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*U3A Banyule acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to their Elders.
The U3A movement is a welcoming place for all.*

Quarterly Newsletter

June 2025

In this edition

Welcome to our second Newsletter for 2025.

The News team has grown to 8 writers since last newsletter, making for a very lively collection of articles and photos in this edition.

We've attended lectures, journeyed to the beach, visited dance, art and craft lessons, watched game sessions, heard recorders in harmony and listened to the Bard's words.

This broad range of activities is testament to the strength and diversity of U3A Banyule.

Perhaps our articles will pique your interest to try something new.

Enjoy!

Sue Gunningham
Editor.

President's report

As I write my first newsletter, I am struck by the huge shoes I am now stepping into. Next year we will celebrate 40 years of U3A Banyule and the wonderful leadership, commitment and dedication shown by our past Presidents.

I have been extremely fortunate in having a mentor in Judith Craze and would like to pay tribute to her work over the past three years as President. Judith is approachable, collaborative and inclusive, and it is these skills that have made her a great leader. Judith is staying on as Vice President and will continue to write our weekly OMail and undertake a myriad of other activities.

AGM: I would like to thank all members who contributed to the AGM held on Monday 31st March, either by lodging a proxy vote or by attending or helping with the organization.

Over 74 proxy votes were counted by our scrutineers Joan Learmont and Valerie McPhee. At the AGM 55 people attended and all four motions were passed unanimously. The Heidelberg Golf Club provided an excellent setting along with a great afternoon tea for our first face to face AGM since Covid. After the meeting members had a chance to socialise.

Strategic Plan: The working party established to develop a new strategic plan has continued reviewing and synthesizing the input of a range of stakeholders. While the document is still being finalised, the Committee of Management has in principle, approved the plan. Our work will centre around four main goals with specific actions and measures related to each goal.

The four goals are:

1. Organisational Sustainability: To ensure a viable and vibrant organisation into the future
2. Learning Program: Promote and support positive ageing by providing a range of classes and activities which engage and enrich members' lives
3. Digital Information and Communication Technology: To be highly responsive to the technological needs of members and the organisation
4. Relationships: To enhance the U3A experience by building and maintaining relationship.

I believe this document has given us a clear direction for the future and I thank everyone who has contributed. The Strategic Plan will be available to members via the website.

Stay warm over the coming months and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Annual Lunch on June 26th.

Janet Ringrose
U3A Banyule President



Our new Secretary 2025 - Ann Kennedy

Ann is a relatively new U3A member, joining at the behest of friends last year. Having grown up in Ivanhoe and attended school locally, Ann has lived and worked in Banyule for most of her life. She filled a similar role in another community organisation, so brings a wealth of experience to the U3A secretary role.

Ann sees the strength of U3A Banyule in the members and the breadth of courses offered. She loves spending time with friends and family, and travelling and bushwalking. Ann is enjoying U3A's *Rambles Near and Far* and participating in *Fun Quizzes*. In the future she hopes to try out some of U3A's Science or History lectures.

By Linda Duncan (News Team)



FOCUS ON: The Joy of Shakespeare

'It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves' - William Shakespeare

Every Wednesday a group of Shakespeare enthusiasts meet at ILCH to read and discuss a selection of Shakespeare's plays, examine the language, characters, plots, culture and history of the times.

The tutor, Robert Bender, a past teacher is well prepared with not only scripts but extra handouts and a wealth of information.

As his first year running the session he describes the experience as 'wonderful' and feels it has enabled him to explore his passion at a deeper level as he shares his wealth of knowledge with others.

Each of Shakespeare's plays have 5 acts so one act is covered each week. The session commences with an introduction, then participants select a character to read and portray in their own unique theatrical style. Robert provides additional information and there is time to ask questions and share knowledge, opinions and insights.

Some participants have their own book of plays however copies are provided. (Anthony Carbine's office prints copies of the plays for U3A as a public service.) On the sixth week, or completion of each play the participants enjoy a showing of the play from London's Globe Theatre to provide a visual portrayal for reflection.

There are a few vacancies in the course if you would like to enrol.

By Dianne Dell'Oro-Morgan (News Team)



Monday Afternoon Lecture: April 2025
Graham Cook: 'Story to Verse' recitations

Graham introduced himself as a *shanakee*; a Gaelic word meaning a storyteller, a keeper of tales who shares oral history, myths and legends. What a treat for the large U3A audience!

