BANYULE
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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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 December 2026

In this edition

Hi everyone, we're in the home stretch to Christmas.

From self-defence classes to child's play, art challenges, to garden walks, U3A Banyule never slows the pace.

This term, we visited Government House as well as galleries and museums in Shepparton.

Lecturers described the isolated existence of lighthouse keepers, and another shared tales of protests, and of mob gatherings to glimpse music idols from Melbourne's swinging 60s. This edition has it all!

Merry Christmas and stay safe.

ENJOY!
Sue Gunningham (Editor)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Writing this column provides an opportunity to reflect on what a strong, vibrant organisation we are. With over 1100 members, we offer a diverse range of over 150 activities comprising classes, lectures and excursions.

In order to maintain this program, our planning for 2027 needs to reflect increased costs of venue hire and a change in the Banyule Council booking structure. You may find we have placed smaller sized classes in a different space, allowing us to utilise larger areas for bigger groups.

I want to acknowledge the dedication of our Tutors in offering lifelong learning opportunities to our members. This group is magnificently supported by the Committee of Management, Support Role Coordinators and Office Volunteers. They carry out so many roles to keep our organisation running smoothly.

We are currently seeking members who would be willing to fulfil the roles of Equipment and Technology Coordinators. We also want to expand our Events Committee. Please contact the office if you are interested in helping in any of these roles.

I am delighted to report that once again we supported Senior's Month with two events hosted by Banyule U3A. Leesa Walsh conducted a card making class and Anne Power ran a Mahjong class. Both sessions were extremely popular and enjoyed by all.

Our knitters are gearing up for their November sale. All proceeds go to the Banyule Council Community Fund.

I hope you get a chance to enjoy one of the many end of the year events coming up. These are advertised in What's On and the Weekly Wizard.

Thank you for your continued support of the Banyule U3A in 2026. I send my Season's Greetings to you all and look forward to seeing you in the year ahead.



Janet Ringrose
U3A Banyule President

Heidelberg Artists 1880s & 1890s to Reconnection, Restoration, Revegetation & Reconciliation Exhibition



When Australia's National Gallery in Canberra, decided to share their precious collections across Australia, Steph Neo, Banyule Council's Art Curator, selected seven paintings related to the Heidelberg area.

The *Early Impressions Expo,* (in gallery 175 at ILCH), featured works by Charles Conder, Louis Buvelot, Tom Roberts, Clara Southern and Arthur Streeton. An accompanying exhibition booklet contained essays by Jane Clark, Curator and Art Historian, to enrich visitor's understanding of the period and the paintings.

Steph later collaborated with the Banyule Bushland crew to link the colonial landscape with the present to 'value add' to the gallery experience. The *Reconnection, Restoration, Revegetation and Reconciliation exhibition* was presented alongside the Early Impressionists paintings.



The recent drawings, art works, photos and handcrafts allowed us to contrast and compare modern images with those painted all those years ago. The exhibition also highlighted changes in our care and appreciation of the environment.

I was fascinated by a recent photo of a gum tree, which is alive and well, recognisable as one painted in cr.1890. Thanks Steph and the Banyule Bushland Crew.

By Elizabeth Ainsworth (News team)

New Class: Self-Defence & De-Escalation (for all fitness and mobility levels)

It was a pleasure to meet Anthony and the self-defence class. A very positive environment and accessible for all fitness and mobility levels.





The focus is on practical personal safety for everyday life and includes strategies to recognize, address, and defuse real-life threatening situations early. Participants learn physical tactics utilizing **Wing Chun Kung Fu**. This specialized system relies on body mechanics, speed, and leverage to turn an opponent's momentum against them, removing the need for superior physical strength.

A 20-year experienced Wing Chun Kung Fu instructor (Leo) and a former senior Victoria Police officer (Anthony) lead the class in the practice of safety and practical de-escalation techniques. Hand/eye co-ordination activities are important, too.



Course Benefits: improved balance and coordination and a learning experience that will gently challenge and stimulate physical and mental acuity.

I was impressed by the acknowledgment that different people will prefer to use a range of strategies – but the options are taught. There are some vacancies in this class and I would certainly commend it to you.

