

U3A
BAIRNSDALE
1987-2022

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

U3A meets on the lands of the Tatungalung clan of the Gunaikurnai people and acknowledges them as Traditional Owners of the land we share.

One never knows where a journey may take you!



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PREFACE

The writing of this document used a variety of sources. Information from the minutes of the Committee and Annual General Meetings. Recollections of long-standing members, previous histories of the association and archived materials informed the contents. Previous brief history summaries abound but authors not acknowledged. A collection of writings for the 10th and 20th anniversary of U3A existed. The latter included articles from the 10th anniversary booklet. Variation occurs in the documents as individual recollections of the beginnings and development of the organisation vary as each member views developments from their point of view.

This document's intentions are to: -

~Provide an overview of the development of the U3A in Bairnsdale. This is not definitive. It is a volunteer's exercise in trying to sort out the archives and record at a minimum, those volunteers who have contributed to its development.

~Acknowledge the people who have worked on the Committees to create the amazing organisation that exists today.

~Celebrate the success achieved in 35 years.

Housekeeping notes: One challenge of this project is points of view on grammar and spelling. To this end Microsoft Word English is the arbiter. The other is style. This is an overview, not just telling a story but acknowledging the context of the time, social changes over the years and the changing nature of the participating cohort. In addition, individual writing styles vary and maintaining the voice of the writer is a consideration.

The support and encouragement of Joy Green, President, Judy Mann, Secretary, and their Committee are acknowledged and appreciated.

Lorraine Scott
Project Coordinator
2022

IN THE BEGINNING

It is the year 1987. Kylie Minogue's song Locomotion is the constant sound on the airwaves, the Australian economy dropped into recession on the back of the New York Stock Market Crash causing unemployment to rise significantly. It was also the year that the first mobile phone call was made in Australia.

Changes were also happening in Bairnsdale. Nick's clothing store was opened and the Railway from Bairnsdale to Orbost closed.

At a government level Education in Victoria was undergoing a major change. Adult learning was on the agenda. As early as 1985 discussing options for adult education began appearing in the newspapers (The Sun 26.11.85) and U3A featured. An article by the then educational reporter for The Age newspaper Geoff Maslen, headed Report urges big state adult education revamp (May 23, 1987) put forward options for all types of adult learning.



At the same time life-long learning became a strong emerging theory. A well-educated older community open to furthering their studies, sharing interests, and seeking companionship to do so was emerging. Issues of early retirement and living longer became a consideration.

'Life. Be in it' a Victorian Government health initiative launched in 1975 by the Department of Youth, Sport, and Recreation, although focusing on fitness had emphasised the need for people to remain active mentally and physically regardless of age. This focus was important in changing attitudes. In addition, improved medical outcomes and a growing interest in diet were emerging.

Adult learning had been on the agenda since the end of WW2 with varied approaches tried around the world. The needs of adult learning in Bairnsdale met by BACE (Bairnsdale Adult Community Education). This was a successful group with an enrolment of 2000 in 1984 offering over ninety-five short- and long-term courses provided by thirty-five tutors (1985 Report). However, things change, and alternatives are sought. BACE played a major support role in establishing U3A in Bairnsdale.



Life Be in it

The following article (found in 1987 archives) illustrates the discussions of the day. In 2022 it is interesting to read and reflect on this and ask two questions: what still applies today and what role does U3A Bairnsdale play in addressing the issues raised

Giving the greying a spectrum of choices

By Alan Nichols

DURING the next 40 years the number of people over 65 will double in Australia. This will provide unprecedented challenges for our lifestyle and economy.

The biggest problem is going to be will the number of workers be able to carry the number dependent on age pensions or will the pension system have to be drastically altered? The dilemma is what is behind a lot of concern about national superannuation.

But it is not the only challenge Australia will face with the greying of the population. Put yourself in the shoes of those turning 65 in the period of 2000 to 2010. What will life be like? What leisure opportunities will there be? What chance of a meaningful existence?

It is going to come down to a question of choice, and by the year 2000 this will be a matter of social justice — perhaps even more important than the question today of continuing child poverty.

Old age without choices will be like a prison. People will have to live in small units in retirement villages, or in decaying homes because they have no resources to maintain them. Leisure will be continuous television, which is not a pretty picture.

The choices older people should have are well described in a report on social justice published this week entitled 'Too Old to Choose?' (Collins Dove, editor Heidi Dixon).

The report, compiled after nationwide consultations with many old people and with welfare agencies which serve them, says they should have these choices:

The choice of staying at home rather than relocation to a medical facility.

The choice of communication and information in one's own language.

The choice of receiving the ministry of the church.

The choice of making a will.

The choice of doctor, hospital, or type of medical treatment.

The choice of donating body organs or transplantation.



■ The choice of dying with dignity, which may include the choice of turning off life-sustaining machines or the cessation of medical treatment.

■ The choice of saying goodbye to family, friends and others.

■ The choice of agent-next of kin to make decisions.

■ The choice of funeral arrangements.

All these are life-and-death decisions. If older Australians had these choices by the year 2000, it would become a lifestyle and social justice haven. To accomplish it, some reallocation of resources would be necessary and some realignment of community thinking.

But there are other, perhaps more significant, rights which I would want to exercise when I am over 65.

■ I would want the right to meaningful community service, contributing something genuinely helpful to society.

■ There might be some oral history I could contribute to schoolchildren, so they can understand the identity and pilgrimage of their local neighborhood.

■ There would certainly be lessons and insights I would want to pass on to my grandchildren, if I have some by then.

■ Assuming health risks continue to increase for young people, through alcohol and drug abuse, infectious diseases, cancer from smoking and other forms of pollution, could there be some tasks for older people in discussing the virtues of monogamous

lifestyle and healthy living? But then, maybe the young will not want lectures from the old!

For old people living on and just above the poverty line, some of these questions are luxuries. They just want to survive. And there are 155,000 older Australians living that way in 1989.

They are the ones on the margin — ethnic people who have never quite fitted in and who are not qualified for pensions; people who have rented commercially all their lives; the chronically ill without family support; and the virtually homeless in supported accommodation of some sort.

These "pockets of poverty" are largely invisible to most people. We are conscious of our own aged parents or grandparents, and we try to make their lives easier. But these are people without anyone to give them support or companionship.

With all the emphasis on child poverty, it would be possible to overlook them. But if special help is not given to this group, they will continue to be overlooked well past the year 2000.

Who will advocate for them? One of the worries about the climate of public debate is that social justice is not a very popular subject.

Even the opportunity shops, which used to provide a dignified way of getting good clothes very cheaply, have been gentrified by the trendy young people who want to dress up in yesterday's clothes.

Alan Nichols is an Anglican priest and writer.

Bairnsdale meeting looked at universities of the third age

(By Norma Vincent)

Universities of the Third Age aim to provide opportunities for constructive broadly based education activities for persons entering retirement and beyond.

A public meeting to explain the concept of the Universities of the Third Age was held in Bairnsdale recently.

From this initial meeting of interested people a committee has been formed and the Bairnsdale Campus created.

It is something new for Gippsland. It is also a first for the region.

However, it is not entirely new for the world or over the past decade Universities of the Third Age have become established in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Since 1984 in Victoria

Hawthorn Campus of U3A as well as other teaching institutions. Prior to retirement Harry taught at R.M.I.T.

This course will commence on June 10 at St. John's Education Centre, Bairnsdale from 10-12 noon and continue for 10 weeks. There is ample parking available this end of town and the room where students meet is heated.

Sue Smart who is proposing to become a Tutor in a Botany Part One Course also has an extensive background of teaching experience in all the Sciences. Ever wondered what flower, or plant, is that, when you visit the many beauty spots in East Gippsland? Join Sue and learn more about this fascinating subject and enjoy the company of others with a similar interest in

Beginners Course. The Tutor for this is Hazel Whitehead who before retirement taught music in Melbourne. Would you like to learn more about what you actually hear when you listen to music? Why not join her?