The resident poet for many years at the *Quiet Man Pub* in Kensington, Graham was anything but quiet as he wove his words into verse to tell stories full of humour and pathos.

During this session Graham kept us enthralled, sharing his own and other poets' verses, including some Australian classics.

We raced along with the *Man from Snowy River*, and later connected with *The Man from Heidelberg* - an old man on an old bicycle whom Graham had watched while parked at traffic lights;

*'... We never even chatted,
And I wonder if it mattered,
But another person thought of him today.'*

Graham's poetry took us on a sailing trip, and we heard of his time spent on Anzac Day with his son. We got to know his dad through his poem *The Forester*, and later we chuckled at his poem *Four-Wheel Drive* that exposed the joy of a city braggart driving a massive, fully-equipped, 4WD that he never drives off-road.

His poem about the 60's *kids* brought much laughter with references such as; 'It was when *woke* was the thing you did to start each day, and *tweets* were made by birds, and singers didn't have to *twerk*, they only had to sing.'

The session ended with Graham's favourite piece; a recitation of *The Phantom 309* written decades ago by Tommy Faile.

Graham's closing life message to the audience was 'Always remember to have fun,' and we certainly did!

Many thanks to the volunteers who organised afternoon tea.

By Sue Gunningham (News team)

Social Connection: Lingering Lunches

It seems many U3A members enjoy a chat around good food and a drink. Our Lingering Lunches attest to that. We try to hold a lunch once a term in a variety of venues to suit all tastes and purses. This year, the new Social Committee, (Pam Macintyre and I) are valiantly trying to fill Joan Learmont's giant shoes.

We began with lunch at the Old England hotel and consensus opinion was that everyone enjoyed their meals, although some had to wait longer for them than they might have wished. They kindly reassured us the wait was well worth it. Whew!

We love feedback and ideas, so don't be afraid to share your thoughts. *Do you have to dress up?* Come as you feel comfortable and enjoy a meal and a chat with new friends and old. We'll report on our next Lingering Lunch to be held at Dama Rose restaurant in Ivanhoe on 28 May in the next newsletter. Till then, Bon Appétit!

By Paule Cartwright (News Team)



Focus on Scottish Dancing

Arriving at the Old Shire Offices, near the old Banyule high school site, I expected to be greeted by the skirl of bagpipes and pleated Scottish tartans. Instead I was greeted by the twitter of flitting birds and the happy chatter of dancers as they greeted each other, changed into soft shoes and formed groups of four - no kilts, no tartans and no bagpipes!

Their leader Steven, kindly asked me to join in, but, I declined, preferring to photograph the dancers. Moving lightly on their feet they stepped forward, back, sideways; arms held high to join an outstretched hand and duck under an arch of arms. Try catching a still pose to photograph!



The class was summed up by one of the members: "Company, fitness, great music and using your brain in lovely surroundings. What more could you ask for?"
By Elizabeth Ainsworth (News team)



Spotlight on long-term U3A Banyule member - Rosemary Sceats

Rosemary joined U3A in 2003 after retiring. With a science degree and a lifelong interest in science, politics and current affairs, she first enrolled in the 'Current Affairs Discussion Group' recommend to her by a friend.

Other sessions soon piqued her interest, including Geology, Climate Change, Egyptology, Ancient Religions, Mathematics and Shakespeare (which included a memorable trip to Gippsland's Stratford Shakespeare festival).



Rosemary has volunteered and given talks on the Senate voting system and a trip to Iran. She also delivered a myth busting course called a 'Sceptic's Guide to Mumbo Jumbo' which analysed activities such as crop circles, homeopathy and water divining. She even organised a water divining contest!

Rosemary says U3A provides her with intellectual stimulation and an opportunity to meet and socialise with interesting and intelligent people. It is an integral part of her life and she attends most weekdays. She is always well prepared for enrolment time. As Rosemary says, 'the early bird catches the worm!'

By Glenda Williamson

(News team)

Out and about: Seaside Train Trip #2: Williamstown March 2025

The last Friday in March was another perfect day for a seaside excursion. This time we crossed the concourse at Flinders Street to platform 10, to visit Williamstown, Melbourne's first seaport.

We had a choice of getting off at either of two stations within minutes' walk of each other. Kim had told us that the Botanic Gardens are lovely, and Williamstown Beach station is the closest station to the Gardens (and also the best stop for intrepid swimmers).

