencing the traditional approach to embroidery and sewing, at school or home, with high expectations, or the ingrained notion that there must be a *‘practical purpose to making something’*, can be problematic for starting stitchers, but can be overcome. Slow-Stitching offers another opportunity to engage. As a relieved member of our group said, and others echoed, *‘Choice is yours: fabric, thread, stitch, design ... perfection and fancy materials are not required’*; another, *‘... slow-stitching has enabled me to have fun without the need of perfection.’* It was a challenge for some to be able to soften existing attitudes and bravely take the plunge to *‘... explore and grow creatively’*.

A member new to U3A this year, who has enjoyed sewing, *‘was looking for something that would meet [her] need to be creative but felt that doing something in the company of other women on a regular basis would be perfect. And it has been.’* The benefit of friendly social interaction, discussing experiences, working with others and exchanging ideas so supportively cannot be underestimated.

As a group or individually, members learn a few basic techniques of layering, piecing and attachment together with a few basic types of stitch and maybe their variations (Fig 2 and other). Individual help is provided when the need arises, but it is up to each person to apply and build these skills as their interest, materials and capabilities take them. *‘We’ve all come from different places in our journeys and have a diverse range of sewing styles.’* A stitcher’s mood is important too. Who can resist a sympathetic response to the *‘I Hate Winter’* piece, so aptly designed and stitched?

What of the leader and her introduction to Slow-Stitching?

She had been conserving (not restoring) an extraordinarily embellished Victorian crazy quilt throw whose provenance she was investigating, but the pandemic and lockdowns put a hold on that. Quite by chance she came across a textile artist and teacher in the UK on YouTube. Anne Brooke had conceived of a weekly challenge of creating 52 small scale tags for her followers in response to given prompts. The leader was hooked. These small tags led to larger independent pieces as confidence, skill, and imagination and creativity ranged free.

What appeals?

The quiet times and pace, the rhythm and sound of stitching, the inventiveness of embellishments, the feel of different fabrics and textures of worked pieces, the visual pleasure and ways of seeing, the sources of inspiration and ways of representation whether abstract or real (Fig 5). All are satisfying.

Slow-Stitching is more than the sum of its parts. ‘Slow’ can nurture wellbeing. Why not share the delight with others and take pleasure in that?

Anne Semple

Key:

Cathy Canals	CC
Jill Smithson	JSm
Joan Slattery	JSl
Monique Anderson	MA
Shelley Foster	SF
Susan Ware	SW
Leader: Anne Semple	AS

Images and quotations used with permission.



Fig 6: Representations of landscapes: top inspired by Bunya trees during a NT visit (CC). Perspective, and a work in progress inspired by the Referendum (AS)

DAWN HEFFERNAN - U3A 30-YEAR PHENOMENON AND 90th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

We have been privileged to attend Dawn Heffernan's weekly Social Philosophy classes at U3A Deepdene for over six years. Dawn has been conducting similar classes at U3A Box Hill and also at U3A Manningham, where she began teaching 33 years ago in 1991. This year, her Manningham U3A class has an impressive enrolment of 117 members. This remarkable record demonstrates Dawn's talent and dedication to making classical and contemporary philosophy accessible, interesting, and relevant to us and societies today.

Our classes cover the full spectrum of philosophy, from ancient Greek thinkers like Aristotle and Socrates to recent and contemporary philosophers such as Karl Marx, Karl Popper, Dan Dennett, and A.C. Grayling, whose ideas we explore through video presentations. Dawn provides insightful introductions, which lead to wide-ranging and stimulating class discussions.



In July, Dawn celebrated her 90th birthday. To mark this significant milestone, our class organised a memorable birthday dinner at the *Nihao* restaurant. The event featured a carefully selected banquet, wines from a generous donor, a special birthday cake, speeches of appreciation, and a custom-made artistic birthday card with messages of gratitude from class members. Excerpts from these messages are included in the appendix on the following page.

On October 3rd, Dawn was honoured with 'The U3A Network Tutor Recognition Award' by the President and Committee of U3A Network. The citation begins: 'Dawn Heffernan is an exceptional U3A Tutor whose work over 33 years has made a significant difference to many U3A members.'

Congratulations Dawn!