All lectures are free. However, some small outlay may be required for a text book, or materials, depending upon the type of course undertaken.

To become a member of the Bairnsdale Campus there is an annual fee of \$15 for singles, and \$25 for doubles.

This fee entitles members to participate in all the activities which make up such a new hall of learning.

Courses will be held wherever possible during the day time, either in the morning or afternoon

subject as a Tutor or can help out with the office work, will you contact us?

Each Wednesday morning between 10 a.m. and 12 noon, representatives of U3A will be in attendance at B.A.C.E., Main Street (next to the T.A.F.E. College). Phone us on (051) 52 2899 or if you live out of town, write to P.O. Box 1075, Bairnsdale, 3875 and let us know of your interests.

Think about the possibilities of a continuing educational campus specifically created for our third stage of living and what this will mean for all of us as the years go by.

Your third phase of life activity is about to take off so please keep those phone calls and letters coming in.

See you on Campus.

1987
This was the year cars were big as this Ford Crown illustrates



Empire Rose The Cup



6-hour

University for retired discussed

In the absence of the president, Mr Frank Addison, Vice-President, welcomed a large gathering of the Paynesville Friends and Neighbors Group at the September meeting in the R.S.L. Hall.

A special welcome was made to the Guest speaker, Mr Ken Calwell,

who spoke on the University of the Third Age.

The aim of the University which has a newly formed group in Bairnsdale, is to provide broad educational opportunities for the active retired, based on their own interests and past experiences.

Courses held during the day include Greek

History, Botany, Creative Writing, Music appreciation, and Gippsland History.

The Annual membership is \$15 single or \$25 double.

New members are being sought, and more information may be gained by contacting the Bairnsdale B.A.C.E. office, by telephone, 52899.

Carlton won the footy



Mr Harrison Chapman made a major contribution to the establishment of U3A Bairnsdale and Districts and became the first President.

A MEETING STARTED IT ALL ~ 1987

A public meeting was held 11am on Thursday 2nd April 1987 at the VCAH McMillan Building under the auspices of the Bairnsdale Adult Community Education Inc. A Mr Tom Timpson Vice President of Third Age Learning City Campus was the invited speaker.

A meeting conducted by Tom Timpson at the McMillan Campus (now TAFE) put forward the view that retirees could continue their mental stimulation and, in the process, acquire more knowledge in subjects of their choice. The meeting was sponsored by BACE who provided a representative and support to establish a U3A in Bairnsdale. Under the auspices of BACE records of a meeting held on the 14th of April 1987 established a steering committee.

U3A BACE BAIRNSDALE CAMPUS

Courses commencing soon

ANCIENT GREEKS: Harry Chapman — 10 weeks.
Commences: Wed., June 10: 10 a.m.-12 noon.

GIPPSLAND HISTORY: (Part 1). Jean Court.
Commences: Fri., June 12 — fortnightly - 7 lessons.

BOTANY: (Part 1) Sue Smart.
Commences: Tuesday, July 7 — 10 a.m.-12 noon.
10 weeks.

WRITERS WORKSHOP: Marie Munday.
Commences: Thursday, July 9 — 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

For further information or enrolment Phone B.A.C.E. 2 2899 or write to U3A, Bairnsdale Campus, P.O. Box 1075, Bairnsdale. U3A membership is \$15 or \$25 double and entitles you to enrol in any course at no charge.

Universities of the Third Age

are being established for older people who have an interest in learning — who, in the broadest sense, wish to continue their education. Members themselves decide what the courses will be and who will teach them.

Mr Tom Timpson an ex headmaster and educator who is now the Vice President of the Melbourne City Campus of U3A.

He will address an informal meeting on the benefits of U3A and the way it can operate in this area.

Everyone is invited along. A light lunch will be served and questions will be encouraged.

The place for the meeting is V.C.A.H. McMillan Rural Studies Building, at 11 a.m. on Thursday, April 2.

There is no fee or obligation, but for catering purposes will you please phone 52 2899 and let us know if you are coming.

The News 18.3.1987

Committee Formed

Records show the following election results:

President Harrison Chapman
Vice President K Coldwell
Secretary D Davidson
Treasurer E Bourke
and a committee as follows:

S Smart, B Allen, B Sweeny, H Whitehead. D Sippo (BACE).

An unsigned summary of the history of U3A includes P Angus and C. McDonald on this committee.

Membership

In July 1987 the membership was thirty-two with fees being \$15 single and \$25 a double.

Classes Begin Reports on the number of classes offered vary. One summary suggests three classes were offered. Harrison Chapman taught a class in Greek History, Sue Smart offered Botany which later became the successful and long running Geology course and Hazel Whitehead tutored Musical Appreciation. Another summary of the history records Writers Workshop with Marie Mundy also being offered.



The University of the Third Age is giving lessons on East Gippsland history to an enthusiastic group of students. Tutor, Jean Court, speaks with student Clive McDonald about pioneering life around Bairnsdale.

Patties, the bakery factory in Bairnsdale and U3A shared a common interest in the closing years of the 1980's. Both were expanding. Patties started freezing pies and U3A went from strength to strength with sixty-one members. The close relationship with BACE continued with BACE providing examples of constitutions and incorporation.

Harrison Chapman continued as President for 1988 before Ken Coldwell succeeded him in 1989. The Committee during this time included:

- M Whitehead
- J Vincent, E Bourke
- C Beecher
- K Caldwell
- C McDonald
- P Millard (BACE representative)
- M Potter.



14.09.1987

Lessons in East Gippsland History from the University of the Third Age continue in the East Gippsland Centre Day Hospital. The class pictured here is (back)- Gordon Wilson, Jean Court, Shirley Stevenson, Mary Charnley, Clive McDonald. (front) Mary Cameron, Marie Potter, Winfred Searle, and Jean Picken.



Members of the University of the Third Age Greek class held a luncheon to celebrate the successful completion of the course. Members of the class talk to tutor Mr Harrison Chapman (second from left).



Participants celebrate the conclusion of a 15 week course, the first run by the Bairnsdale campus of the Universities of the Third Age movement, back in 1987. The first course was a study of Ancient Greeks and present at the luncheon were Clive and Moreen McDonald, John and Helene Toland, Max and Beryl Allen, Peg Wright, Jean Picken, Jean Neville, Marie Potter, Sue Smart (registrar), Denece Sippo (BACE convenor), Ellen Bourke, Avril Yates, Ken Shortbridge and tutor Harrison Chapman. (Bairnsdale Advertiser 25/11/87)

A photo in the Bairnsdale Advertiser (25/11/1987) records the first course offered and run by the Bairnsdale U3A. The course was a study of Ancient Greeks tutored by Harrison Chapman.

Maur's Rodwell arrived in Bairnsdale in 1988 and joined the Poetry and Prose course. Maur's was delighted to find that the group met at the Uniting Church 5 minutes from her home. However, the group became mobile moving to Morgan Street and then to Service Street.



“Much to my surprise and reluctance the president Avril Yates asked me to lead the Poetry and Prose class. After much persuasion I agreed. The course name changed to creative writing...the class numbers expanded, and more able members joined so I gladly handed over the leadership role.” Maur's records that she participated in many courses and accredits U3A programs as helping her develop “much confidence”

Maur's has fond memories of Barty Harvey. Bertha (Barty) Harvey, one of U3A's earliest members made history. Maur's recalls “She was a larger-than-life figure – tiny but her radiance overflowed.” After her husband died, she studied at a teachers' college and became a teacher and a church lay-reader. Her involvement in Poetry and Prose saw her complete a biography of her father, Robert Graham Carey - ‘A Message from the Clouds.’ He was Australia's first aviator. Barty's nephew Peter Carey won the literary Booker award four times. Writing was extremely popular as this photo published on October 2, 1987, illustrates. Marie Munday coordinated the course. The group is photographed below. Unfortunately, not all names were attached but we know it includes Olive Jenyns, Mary Charnley, Eunice Richards? Marj Cameron and Ms Bourke





Maurs Rodwell with an early group of writers



Dawn Barr was a regular leader of the writers group up until 2019 when she moved to be nearer her children.