Some of the group strolled along the seafront to the Botanic Gardens, which are indeed exquisite. They were officially opened in 1860, making them one of the earliest intact botanic gardens in Victoria. Others in the group went on to Williamstown station, built in 1859, the oldest in Victoria. The beautifully preserved streetscapes still give you a sense of earlier days.

The Visitor Information Centre in the Heritage Precinct has three great walking maps for the Waterfront, the Seaside, and Heritage Buildings. The Victorian Navy, centred at Williamstown, was the first navy created on the continent, half a century before federation.

Discovering its history by visiting the Maritime Museum Ship HMAS Castlemaine will have to be an excursion for another day!

Lunchtime saw us gathered together at the Customs House Hotel. Another memorable day; it's wonderful to think how far you can go with a myki card and a train timetable.

By Jan Connor



Afternoon Lecture: May 2025

John Arthur – First gardener; Melbourne's Botanic Gardens



Irene Kearsey

Irene Kearsey presented a fascinating account of John Arthur's career and life including anecdotes from his daughter, shipping records, and TROVE newspaper articles.

Born in Scotland in 1804, John Arthur studied Botany and Landscape Gardening at Edinburgh University, completing a degree with honours. He was awarded a prize, said to include kilts, bagpipes and £20.

John worked in Scottish estates including Inveraray and Dumbarton Castles, before migrating to Melbourne with his family in 1839 aboard the *David Clark*; the first ship to bring assisted migrants direct to the Port Phillip District.



Melbourne Botanical Gardens 1840s

Arthur brought seeds and trees from Scotland and took a job with George Brunswick Smyth at Chelsworth estate, later obtaining local land for his own horticultural business.

In 1846 Governor La Trobe appointed him to establish Melbourne's Botanic Gardens. Arthur recommended a suitable site and led a small team to establish the original five acre garden. Their work included fencing, clearing dead timber, acclimatising exotic plants, tree planting, laying out flower beds, clearing the lagoon and creating lawns. A small cottage was built adjacent to the gardens to house Arthur's family. He died in 1949 of suspected Cholera.

Irene continued the story of Arthur's widow and children, and the complex weaving of lives of others who had travelled on the *David Clark*.

By Dianne Williamson (News team)



U3A Banyule Recorder Group

When I set out to visit the recorder group, the lilting sounds of their skilled efforts drew me forward to find their location.

The group formed seven years ago with 12 members. There have been a few changes, but membership remains fairly consistent. There are recorders suited to each of the soprano, tenor, alto and bass registers. The smallest recorder played in this group is the Sopranino, while the Bass impresses with its size.

I was advised the recorder is not hard to learn – but is hard to learn *well*. The Victorian Recorder Guild organizes soirees in which our group participates. They also played last year for the Springthorpe Retirement Village – and received an excellent reception.

The conductor, Heather Hobbs, ensures an attractive selection of music scores is available for the players to learn. Robert, the sole male in the group, said this statistic applies in most Guild groups.

It's a happy group and meetings continue during school holidays as members enjoy playing both for their own pleasure and to support each other. I certainly appreciated their music!

By Marian Power (News team)

Focus On Creative Watercolour

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Pablo Picasso

On the second, fourth and fifth weeks of each month an enthusiastic group of U3A members gather at ILCH Community room from 2-5pm to take part in 'Creative Water colour' classes.

Tutor, Maxine Marks, is a keen watercolourist who started her art journey over 20 years ago. Maxine's focus is to teach techniques and highlight the beauty of watercolour in a very comfortable, supportive environment, regardless of participant's skill level or experience.

Each session begins with a teaching video that highlights different techniques. Participants then practice these techniques while being supported and encouraged by Maxine. There is always time for a cuppa and chat while art works dry or ideas consolidate. At session's end participants can share and comment on each person's work of art.

Maxine provides new participants with a list of recommended art supplies and organised a trip to *Seniors Art* in Eaglemont where we could purchase supplies at a 20% discount. These sessions are popular, but if you believe this is for you, it's worth joining the wait list.

By Dianne Dell'Oro-Morgan (News team)



Buying supplies at Seniors Art Eaglemont



Focus On: Card Making

There was a hustle and bustle in the ILCH meeting room as the 'card makers' put up tables, fetched chairs and chattered while organising their work stations.