By Marian Power (News team)

Meet the portrait artists



At the Annual General Meeting, eight life members were presented with a portrait of themselves in appreciation of their many years of dedication to U3A.

The portraits were done by five talented U3A members, Anne, Aruna, Barbara, Patricia and Xuan. The artists have a range of experience; some being involved with art their entire life, others only picking up a paint brush in midlife.

Most created the portrait from a photograph of their subject and the time taken to complete each portrait ranged from a few hours to many weeks. Artists used a variety of mediums from pencils, pastels, acrylic and oils.



When asked how they approached the task, their comments included; to create a solid likeness, to find the essence of the person, identify what stands out, to imbed feel, character and emotion into the portrait. But the main objective was for the recipient to be pleased with the completed work.

All the artists enjoyed the process. One even inspired to shift from landscapes, and commence a portrait of her granddaughter. All eight life members responded very positively to their gift and one life member was delighted when her young grandchildren recognized her in the portrait. U3A Banyule thank the artists for sharing their time and talents to create such a personal gift for our hard working, life members.

By Dianne Dell'Oro Morgan (News team)

U3A Banyule Seniors week activity - CHAOS with fun!

Take a ring of chairs occupied by ladies and a gentleman from Ivanhoe Grand Care Community and U3A members surrounding a floor covered with 1-3 year olds toddlers and their Mums; add a silk parachute, buckets of balls and what do you have?? Chaos, glorious chaos! And so it was when I joined Sharon, Linda and Sue for toddler time at ILCH one Monday morning as part of U3A's involvement in Seniors Week.

Sue Lees hassled us about 'Working with Children' certificates, set up the reading program and guided us through the process. Sharon, Sue and I read one book each to the children however I think they were more interested in playing games. Books are for reading in bed with Mum and Dad!



I teamed with Karl from Community Care. Karl, a very dignified gentleman shared some of his life story with me before we began the session. What fun we had! We sang 'Hot potato, hot potato' and threw balls fast and furiously in all directions (well as hard and fast as 2-3 and 80-90 year olds can). No one wanted burnt hands!

The highlight was the undulating silk parachute. It flipped and waved overhead. Balls were tossed onto it and thrown off just as quickly. Hands grabbed balls, children scuffled under chairs and somersaulted over mothers' legs, not sure which way to look.

Karl, his face alight with joy, caught balls, attempted to pick them up from the floor and joined in the fun. From 1 to 90ish everyone was having fun together. It was a privilege to be part of the morning.

Thanks to all the Library staff, Sue for organising U3A's participation and all the folk who joined in.

By Elizabeth Ainsworth (News team)

OUT & ABOUT - September 2026
My Garden of Delights Tour

A group of about 16 members visited U3A Banyule member, Christine Lister's unique bushland garden in Montmorency. Christine bought the original small, two-bedroom house in 1974. At that time there was an outdoor toilet, the sewer not being connected until 1980.



Christine and her late husband and soul-mate Rex, worked tirelessly to improve the soil and plant a dense covering of plant-life, 'something like hiding from the world' Christine quipped.



There is no lawn in this garden and many of the trees were planted symbolically to honour special people and events the house has witnessed.

The garden is full of secret places, connected by winding paths and replicates natural bushland through a combination of rocks, boulders and dense groupings of native plants. It also contains many strategically placed, delightful sculptures.

Extensions built on the property accommodated Christine's in-laws in the latter years of their life. More recently, the property was subdivided and the original house sold, although the new owners still rely on Christine's gardening expertise.

Christine's new, architect-designed house on the rear block, features large windows to give an outdoor-in feel to the building.



We were invited inside to view and hear about some of the other amazing features of this unique structure, not the least being one massive glass wall between a paved, enclosed deck and a sunken lounge-room.

Christine presented a slideshow and read selected pieces from her memoir 'The Hidden Journey' to provide heartfelt insights about how she and Rex dealt with his terminal cancer prognosis. Rex passed away in 2005.

Christine's garden featured on TV's Gardening Australia program; truly a garden of delight.