Claire Beecher was secretary in 1988 and went on to become the Registrar. Classes continued to expand taking place in a wide variety of settings such as Art Access- operating from the Gippsland Centre. Tutor agreements, profiles, and a tutor information package were prepared.



Popular courses included Jean Court's introduction to Gippsland History (remember many of the early participants had moved to Bairnsdale for the next phase of their lives, so this program provided a great deal of interest). The diverse range of courses included Ham radio operation, including building the radios, and computer lessons which were much in demand.

Marie Potter, now a **Nonagenarian** and still actively involved in **U3A** recalls attending a series by Jean Court, introducing participants to Gippsland History (remember many of the early participants had moved to Bairnsdale for the next phase of their lives, so this program provided a great deal of interest). As a result of this course Marie stated that she always reflects on how difficult it was for pioneers to travel to Melbourne through the river of swamps.

Marie recalls Avril Yates introducing Armchair Travel in her lounge room. A popular and ongoing program that enabled participants to share their travel with others. Remember that in the early days this was the time of slides and photos. Marie coordinated a course in Comparative Religion obtaining a wide range of speakers and covering many religions. Celebrating her 90th birthday saw Marie take her first parachute jump.



Alan Searle (dec) was made a life member for his work at U3A. Alan had a background in management. A sea change in his middle years saw him accept farming. Retiring from farming, accountancy kept him busy. Alan joined U3A in 1988 to study two courses offered by Harrison Chapman -Astronomy and Radio where members studied for their Ham operators' licence and built their own radio: a task Alan openly admitted was beyond him. Alan was a keen walker and in 1987 led the U3A Ambling. In addition, he introduced many members to computers

"When my wife died., I found U3A to be a life saver. I was lonely, lost most of my reason for living, but now with so many marvellous members who I think of as extended family, I enjoy a full week and the company of many friends.

Why they even allow me to be a tutor and put up with my peculiar sense of humour. Remarkable too, they even elected me to the exalted position as a committee member (2007). Bless U3A!"

Alan Searl (p. 14 10th Anniversary booklet 1997)

CONTINUING TO GROW



Geology attracted many people to join. An early excursion to Rock Valley Dam was one of the many excursions that took place over the next 10 years.

1989 - 61 MEMS -
GRANT OF \$500 FOR ELDER PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN APPROVED TO BE USED TO ORGANISE & PERHAPS SUBSIDISE SUITABLE COURSES THROUGH BACE.
SUGGESTIONS WERE: EXERCISE - HORSE RIDING - CARPET BOWLS
DRAMA - CYCLING & BUSH WALKING

June Soutter a Nonagenarian has been a member of U3A since 1988. After years of living in the Omeo area where she raised four children, June said that U3A was a great introduction to a new lifestyle. June enjoyed participating in a wide range of activities including Comparative Religion, Geology Studies (for 10 years), Music Appreciation, Current Affairs, the King Walkers and later The Amblers. June and fellow Omentarian, Margaret Hallet shared an interest in Antiques and offered a successful program on the topic to interested members. June, now in her early nineties is a familiar face at all U3A events.



Left-Right ~ June Soutter, Joy Green, Val Moller

WHAT A DIFFERENCE MODERN TECHNOLOGY MAKES



UNIVERSITIES OF THE THIRD AGE

Bairnsdale Campus

P.O. Box 1075, 3875

1/345678

24
120

Newsletter No 4.

Date August 1987

Dear Members and Friends,

our membership now stands at 36, and our five classes are still actively meeting. Attendances at classes have been maintained which is pleasing for all involved.

Here is a summary of the questionnaire which 27 members kindly filled in. As the instructions were not always followed the analysis is incomplete, however trends are apparent.

Choice	Lit.	Hist.	Sci.	Maths	Art/Music	Per. Dev.	Languages	Leav
1st	10	7	5	1	0	1	2	0
2nd	2	8	3	2	5	2	2	0
3rd	5	2	1	0	12	1	0	0

In literature the majority preferred prose with the study of the literature of a country or a period about equally chosen.

Overwhelmingly the literature of Australia was selected with Britain + France to a lesser extent. There was a sizable interest in the HSC set books.

History showed the main attraction to be the distant past. Archaeology + Ancient History have a strong following. There is however twice as much interest in Australian History as British History with only minor attraction to the history of other countries.

In Science, Zoology, Botany + Geology rank equal + other sciences are insignificant in their following in comparison. Maths had very few supporters.

Art + Music appear to be a second or third choice but still indicate a positive support for these activities. Art Appreciation + History + Music Appreciation + History were equally chosen. Play an instrument received little support.

In Personal Development the preferences fell as follows:

August 1987
Newsletter No 4.

2.

	Healthy Living	Psychology	Religion	Ethics	Philosophy
"Votes"	3	2	8	0	3

Several people expressed an interest in Comparative Religion. At this stage there does not appear to be a strong demand for the study of a particular language. Those named were as follows

	Spanish	Italian	Greek	German	Japanese
"Votes"	1	3	2	2	1

To sum up the findings:- We now have useful leads for planning courses + it would seem that for next year (Bicentenary year) that we should offer both Austral literature and Australian History. The interest in comparative Religion is significant + should be followed. Geology is a subject which will be passing into the design stage + possibly the History + Appreciation of the First of a period could be offered.

If you would like to be involved as a tutor or course convenor please make contact with a member of the Committee.

Meanwhile some courses are nearing completion.

The Greek History course will finish by the 16th Sept. + a planning a get-together on that date. The Giffland History course have extended their program until the end of October. Members have a personal research project which they have been working on during the course. The Wris Group still have four or five more sessions to go. They intend collecting some of their original works together as a "publication". The Botany I class will continue until the end of September + will be holding one of their classes at "Poorinda", the property of Mr + Mrs Richmond. The Music History + Appreciation group made a start only recently. It is held every second Friday 10:30am-12 noon in the Meeting Room at Statewide. Hazel Whitehead (566 931) would welcome newcomers (S. Smart Registrar.).

The following excerpt handwritten minutes provides an insight into the basics of establishing a non-profit organisation. Remember there were no mobile phones and minimum computer access.

<sup>errata
1987</sup>
Barnedale V3A. As Oct 14/4/86. (under the auspices
of BACE)

14. First - Steering Ctee formed.

JV. not elected Secretary or Asst. Sec.

15 Denise Sippo phoned from BACE wanted

* I do some typing. "Sec. has arthritis
in her hands & cannot type."

As I was going to the shop, I called
and picked it up about 12:10pm
at head office BACE.

* Found it was 10 minutes of two
meetings (1) D.S. chaired to select
an Ctee

(2) Steering Ctee

* Also list of Ctee members,
names, addresses, phone numbers.

I used my own elec. A/writer

I supplied A4 paper for master copies

Took about 1 1/2 hrs to do the task

to my standard. x \$8. + per hour (current rate)

I delivered papers back to the BACE

office for photocopying list of Ctee

members x 12 A4 copies & then

Denise Sippo gone home, away for a

week will not be attending

Tues. 21 April 10am, so I brought

all material home.

4 miles ^{x 1.6 - ps to miles} to BACE & return.

I also purchased carbon ribbon

ES100 x \$8.20 in case I ran out.

I used large Gothic type daisy wheel.

Typed up the 10 minutes for 2 meetings

held on 14/4/87. Also a list of Committee

Members which has to be amended.