Leesa, their tutor, lifted her heavy basket of goodies: papers, ribbons, cards, silver-sprinkles, and much more, onto the table. Everyone gathered around as she demonstrated the project for the day.

Now how did she apply that sticky tape and remove it without damage? "Magic tape! Don't like it there? Put it on the other side." A plain piece of card transformed into an attractive card under her magic hands.



Everyone collected a kit and set to work on their card. Each will be different as the maker selects materials to reflect their own interpretation.

I asked one maker if she would like to make a comment about the class. Her reply; "I'm new, but everyone is friendly and helpful. I really enjoy my time in class."



Fun and fellowship with a purpose. *By Elizabeth Ainsworth (News team)*

Mahjong – the mystique explained by tutor Anne Power

Anne has been involved with Mahjong since 2018 when classes were held in Rosanna Library. She saw it in the U3A class offerings and decided to explore it further. Since COVID restrictions were lifted, Anne has been the tutor for the Friday class.

Mahjong is a game of skill and luck; 5% skill in choosing the most appropriate game to play, and perhaps knowing when to change games part-way through if necessary AND 95% luck in having the desired tiles appear when needed. Anne says it's important to become familiar with the book "The Mahjong Players' Companion" which U3A provides to each participant.



Tutor: Anne Power

The traditional set of 144 Mahjong tiles includes three simple suits (stones, characters, bamboo), two honour suits (winds, dragons), and one optional suit (flowers).

New players are taken through the game's rules by Toni (who also taught Anne when she first started). The more you play, the greater your awareness of the games listed in the book increases and the better the choices you then make. The happy group meets each Friday, with a cuppa half-way through.

By Marian Power (News team)



Do you have an article idea for the quarterly Newsletter?

U3A is a volunteer organisation and relies on members helping in some way to keep the organisation viable. The Newsletter team are volunteers and constantly seeking articles and photos of members participating in U3A activities.

If you have an idea for an article, or a photo you would like to submit to the Quarterly Newsletter, please contact Sue Gunningham (Newsletter editor) via My3A office. You are welcome to submit an article or if you prefer, a team member can interview you about your idea and write the article for you. We welcome your assistance.

Dates for your 2025 diary	
Monday 9 June	King's Birthday holiday – Office closed
Tuesday 10 June	Semester 2 Courses promoted by email
Monday 16 June	Nonagenarians' celebration morning tea
Thursday 26 June	Annual Banyule U3A Lunch
Friday 4 July	Classes conclude Semester 1, Term 2
7- 20th July	School holidays
Monday 21 July	Semester 2 Term 3 Classes commence
Wednesday 6 August	New Members' welcome



1. Handrail On Stairs



I am delighted to inform members that a new handrail has been installed at ILCH. Thanks to the commitment of Janice Kelly, Alan Marks, Judith Craze, who worked closely with Banyule Council to review what options would be available to ensure a safer passage for everyone.

Regardless of the new middle rail, please take the utmost care on the stairs. When the large sessions finish, there are always many people accessing the stairs. The lift is also a good viable option. We want you to be safe.

2. Award For Banyule U3A 21st May 2025

It was a great pleasure for Judith Craze and me to accept a 'Highly Commended' award on behalf of Banyule U3A members at the annual Banyule Council Volunteer Awards Night. Our organisation is one of the largest in the state and is run entirely by volunteers; a remarkable achievement.



Fourteen organisations were nominated in the category of Community Group or Community Initiative, and I would like to acknowledge the work of Sue Beshara who wrote an outstanding application that secured our win.



Currently providing courses, classes and services for over 900 members, Banyule U3A has evolved into a complex, highly structured and well-managed organization. As a non-for-profit volunteer incorporated body, this is achieved and maintained through the contributions of members who volunteer to take on diverse roles. From Catering Coordinator to Website Manager, there are 36 position descriptions, all with an outline of responsibilities applicable to each role.

Below is a recent breakdown of the different aspects of volunteer work undertaken at Banyule U3A.

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Tutors 60 - 70 | • Office Volunteers 39 |
| • Guest Speakers 20 (on average) | • Catering Team 36 |
| • Committee of Management 14 | • Newsletter Team 8 |
| • Support Roles 21 | • Class Helpers 30 approx. |
| • On demand Helpers 10 | |

This award truly reflects the Community Spirit and the willingness of so many people to take on various roles and responsibilities.

By Janet Ringrose U3A Banyule President