By Sue Gunningham (News team)

OUT & ABOUT - The Melbourne Botanical Gardens

Quite a few of our members had a lovely guided walk around the Botanical Gardens. It was a perfect autumn day and our two guides were enthusiastic and knowledgeable. As we wandered among the huge variety of trees and flowers and admired the gorgeous vistas, the guides told us about the amazing scientific research conducted here and the expert conservation management happening around us.



We heard about the visionary early directors who established the Gardens and those who oversaw its later evolution. We watched an artist direct the building of a bamboo archway in the 'Sensory Garden' and admired the charming and beautifully preserved old buildings.

By noon, we were ready for lunch at the Terrace Restaurant where we enjoyed good food, excellent service and much conviviality! Thank you for organising the visit.

By Marcia Giles (Guest writer)

Beautiful Bellows - August 2026 Lecture



Guy Bellman, who runs 'The Accordion Workshop', and Robyn Mullen, an enthusiastic member of The Accordion Society of Australia, took us through the 200 year history, development, types, structure and mechanics of the piano accordion. Such a treat for musical romantics! Who doesn't love a Parisienne sidewalk melody, a Gypsy serenade, Celtic folk music or a rockin Zydeco waltz?

In 2019, Guy located one of the last remaining accordion repairers in Victoria, Peter Anderson of Heidelberg Heights, and ultimately became his successor.

Guy's 'Accordion Workshop,' now services the precious accordions of over 400 musicians. His 'spare time' involves gigs and adding to his own diverse collection of beautiful accordions.



Although the popularity and production of accordions declined in the 1950s, both are currently undergoing a global revival.



Robyn Mullem said musicians and fans can enjoy the regular 'Bellows and Beverages' gigs at Northcote's *Wesley Ann,* or follow the Melbourne Tango Orchestra. The seriously committed can join the Accordion Society of Australia.

Guy demonstrated the accordion's inner workings and let us touch and feel the instruments. He also showed us his beautiful blackwood accordion, commissioned from local manufacturer, Craig Woodward in Lalor.

Best of all, we heard the sweet sounds of the Beautiful Bellows.

Fun fact: John Lennon played the piano accordion as a child, as did Paul McCartney, later in life. Rumour says its sweet sound may be heard on the Sergeant Pepper album.

By Bernadette Byrne (Guest writer))

MEMORY LANE ARTICLE- collected as part of U3A 40th Anniversary - The La Trobe University Subject Audit Program

This program operated from early in our history and enabled U3A Banyule members to select and attend one undergraduate subject each semester and use the university library, free of charge. Some La Trobe University staff extended the invitation to the attendance at tutorials and interaction with enrolled students.

While initially an informal arrangement, in 2015 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to formalise the agreement. U3A Banyule members' participation rates were consistently between 15 - 18 members per semester.

In 2020 with COVID campus closures, online access was negotiated for our participants. This was a significant step in learning availability and most appreciated. But following the stresses of this period for the University, a major restructure, and complications of online learning and associated copyright issues, a new MoU was not forthcoming. The arrangement with U3A ended late 2022.

The program was greatly valued by our members. They had participated in a wide range of subjects including history, sociology, archaeology, literature, Spanish and Italian languages, Auslan and computer technology.

By Sue Beshara La Trobe Audit Program Liaison Officer (2018 until 2023)

OUT and ABOUT - Banyule U3A Social visit to Government House October 2026

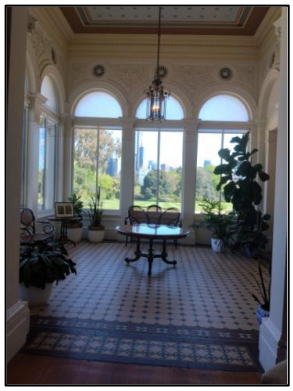


This is the 150th anniversary year of Victoria's Government House (1876). It has a delightful aspect next to the Botanic Gardens. Designed by architect William Wardell, this Italianate house with its belvedere tower is an iconic Melbourne landmark.



Inside, a guide took us through the state apartments. We were given a talk in the spacious Entrance Hall, beneath its soaring ceilings. The atmospheric deep-red walls of the Billiard Room host a picture gallery of past Governors.