Death of Bairnsdale Campus U3A founder

Widely known and highly respected founder of Bairnsdale Campus U3A (University of the Third Age), Rev. Harrison Chapman, aged 80, died at Bairnsdale on February 6 after a short illness.

Rev Chapman (retired) moved to the Bairnsdale area in July 1986. Soon afterwards Rev Chapman was instrumental in commencing the Bairnsdale campus of U3A.

Prior to moving to the Bairnsdale area, his experiences in life had been many and varied.

His first job was at "Dunlop" as an analytical chemist. He then moved on to a similar position with the "Phosphate Co.", a position held until the outbreak of World War II.

During this time, Harrison Chapman remained a radio operator, having obtained his licence in 1929. These years of experience qualified him as a radio instructor with the Royal Australian Air Force (Flight Lt.) stationed at Ballarat.

He then moved on to become a lecturer in chemical engineering at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (R.M.I.T.) during which time he instigated a course in chemical engi-

neering at Melbourne University. This led him

to receive his Masters Degree in 1975.

Harrison Chapman left R.M.I.T. to enter the Ministry and was ordained at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, in 1959.

His first appointment was as chaplain at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School where he also taught Physics and Chemistry, and conducted a radio club for students.

Rev Harrison Chapman then moved to his first and only parish at St

John's, Flinders. Here he ministered for the next 15 years.

On retirement, Rev Chapman took up a post as counsellor of St Paul's Cathedral, until he moved to Bruthen to be with his family in 1986.

He then initiated the Bairnsdale Campus of U3A, having been active in U3A in Melbourne over a number of years.

During his years in the Bairnsdale area, he was extremely active in lecturing and taking courses with U3A.

Harrison Chapman will be greatly missed by all he came in contact with.



Rev. Harrison Chapman

COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE EIGHTIES

Denise Sippo (A representative of BACE) chaired the first meeting to establish U3A in Bairnsdale.

April 1987

President: -Harrison Chapman.

Vice President: -Ken Caldwell.

Secretary:-D. Davidson.

Treasurer: -E Burke.

Register: - Sue Smart Assistant Registrar Beryl Allen.

Committee J Vincent, Clive McDonald, Bob Sweeny, Phyl Angus

Records for the years of the 80's are difficult to interpret. Records show that Claire Beecher was secretary during this stage. Ken Caldwell became President after Harrison Chapman passed away.

Do you remember the usual idea of age in the 1980s and the frantic searches for euphemisms that would not offend the old dears? According to the popular press, Old Age started at 65 (or earlier) and consisted of sickness frailty and dependancy, with one foot in the grave. An older person who achieved some thing must be a weirdo. Few people had heard of the Third Age

I heard discussions about U3A at a time that found me looking for a purpose. A few months later in 1987 Harrison Chapman and Denise Sippo in BACE thought there was enough interest in Bairnsdale to call a public meeting to be addressed by Tom Timpson, secretary of a committee representing the existing Victorian U3As, from which a steering committee was elected to form U3A Bairnsdale. Quickly following this a Network Committee was formed to promote contact between the eleven or so campuses.

I served as Vice President of Bairnsdale and representative on the Network Committee and later on the Network Council. When Harrison retired I followed him as President.

From the outset I met many interesting people and made good friends. In the early days the Committee made a point of ensuring that at least one committee member attended each group so that all our members were kept in touch and no class failed from lack of support. Among the first groups to meet were Harrison's class on Ancient Greece, which had 14 or so members right from the start, Gippsland History presented by Jean Court and Botany with Sue Smart.

DOROTHY BALD

Dorothy Bald saw an advert in the local paper that a U3A Group was going to discuss "Comparative Religions". "It sounded interesting and I joined the merry group. It was a great success. We had interesting discussions and our leader Kath Porter organized conducted tours of the various religious organizations. Now we are talking about "Global Warming" and coming up "God versus Science". Do come and join us."



THE NINETEEN NINETIES

In Australia, the nineteen nineties began with a recession that was hard both socially and economically. Unemployment reached 10% by the middle of the decade. Despite the gloom and doom of the beginning of the decade, it was also a period of rapid technological growth including computers, computer technology and the mobile phone. Life continued in Bairnsdale with a highlight of the first year of the nineties being the 1990 Great Victorian Bike Ride which commenced in the town.

The nineteen nineties was also time of growth and development for U3A Bairnsdale. The foundations of many of the courses that still operate in the 2020s began during this time. For example, languages are popular today and one of the early ones was Conversational German by Ilse Bedurke which operated out of St Peters by the Lake, the Anglican Church in Paynesville. The Church was also the venue for vigorous Media Discussions on topics as diverse as racial vilification, Asian immigration, language, open government and euthanasia. Most of these topics are still relevant and discussed today. For many years Geology was the 'go to' class at U3A. Sue Smart is credited with commencing this class which developed from the original biology class.



Photographs and reports illustrate that exploring the community was high on the agenda and well supported by members. Excursions included: - Exploring the Gippsland Lakes on the Odyssey (1996), The Power Works Morwell and APM (1998), Hazelwood Power station, The Beet Museum Maffra, Knitting Mill Centre for Gippsland Studies, Vegco (1995), and Patties (1996)



Membership continued to grow. New arrivals to East Gippsland contributed to the ongoing growth of the organisation. Examples include Anne Farrell who joined U3A in 1992 engaging in a range of programs including Creative Writing and Comparative religions. Bernard (a RAAF veteran) also joined, and they became regular participants in Current Affairs and Saturday Afternoon at the Flicks.

Another example were Mary and Bert Gard who arrived in Bairnsdale in 1993 and via contact with Noel Moline became aware of U3A and the courses they offered. Mary's first introduction to U3A was a visit to the Clock Museum where over morning tea they met people and enjoyed the friendliness of the group. Mary recalls the different venues where members met including the Uniting Church and then Morgan St. Like many newcomers Bert and Mary supported U3A in a variety of ways including making tea and coffee, to Bert giving talks about sailing ships. Mary recalled that they attended music classes conducted by Pam King, Art Appreciation by Max Hall, Gippsland History with Jean Court.



In 1993 Denise Turner was responsible for organising classes and records her appreciation of the work Barbara Clayton had undertaken to establish this role. Denise records that full time classes were offered in Geology, Music Appreciation, Armchair travel, Poetry and Prose, and Media Discussion, while short term classes included Environmental Studies, Shipwrecks in Bass Strait, History of Gippsland, Nutrition and Preventative Medicine and Family History.

Music in its many forms has been an important part of U3A. Hazel Whitehead set a high standard with the program she coordinated. In 1997 (20th Anniversary Booklet) Hazel records the problems of rooms with limited power outlets and varied acoustics. Hazel stated *thirteen years was a very intimate and rewarding time for me.... Intimate because members' emotions were aroused and rewarding because it revived musical knowledge which I thought I had forgotten...*

Pam King and Anne Cameron also coordinated Music Appreciation. Music is still popular today. Ukuleles, guitar, choir are just some of the many variations. Attendance at concerts and musicals have also been organised.

UKULELE GROUP



Incorporation: -A meeting held on 14.06.1995 in the Uniting church hall, reached an agreement to incorporate. Once incorporated there are rules and requirements an association must follow. Importantly members and office bearers are protected against personal liability for the organisation's debts.

This appeared to reenergise an already active organisation. Noel Moline produced a newsletter, permanent name tags were introduced, a post box hired, and history books produced thanks to Jean Court and Dick and Noel Moline, and the Poetry and Prose group produced a children's book.

1996 A BUSY YEAR

A variety of activities took place during this year. Minutes record that a train trip to Walhalla was to take place on the first of November, a pizza lunch was being considered to obtain members opinions and ideas; classes in Canasta were planned and Bridge classes were being investigated. Numbers continued to grow.