Ken Parker



Appendix - Extracts of inscriptions by class members in Dawn's birthday card

- Your dedication to philosophy inspires us.
- Your commitment keeps us coming back for more.
- Your wisdom engages our minds.
- Wishing you many more years of happiness and thought-provoking discussion - Anon
- You have inspired me! - TB
- Dawn, you are a warm, genuine person, who teaches enthusiastically, showing your zest for knowledge and life - PD
- Thank you for many years of thought-provoking classes. My mind has been expanded exponentially! - SF
- An absolute pleasure to be in your class. Thank you for your fantastic teaching. - DR
- Thank you for keeping my mind in top gear. - RM
- I thought you were much younger! Perhaps by keeping up with the latest in Philosophy, AI etc and sharing your passion and enthusiasm so generously with us, you've discovered the genuine Philosopher's Stone or elixir of life! - KP
- I am so pleased to have rekindled our friendship. Congratulations and much love. - BK
- Thank you for introducing me to Philosophy. It is a steep learning curve for me and I am enjoying it and looking forward to each week. – JS
- There is so little room to express my best wishes for you and your depth of knowledge. - HB
- No words to explain how I feel and how grateful I am for knowing you. - RG
- You have inspired me with your vitality, caring and awakening consciousness for the betterment of world in harmony. - AT

BRUCE WOLPE - THE STATE OF PLAY IN USA, 2024

It is the aim of U3A Deepdene to allow exploration of political ideas in a free environment. It should be clear to members, tutors and speakers that political views expressed are their own and not the official views of U3A Deepdene.

We were honoured to have Bruce Wolpe, Senior Fellow, United States Study Centre at the University of Sydney, update the audience of over 100, on the state of play with two weeks to go before election day. The host of News and Views, Kay Axsentieff, warmly welcomed Bruce, who is a regular contributor on US politics in Australia. He is the author of *Trump's Australia* (2023), an examination of Trump's possible return to the presidency and the issues presented to Australia.

Bruce immediately gained our attention with his assertion:

'That the USA is at the fork in the road for its future. What voters choose this time will have long-term effects to its democracy. A line will be drawn about which society's values and civil rights are important to Americans going forward.'



After earlier predicting a Trump win against Biden he said it is now too close to call!

Various data sets, the latest polls and the electoral system were clearly explained. The key issues for the election are: the economy, immigration, abortion, climate change and the future of democracy. Harris is

vulnerable on the economy and immigration. Most think they are not better off because of inflation and the cost of living. Overall, the economy is the key deciding issue.

Bruce presented us with some very interesting **insights into Trump**. For example:

- Trump sees himself in complete control of the military which should be completely loyal to him.
- Trump will replace some members of the Supreme Court with younger conservatives to ensure balance to the conservatives into the future.
- Trump is charismatic on television, like JFK, Clinton, Obama and Reagan, and cannot be easily replicated by a successor.
- Trump supporters are seemingly not worried about some of his behaviour and comments because they know he will do what he promises.

The 2024 election campaign raises some overarching questions and food for thought:

- Should election funding be unlimited because elections are about free speech?
- Is democracy working? If not, people become disillusioned and angry.
- When fear and power are welded together, they are very powerful. Elon Musk's power and wealth legitimise Trump.
- What happens in this election matters to Australia. For example, the emerging abortion issue, corporate tax cuts, media images of the noose around Pence on 6 January being replicated in Covid demonstrations, mistrust in the Electoral Commission during the Referendum.

Conclusion

Bruce finished on a very positive note that Australians should be proud of our robust and vibrant democracy.

- He reminded us that features are built into the Australian political system which make it different from the USA's.
- A 'blow-in' cannot become Prime Minister: they have years of experience in parliament and institutions, and are appointed by the government, not the electorate. Compulsory Voting means there will be 'middle of the road' governments, neither left nor right extremes. The Electoral Commission is independent of government and has great integrity.

Melinda Sparkes

BEAUTIFUL SCOTLAND BY SUZANNE HUME



Top: Oban

Above left: Loch Linnhe, Glencoe

Above right: Ardnahoe, Isle of Islay



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Weekly email/s are sent to all members with email addresses; watch for these updates. See our website for details of courses.

The Program Guide for Term 1, 2025 will be distributed in the last week of November. **ENROLMENTS for 2025** will be available from 2 December at 9:00am.

CALENDAR DATES:

End of year Celebration at BPC Wednesday 4 December, 5pm – 7pm
Lunch for Tutors at BPC Friday 13 December, 12 noon – 2pm

2024

Term 4 Monday 14 October to Friday 6 December

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

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