'Elegance and light' are two words that spring to mind for the Drawing Room. The crystal chandeliers and a remnant of heavy wallpaper illustrate its original Victorian interior design. The conservatory windows at one end offer views of Melbourne CBD.



In the State Dining Room, we heard the fun facts that the massive table seats 54 and that it takes 6.5 hours to set the table! Little wonder it is not frequently used. Perhaps the most opulent room is the vast State Ballroom showcasing gold leaf and the wealth of the gold rush.



Government House hosts ceremonial, constitutional, international and community activities. It's both the residence and workplace of the Governor of Victoria, (representative of the Monarch), Professor Margaret Gardner. Suitably, royalty features in its art collection and even in royal tree planting. We had the opportunity to step into the functional kitchen garden, also used for social outreach.

Government House was ready to host the 2026 Victorian Senior of the Year awards. So, it was especially fitting that our U3A Banyule group visited today. Thanks Ann, for organising this enjoyable social activity.

By Margaret Cosgrove (Guest writer)

A weekend away - U3A Banyule in Shepparton



2026 winner Richard Lewer's Iluwanti Ken

In September, 14 U3A Banyule members visited Shepparton, via rail, for a weekend to visit two rare art museum country exhibits.

After a delicious lunch at SAM (Shepparton Art Museum) on Saturday, we were enthralled by the Degas to Picasso guided tour of 37 rare paintings and sculptures from a private collection donated to the Auckland Art Gallery. This is an Australian-exclusive showing nearly a century of modernism in art, from Impressionism and Cubism to Surrealism and post-war abstraction.

On Sunday, we toured the 2026 Archibald Prize exhibition at SAM, showcased here as part of its exclusive Victorian regional tour. Since 1923, 6000 plus works have depicted Australians in 103 Archibald Exhibitions. Richard Lewer's 2026 winning portrait of inspirational Pitjantjatjara Elder, Iluwanti Ken, is just the second indigenous woman to be honoured in this way.

From Powditch's powerful portrait of Governor General, The Honourable Sam Mostyn AC; to Collis's remarkable image of 22 year-old successful influencer Sophie Dopha, on a resin-coated iPhone; to Kurdish refugee, Azimitabar's toothbrush-painted image of Midnight Oil's Jim Moginie, the complexity, generosity & humanity of Australia shines through its brilliant art.



Museum of Vehicle Evolution

Many of the group visited the excellent Museum of Vehicle Evolution (MOVE), including the Furphy Museum (iconic family businesses Furphy & Sons and Furphy Foundry) and exquisite Loel Thomson Costume Museum (transferred from Bulleen during Covid). MOVE is a dynamic world class transport museum and all items are in pristine condition. Cars, trucks, motorbikes, buses, bicycles, costume, sound and story — a world-class collection under one roof -10 minutes drive from Shepparton.

By Dianne Lacroix and Margaret Connors (Guest writers)

Lecture: Allowing the Dead to Speak

On 2nd Sept David Weatherill, Past President, Genealogical Society of Victoria communicated his passion and depth of knowledge about Victoria's lighthouse cemeteries to an interested group of U3A members.

Victoria has 12 lighthouses. The first was at Cape Otway in 1848. David asserts that cemeteries in these often-remote areas, give us a snapshot of what life was like in those communities.

Many deaths were not officially recorded, but come to light through police and newspaper reports, bible annotations, old diary notes or inquests. David's research into these sources enables him to 'bring to life' the families who braved hardships and isolation to perform the essential duty of keeping the lighthouses running and the ships safe in often violent conditions.

Lighthouse keepers and their families had to be very resilient and resourceful; managing with very limited social contact, difficult conditions and irregular supplies.

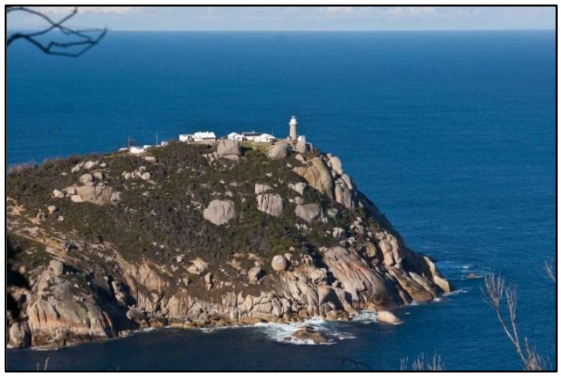


David spoke of Captain Thomas Musgrave, who served as lighthouse keeper at five of Victoria's lighthouses. He was at Wilson's Promontory Lighthouse from 1869-1878 with his wife and children.