Jim Connolly retired to Paynesville and joined U3A in the middle of 1996 after being informed by friends of the courses they offered. He enjoyed a discussion group led by Doug Trigg and ended up running it in 1997. The group met in the fellowship room at St Peters by the Lake until 2002 when the group moved to the Morgan St rooms.



Views from St Peters by the Lake Paynesville

The nineties were the start of “a year for everything” and the mature in the population were not to be left out.

Page 10 – THE NEWS – Wednesday, September 11, 1996

U3A members active in Adult Learners' Week

During last week, which was officially designated “Adult Learners' Week”, U3A visited the premises of East Gippsland Newspapers to learn how “The Advertiser” was produced.

General manager, Bob Yeates, entertained members with a short history of his family's involvement with providing East Gippsland, particularly Bairnsdale, with news about local events and the role of the company, as a small business in the area, in providing employment for local people.

For U3A participants, last week was also the start of Term Five, with another series of six-

week courses twice daily, Tuesday to Thursday at the Youth Centre, Uniting Church, Lucknow.

The discussion group continues each Monday at Paynesville, and by coincidence, last week's topic - “What can I do about homeless children?” was echoed by last Monday's editorial in “The Advertiser” - obviously recognised as a problem for society as a whole.

Perhaps the community of East Gippsland can do something for the children of this area.

Clifford Kline, the “Merchant” and producer of “The Merchant of Venice” at this year's Stratford Shakespearean Festival is presenting “Cos” at the Briarlong Mechanic's Hall next Saturday, September 14, 1996, at 8pm. U3A hopes to have sufficient numbers to hire a bus, and would be

pleased to hear from anyone interested in attending. Interested persons should ring Noel Moline.

U3A will be starting another series on the Constitution on Wednesday, September 18 - with guest speakers Senator Lyn Allison, Dr Ken Coghill and Ken Anderson - the general title, “Towards a Republic”.

Once again, all members of the general public are invited.

Adult Learners Week became Seniors Day designed to recognise and acknowledge senior citizens in Victoria. It has morphed into the Victorian Seniors Festival and is sponsored by the Victorian Department of Health & Human Services to encourage seniors to get out there and participate in and enjoy a wide range of activities.

Bairnsdale U3A one could argue, have a seniors' festival every week. A report by the then President, Avril Yates stated that classes were organised with courses lasting six weeks, with a two week break in between. Class numbers ranged from

5-35 members. Classes were as varied as lectures on Chaucer to Antiques with June Soutter and Margret Hallett. Travel experiences were shared and as varied as the Gun Barrel Highway and Glimpses of Africa. Music, Poetry, and Prose continued as did Art. Anthropology studies led by Clive McDonald was popular while Jim Connolly led a lively discussion group. Members certainly were not procrastinating.



A Seniors Week funded luncheon

The group was also obviously reaching out to the community and encouraging activity as the following excerpts suggests as bush walking was on the agenda. Bushwalking was introduced in this year according to this article. (Found in the archives but no source)

U3A Hikers to Join " Long Walk " (March 1997)

As part of the curriculum offered this year by U3A Bairnsdale & District, a Bush Walking group has been formed. A number of walks of varying grades of difficulty will be undertaken throughout the year. The initial walk was in the Mount Lookout, Boggy Creek area, north – west of Bairnsdale. Apart from the delightful countryside traversed, of particular interest were the Chinese diggings where surprising amounts of rock and soil had been moved in the search for gold late last century. In total, some 15 kilometres were covered by the 20 or so participants and all were more than happy with this initial outing. The next walk will be in conjunction with the Scout Association, re –enacting a portion of the " Long Long Walk " undertaken by survivors of the vessel " Sydney Cove ". This walk, which took place in 1797, commenced from approximately Lakes Entrance and ended two months later at – Wattamolla, N. S. W. U3A walkers will join with the Scout movement, Secondary College students and other bush walkers in a recreation of the first phase of the walk from Lakes Entrance to Pettmans Beach on Saturday, March 15 starting at 6am from the Post Office Jetty in Lakes Entrance exactly 200 years to the day from the commencement of the original walk for survival.

The article also included the following:

To further emphasise the activeness of U3A members, the geology group held a recent excursion to the Angus Vale area, off the Dargo Rd., where rock formations were explored and analysed during the course of the day. The highlight came at the last site visited where many marine fossils were found in an excellent state of preservation. The excitement of the group at these findings was probably similar to that experienced by the goldminers of old upon finding traces of that rare and sort after mineral – each find bringing an added impetus to search for more and better samples.

1997 ~ 10 YEARS SINCE THE BEGINNING

Pam King

King is a name that is often heard around U3A walking groups. The King Bush Walkers were named in the memory of Pam King who was the instigator of Bush Walking at U3A. Pam a former Home Economics teacher joined U3A in 1993 and was elected to Committee. The following Year she became Treasurer. The bush walks were arduous for many, and The Amblers were established.

The group has at times been independent of U3A and the alliance between the King Walkers and U3A appears to vary as some members linked to U3A while others do not.



A walk along the Mitchell River

A decade of U3A existence



University of the Third Age members celebrated U3A's 10th anniversary of the first meeting, at Saint Andrew's Receptions, last Wednesday. U3A now has 90 members. Pictured with foundation members and a celebratory cake is current U3A president, Avril Yates. 97-04-19-F11

A well-earned celebration took place to celebrate 10 years of U3A Bairnsdale. To honour the occasion a booklet of memories and experiences was printed and has been used as a reference in this document.

THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

The Australian Republic Movement was a regular discussion point during this decade and U3A played an active role in hosting speakers and discussion groups. This was a lively time leading to the referendum held on 6th November 1999 when the concept was defeated.

Mary Good describes in a letter dated third of September 1996, to the U3A Editor Network News that the Commissioners who were then operating the Bairnsdale Council, decided not to participate in any way in this process of consultation on the Republic Movement Referendum and U3A was the only group to come forward with a program.

The program commenced in April called What are they Saying...What Do You Think? The program covered the period from the lead up to Federation to the present day. Speakers included local Federal MP Peter McGauran, Deputy Premier John Cain and U3A members addressed issues such as the ANZAC Tradition, changing military roles, family law and immigration.

These proved so successful that a series of an additional three lectures and discussions was held. These occurred on September 18th when Ken Andrews spoke on the question of Head of State; on 5th of September when Dr Ken Coghill formerly a Member of the Victorian Parliament (1979-96), Cabinet Secretary (1982-88) and Parliamentary Speaker (1988-92) discussed the differences between a Democratic Republic and a Constitutional Monarchy; and Senator Lyn Allison a Democrat; hosted discussions on the changes in our forms of government inherent in such a change. The laptop and projector purchased with a grant from the Community Support Fund valued \$2979 would have been a great advantage and assistance in running the discussion program. The records of the activities surrounding this event illustrate the apolitical role U3A can take in ensuring members are well informed.

(NB An interesting topic for the history buffs at this time would have been “Ned Kelly and the North-eastern Victorian Republican Movement” and the opportunity to study the history of the Republican Movement in Australia.)

STRENGTH IN LEADERSHIP

During this time U3A Bairnsdale was fortunate in having consistency in leadership. Avril Yates’ background in Education provided a sound knowledge of the requirements of educating for life-long learning while Ken Coldwell’s long-term commitment provided knowledge and experience of the organisation.

CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE PLANNING

Stimulated by the discussion on Australia’s future, the U3A Committee were concerned about the Association’s future. On the agenda during this time was how to ensure smooth transition from one committee to the next with no one person staying too long in a particular role. Interestingly this issue is raised at various times throughout the history of the club including whether multiple members of the same family should be on the committee at the same time or one individual holding multiple positions.

The U3A committee was aware of the importance of supporting members to become familiar with computers and the mobile phone. This commenced an ongoing program to ensure members were confident in using modern technology that continues to this day.