His twin daughters were born at Wilson's Prom. One died aged 8 months and is buried in the Yanakie Station Cemetery on Wilsons Prom. Another of his children, Norman, died aged 7 months in 1875 and is buried near the lighthouse.

Thomas next served at Gabo Island where there are three visible graves, but more are likely hidden in the scrub and sand, as other death certificates have been found.

Thanks for the interesting talk David, especially regarding your adventures exploring these locations.



Lighthouse Wilson's Promontory

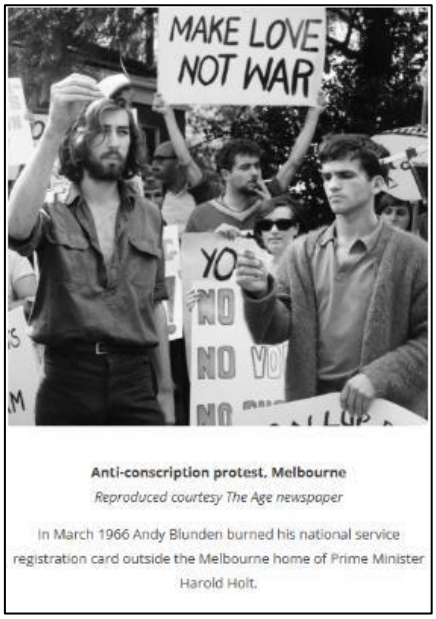


Gabo Island Lighthouse Reserve

By Linda Duncan (News team)

Lecture September 2026: The Swingin' 60's

Were you at Melbourne Town Hall when the Beatles waved at the crowds, or perhaps you saw the Seekers at the Myer Music Bowl? Did you march against conscription?



Anti-conscription protest, Melbourne
Reproduced courtesy The Age newspaper
In March 1966 Andy Blunden burned his national service registration card outside the Melbourne home of Prime Minister Harold Holt.

Margaret Anderson, Director of the Old Treasury in Melbourne discussed these issues and more in this engaging talk. The 1960's ushered in a trend of worldwide change as described in Bob Dylan's record, 'The Times they are a Changing'.

The desire for change was not limited to the younger generation. Australians from all walks of life questioned old hierarchies and developed new strategies of protest.

The Union of Australian Women (UAW) was an association of radical women who came together in Melbourne to support a wide range of women's issues from equal pay to legalised abortion, as well as cost of living concerns. Their protests were often disrupted by police, their placards seized and destroyed. The UAW came up with a novel response: they made aprons with slogans to wear on marches!

The TV show, Go!! — 'Australia's swingin'est teenage show' first televised in Melbourne in 1964. Unlike 'Bandstand,' the 'Go' show specifically targeted youth. Do you remember hosts Ian Turpie and Johnny Young? 'Go' launched the careers of many singers including Normie Rowe, The Strangers, Olivia Newton John, The Bee Gees, Denise Drysdale and Billy Thorpe & the Aztecs.



The GO-SET Magazine began publication in 1966 in Melbourne. Compiled by former Monash Uni students, it became very influential on the music scene.

Margaret's presentation included some lovely links to songs, trends, fashions and protests from the 1960's - some of our members were probably at one or more of these events!

By Linda Duncan (News team)

Do you have an article idea for the Quarterly Newsletter?

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 U3A office. You are invited 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.

2026 Important Dates	
Monday 23rd November	2027 Program available
Tuesday 24th November	U3A Banyule choir performance U3A Banyule drama performance
Wednesday 25th November	Craft sale ILCH
Friday 27th November	Term 4 classes conclude
Monday 30th November	Enrolments for 2027 open
Monday 2nd December	Volunteers' celebration
Tuesday 8th December	Annual Forum lunch
Thursday 10th December	U3A Banyule office closes