Committee members (left-right) B. Isaacson (Vice President), Avril Yates (President), S Rowlands, A Cameron, Front Row Ken Coldwell Fred Cannington

END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The decade ended with a Christmas celebration at Marg Hallett's wonderful native garden.



AVRIL YATES LIFE MEMBER ~ PRESIDENT



"From being a committee member... I became Social Secretary and then President. There have been challenges over the years (refers to her time on Committee). With the help of various committee members, accommodation options were investigated, funding sources as an educational body so that necessary teaching aids are available, members encouraged to lead classes, and attempts made to learn computer skills to deal with today's accepted method of communicating. I have enjoyed my involvement in U3A and look forward to U3A Bairnsdale and District continuing to provide a challenge to retired people to both explore innovative ideas and to enjoy sharing knowledge and friendship." Avril Yates.

Avril Yates' background was as a Home Economics teacher. A lover of travel Avril introduced Armchair Travel a popular course in its time. Dorothy Cooper recalls: - "My first introduction to U3A was when Midge Donnelly took me to armchair travel at Avril Yates' home in 1990, which was so enjoyable I could not miss future sessions"

In her role as President, Avril participated in many discussions to find a home for U3A. Support to the establishment of Lakes Entrance U3A was also given priority.



Politics ~ Avril Yates and Craig Ingham MP

NOEL MOLINE LIFE MEMBER



Noel joined U3A in 1993 and remains an active member for almost 30 years. Noel had retired from a most interesting career as a patent attorney and moved to Bairnsdale with her husband Dick. Dick was a good repair person and with his physics background assisted members of his family to develop the Jolley Jumbuck knitwear factory and brand while Noel and with Pam King opened Pandora's Pantry.

According to the U3A records Noel worked tirelessly on Committee filling the roles of Secretary, Treasurer, Editor and Network representative. Noel was creative and inventive when it came to suggesting courses and was actively involved as an originator or participant in a wide range of activities over the years including King Walkers, Films, Meals for One, Play Reading, Puzzles, and Behind the Scenes (an investigation of how products such as electricity are formed from raw materials)

A popular course that has benefitted many U3A members, now called Armchair Aerobics was introduced by Noel. This program is gentle in nature and low speed, and it is popular for many. Maurs Rodwell praises it highly for improving her flexibility and fitness level.



From Left – Right Noel receiving Length of Membership certificate from the Mayor. June Soutter in the cooking for one class, armchair aerobics. Below the results of cooking class.



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP DURING THE NINETIES

EXECUTIVE

President:

Ken Caldwell 1990,
1991, 1992, 1993, 1994,
1997

Avril Yates 1994, 1995,
1996, 1998, 1999

Stan Cooper 1997

Vice President:

R Burton 1995

B Isakson 1997

A Cameron 1998,
1999

Secretary

M Marsden 1995

S Rowlands 1997,
1998, 1999

Treasurer

V McGoldrick

1994, 1995

P King 1996

Fred Cannington 1997,
1998, 1999

Committee Members

D Turner 1995

J Proudfoot 1995

Anne Farrell 1996

K Coldwell 1995, 1996

B Eagle 1995

N Moline 1996

P King 1995, 1996

M Kuseff 1995

Stan Cooper 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999

Anne Cameron 1997

Wynne Ireland 1997

M Marsden 1997, 1998, 1999

Heinz Homberger 1998, 1999

Pauline Cannington 1998, 1999



Celebrating Seniors Day

Of Interest

The yearly income during this time was \$1040 and the rental costs for the Year \$145. Compare this to today's income of approximately \$40,000 and rent and operating costs of the same amount

THE FIRST DECADE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

This decade is thought by many as the one that changed the world. We are a part of history every day, but it so quickly fades into memory. During this decade America invaded Afghanistan, issues arose with Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden.

As the Century began the world waited for the catastrophe of the Y2000 problem. Despite businesses and government spending millions of dollars to avert the disaster it never happened. Computers did not crash, neither did airplanes. Washing machines still worked and U3A continued to grow. Papers were still published.

A press summary to start the new decade sets the scene. The source of this article was not listed. However, Bill Bolitho was Mayor 2000-2001 and the print lists August 2, so it is assumed that this article was published in 2000.

Meeting the challenges of the 'third age'

After a busy and active working life and a retirement spent fulfilling some of those earlier dreams of travel or of simply having time to smell the roses, there can come a time when the pace of life seems a little slow and the day to day challenges are no longer enough to meet the need for intellectual stimulation and social interaction.

It was from just such a feeling that U3A, University of the Third Age was born. U3A draws upon the experiences and accumulated knowledge of its members to create a varied and interesting program. Members have the opportunity to learn and to share their own knowledge with others in an environment without pressure and, best of all, without exams.



U3A committee members – left to right: Stan Cooper, publicity officer; Avril Yates, president; Bill Bolitho, Mayor; Jessie McPherson, Margaret Hallett, Anne Cameron, Frank Muller, Val Muller and Julie Warren.

With term 4 approaching, U3A members can look forward to many interesting presentations. Pam Siedel will be presenting a series titled "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table - Fact or Fiction." The Monday discussion group with Jim Connelly will continue to provide some lively debate, while the prose and poetry group, led by Maurs Rodwell, will meet on Thursdays. Some interesting guest speakers have been invited to participate in the ever changing program. On Wednesday experienced mariner Jack Nesbitt presented an informative talk on 'the islands of Bass Strait'. Many members

were surprised to discover that there are 140 of them! Next week Glenn Carey will share his experiences in ultralight aircraft. Glenn both imports them and flies them and will no doubt have many an interesting tale to tell. Another guest speaker to look forward to is retired diplomat David Sadlier who will be speaking of his time in China.

About 50 people who attended the annual general meeting, held at the club rooms in Morgan Street on August 2, heard Mayor Bill Bolitho spoke to members about the difficulties of managing a shire as large and diverse as East

Gippsland and of his admiration for the many volunteer workers who contribute so much to the welfare of the community.

The meeting also elected a new committee and office bearers and made a presentation to departing members Gordon and Betty Wilson, who are relocating to Morwell, and to secretary, Sheila Rowlands, who has taken up the challenge to teach English in China.

After the meeting members and guests enjoyed a shared lunch.

U3A welcomes new members and enquiries can be directed to secretary Julie Warren on 5153 0860.

IMPROVING RESOURCES

Avril Yates was passionate to improve the range of courses and resources for tutors and listed it as top priority. The list of items available to tutors at the time was as follows: - *Whiteboard, episcoper, overhead projector, projection screen, stereo unit, four heaters, four drawer filing cabinet, two fans, six computers, two printers, scanner, large television, small video screen fifty chairs three tables, crockery, cutlery, 2 display boards, hot water urn and 3 bookcases*



A list like this seems antiquated today with the access to large screen TV, YouTube, computers, fast photocopiers and many more. From 2019 to 2022 Joy Green and Judy Mann have also worked tirelessly to improve the equipment and facilities from tearoom to room painting, suitable blinds, chairs, PA equipment, office facilities, taking on the goal that Avril had strived to achieve earlier in this century. The list today would certainly put a smile on Avril's face.

Broad Interests

One thing that appeals to U3A members is current and civic affairs. Strong traditions were certainly in the first decade of the 21st Century. Information on the current affairs program lists a visit to the Magistrates Court in Bairnsdale, a talk on the County Court, a talk on What Lawyers Do, the CEO of the Shire, a visit to Parliament House and a talk by a Police Prosecutor.



Parliament House Visit.

In attendance were: L Anderson, E Andrews, D Bright, J Chandler, M Cumming, J Finn, M Finn, J Fraser, G Jack, L Hall, B Lunt, G Mascas, M Mascas, N Moline, V Moller, J Race, A Searl, J Soutter, E St John, O Walden, B West, B White, P White, Mr Craig Ingram MP Gippsland.

JAPANESE



In June 2006 members of U3A enjoyed exploring traditional Japanese custom and food. At this time few thought Australians would develop a love of raw fish and sushi and a Japanese restaurant would be opened in Bairnsdale.

(Pictured Anne Cameron and Mauran



Jeno Souther (U3A) and Mary Pickett (president, Gaimodela Bonsai Group) at U3A's Wednesday morning "Poiyowari" series of talks held at Morgan Street. The photograph shows some of the exhibits created by Jeno and Mary.

Bonsai U3A's focus



EXCURSIONS



Right: -Helen Jennings and Kath West enjoying an excursion on the Gippsland Lakes

Enrolment Day 2008

FOR

U3A BAIRNSDALE & DISTRICT INC.

WED. JAN. 30, 2008 BETWEEN 9AM TO 12 NOON
21 MORGAN STREET ROOMS, BAIRNSDALE.

LEARNING TO LIVE - LIVING TO LEARN - MAKE IT FUN!

MAKE 2008 YOUR 'WOW' YEAR
ACTIVITIES FOR 2008 INCLUDE

Regular sessions throughout the year:

- Appreciation of Music
- Drawing Classes
- Games: Mah-jong and Scrabble
- Ambling - leisurely local walks
- Bush Walking - longer bush walks
- Creative Writing
- Current Affairs Discussions
- Computer Classes for beginners and upwards
- Films - educational & entertainment
- Japanese Language
- German Language
- Calligraphy
- Tai Chi
- Stocks and Shares
- Book Club

- Healthy Food Cooking - Cook and Eat Hands on Class
- Square Dancing

Special Courses

- Art Appreciation
- Early English History
- Living Well - Aging Well with special contributors on matters as dealing with Centrelink, Financial and Legal Matters, Unravelling the mystery of Residential Care Lifestyle & Diversion Therapy, CPR demonstration instruction and other interesting questions to be rest by senior citizens.
- And a variety of interesting courses, activities and s throughout the year.

Other activities include Educational Outings.

FEES: Single Membership \$30 per annum / Couple Membership \$50 per annum. 50 cent donation payable at each sessi class materials, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Further Details:

Graham Mance
President Ph: 5157 5715

Kath West
Secretary Ph: 5153 2114

Club Rooms
5152 3063

Despite change of names, programs throughout the history of the organisation have remained mostly the same. History, Sciences, Language, Current Events, New Technology, Art (including photography), Music, Literature (consisting of writing, poetry, book clubs and study of authors) and Physical Activity (as diverse as ballroom dancing, armchair aerobics, indoor bowling, gardening). For former teachers amongst members this sounds just like any school curriculum with the same name changes and tweaking over time. The difference being, lack of compulsion and in most cases homework. (Although one tutor told me that homework was a regular requirement in the class). Interestingly learning through excursions was also popular and were a major feature of this decade.

REGISTRATION DAYS

These were busy events. Tutors met interested participants and discussed their courses. These days became busier as members of U3A expanded. One tutor commented on the buzz and enthusiasm these events created as they provided an excellent opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new people. Times change and in the 2020s the computer skills learnt by members in this decade are now used to register and enrol in classes online. (<https://www.u3abairnsdale.org.au>)



If such an event took place today, recognising old friends would be difficult from behind masks. Wiping benches, pens, and hands all the time with an antibacterial spray would have slowed the day down considerably, and given social distancing, lines would have gone for metres along the streets. This decade, however, was not free of epidemics. In 2002-2003 there was SARS from 2003-2008 bird flu and in 2009 swine flu. Pharmaceutical companies made over seven billion Euros from the sale of drugs for Sars. (This certainly puts Covid in perspective and one cannot help but wonder how much the companies are making in 2021).



EXPANDING IDEAS

Inviting prominent speakers to the community was remarkably successful according to Bernard West, former President, and Treasurer of U3A. One successful example of this was the invitation to Frederick Mendelsohn now Emeritus Professor at the Florey Neuroscience Institute at the University of Melbourne. At the time of his talk in Bairnsdale (May 11, 2005) he was Director of the Howard Florey Institute and R Douglas Wright Professor of Experimental Physiology and Medicine at Melbourne University.

The Howard Florey Institute developed a “Maintain Your Brain” program which was offered free to Victoria’s Senior Citizens to educate and raise awareness of debilitating brain and mind disorders. Noel Moline recalls that over two thousand people attended the Bairnsdale event and raised over \$9,000 for the research project

Two disorders featured. Parkinson’s Disease a progressive, degenerative neurological condition that affects a person’s control of their body movements. It affects 100,000 people in Australia with thirty-eight people being diagnosed every day. The other is Alzheimer’s Disorders



RELATED DISEASES

The relevance of this line of education is highly regarded in 2021. Alzheimer’s Disease is one of the most common forms of dementia and is the second leading cause of death of Australians. Interestingly, more women die of dementia than of heart disease, accounting for 13,729 deaths across Australia. It is estimated that in 2021, 472,000 live with dementia and that almost 1.6 million people in Australia participate in their care.

Many of our U3A members are caring for or have cared for someone with dementia or Parkinson’s and the anecdotal evidence is that U3A provides an outlet, support, and an opportunity to balance out the life of a care person. A support group operates out of U3A and meet the second Friday of each month.



Joan Race - 2010 and 2011
President

RAISING HEALTH AWARENESS

During this decade, the importance of a healthy lifestyle became a focus. While Norm “got off the couch,” issues of overweight, (50% of all Australians were considered overweight in 2010) lack of exercise, increases in Diabetes type 2 and an ageing population received a focus from policy makers, news programs, magazine articles and in many cases government funding

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS ~ 2007

This was the year to celebrate U3As 20th Birthday. It was also the year that saw the premiere of the program *The Farmer Wants a Wife*. The significant difference was the size of the budget for these events.

The program was organised by a committee consisting of Graham Mascas-President, Peter White-Vice President, Kath West-Secretary, Bernard West-Treasurer, and Committee members Janine Evans, Jean Bourne, Judy Ward, Alan Searle, Eril Andrews, and Joan Race.

Newsletters edited by Marijke Mascas were highly informative. They recorded what an incredibly busy and active organisation existed. In the November Newsletter Marijke reported that: - up to fifteen people were attending Creative Writing; fluoridation was a hot topic in Current Affairs; Alan Searl was running three computer classes, four new computers had been purchased and installed; the King Walkers had a great weekend at Mallacoota, the Amblers were ambling on, while Cryptic Crossworders were solving problems. Chess, Bridge and Scrabble groups operated. Stocks and shares were attracting large numbers. In addition, reports were included from Book Club, Life Drawing, Square Dancing, Cooking, Calligraphy, and Films.

It was indeed an active U3A!

THE 20 YEARS CELEBRATIONS



A booklet to celebrate the anniversary was compiled with photographs and writings from members and included the booklet published for the 10-year anniversary. The Celebration was held at The Italian Australian Club on the Omeo Highway starting at 10am including the AGM, lunch, and a speaker on Jane Austen. To celebrate twenty successful years Jean Bourne and Gwyneth Craig produced a wall hanging to celebrate the occasion. This still hangs in U3A rooms.

A HOME BUT NO GUM TREES

The move into the 'Bristol building' was the end of a long and torturous process. In 1994 and for the next two years a group of local organisations worked with the Bairnsdale City Council to investigate the redevelopment of the Bairnsdale Senior Citizens Centre to accommodate the needs of the non profit clubs and groups. U3A was a major player.

The history of this exercise made the point very clearly that if you, as the provider (eg government or semi government organisation) want to achieve nothing then appoint a committee of diverse groups with varied requirements. The groups involved, had different meeting requirements (meeting once a week or once a month compared to the requirements of meeting every day twice a day as is the case with U3A). There was never any indication by the organising body to offer a solution. The members of U3A Committee at this time should be congratulated for their commitment and effort to acquire support and funding.

The confusion of purpose was evident with minutes recording issues such as buying an auto trolley and basic repairs rather than the issue of accommodating the needs of the groups on a long term basis. This must have frustrated many. There was also some duplication of what courses were offered by whom. The minutes record little statistical data on which to base decisions.

However 15 years later a pleasing result emerged



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PO Box 603
Bairnsdale 3875
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Fax: 5152 1773
www.cceg.vic.edu.au
ABN: 32 296 644 795

19th December 2008

Mr Bernard West
Bairnsdale U3A

Dear Bernard

Re: Relocation to the Community College site in Dalmahoy Street

The Board of Community College East Gippsland at it's November meeting approved the relocation of Bairnsdale U3A to our Dalmahoy Street site from January 2009.

The rooms that U3A will utilise are in urgent need of painting and some repair to bring them up to a reasonable standard.

This is a letter of support for your application to East Gippsland Shire Council for some funds to provide materials to undertake the work.

The Community College commits to providing a Work for the Dole supervisor and some participants to undertake repairs and assist U3A with labour where required.

With support from the Shire for materials I believe the rooms can be made very suitable for use by U3A.

I wish you good luck with your application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Ferres'.

Ray Ferres OAM
Ceo

U3A ended this decade on a high note. After much challenging work as varied as cleaning to refurbishment U3A had achieved its dream. A facility where it could put down more permanent roots in the community and extend its programs was becoming a reality. Meanwhile, dreams of all kinds were achieved around the world. The first multi-racial elected President of the USA was impressing the world with his leadership. Every grandparent discovered who Harry Potter was and scientists had announced that they had mapped the human genome. Little did we know how important the mobile phone would be. Launched in the middle of this decade (2005) Youtube would change the way information was accessed even if it took a while for people to realise its value. A permanent place where technology could be established and taught was important to U3A. Hence the news contained in the above letter was indeed a bonus and a major step forward.

THE BRISTOL BUILDING

The opportunity for U3A to have access to a series of rooms in a part of the old High school was indeed a blessing. The part they were able to access was the "Bristol Buildings." These buildings have a history in themselves.

Between November 1940 and April 1941, the German army made six major bombing raids on the English city of Bristol. The result was 919 tons of high-explosive bombs plus many thousands of incendiary bombs dropped in clusters killing 1,299 people, injuring 1,303 and damaging 89,080 buildings including 81,830 houses.

After the war, a solution to the housing problems was found in prefabricated buildings. Bristol became well known for expertise in this area. In Australia and particularly in Victoria the post war baby boom was putting pressure on schooling. Combined with more students completing higher education levels, school buildings were in high demand. As a result, the Victorian Government looked for quick solutions. One was to purchase prefabricated or Bristol buildings. Hence in the early 50's Bristol type buildings now occupied by U3A appeared. In Bairnsdale, the needs of a high school were met with this building. Interestingly there was also a Bristol building used for Cabbage Tree Primary School.



Many Hands Made Light Work. Paint and cleaning made an enormous difference in upgrading facilities in 2020.

EXECUTIVE

Presidents

Avril Yates 2000,
2001, 2002, 2003
Graham Mascas 2005,
2006, 2007, 2008
Kath West 2009
Joan Race 2010

Vice Presidents

Anne Cameron
2000, 2001, 2002,
2005, 2006
Graham Mascas
2003
Heinz Homeberger
2004
Peter White 2008

Secretary

Sheila Rowlands
2000, 2001, 2002,
2003
Noel Moline 2005,
2006
Kath West 2007,
2008
Judy Ward 2009
Eril Andrews 2010

Treasurer

Noel Moline 2000
Pam Seidel 2001,
2002, 2003
Bernard West 2004-
2008 2010
Bob Evans 2009

Committee Members

Heinz Homberger 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006
M Hallett 2000, 2001
J. Fraser 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005
Stan Cooper 2000, 2001
Sheila Rowland 2002
Lexie Hall 2002, 2003
Jessie Walker 2003
Marijke Mascas 2003
Anne Cameron 2004, 2006
Avril Yates 2004
Helena Tholen 2004
Graham Mascas 2006
Edith Gourley 2004, 2005, 2006
Robert Lunt 2004, 2006
Robert Lunt, 2005, 2006

Joan Race 2005
Lisa Rasmussen 2005
Bernard West 2006
Noel Moline 2006
E. Andrews 2007, 2008, 2009
Janine Evans 2007
Jean Bourne 2007, 2008
Judy Ward 2007, 2008
Alan Searle 2007
Joan Race 2007, 2008, 2009
C. Beecher 2008, 2009, 2010
R Newman 2009, 2010
J St John 2009, 2010
J Spears 2009
K. West 2010
G. Bolleman 2010
Pat McKeown 2



Bairnsdale U3A celebrated its Christmas break up party at the Italian Australian Social Club on Thursday. Pictured are committee members: (Back) Lexie Hall, Pam Seidel, Heinz Homberger, Ann Cameron. (Front) Sheila Rowland, Avril Yates and Jessie Walker enjoying the luncheon. K.602-0028

THE TEEN YEARS OF THE 21ST CENTURY ~ A TIME OF CHANGE

The teen years of the 21st century is little different to the teen years when one grew up. Only this time it involves the world not oneself. Reflecting on the decade one cannot be but awed by the changes and the speed of change.

Energy provision is just one example. Coal powered power stations becoming unfashionable replaced by solar panels, solar farms, wind turbines. Renewable sources of energy now account for 12 percent of the world's electricity supply. Plastic bags once a great invention banned and a worldwide movement (120 countries so far) to ban sole use plastics such as straws, up to one billion of which are used daily around the world.

Social change has seen a focus on issues of child abuse, institutional abuse, power abuse (MeToo), gender equity, gender identity and racial equality all being addressed. Mail now consists of texts, emails, Tik Toc and others. The telephone is now a multimedia communication device that serves as camera, video camera, bank book, file, and many other items. There are jobs and careers that did not exist ten years ago. Who would have thought that being a social influencer on social media would make you a millionaire or running your own YouTube channel could create millionaires? Let us not forget NBN!!

This was also the decade of the teen activists such as climate activist Swedish teenage student Greta Thunberg, who was named 'Person of the Year' by the USA's Time News Magazine or Nobel Peace Prize awardee, Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani teenager who just barely survived a terrorist assassination attempt to go on heroically to create worldwide awareness of the need to educate girls and young women

For East Gippsland Climate the community has battled drought, fire, and floods throughout the decade. Yet, many things remain the same. U3A classes continue and, in many ways, minor changes as the class statistics show.

Classes 2012

Arts and Crafts	9 classes 56 participants
Humanities	8 classes 64-74 participants
Information Technology	8 classes
Languages	6 classes 48-50 participants
Physical Activity	8 classes 48-63 participants
Science	1 class 6-10 participants
Other	2 classes 11-16 participants

Total number of classes: 41

No of participants: Term 1 270; Term 2 349; Term3 296; Term 4 306

In the year U3A celebrated its 25th Anniversary participation rates and membership was high as the statistics prepared by Claire Beecher at the time illustrate.

A SILVER EVENT

The twenty fifth anniversary of U3A Bairnsdale was celebrated on 22nd August 2012 at St Mary's Hall with Light Lunch. Eril Andrews, then President hosted this event.

Eril Andrews joined U3A in 2005 and encouraged by Graham Mascas to join the Committee serving two years as Secretary in 2010 and 2011 and as President in 2014 and 2015-2016. Eril (a pharmacist) and her husband Brian (a dentist) moved from Melbourne to live in Bairnsdale in 1965. It was here they raised their four children. From 1984 to 2000 Eril worked as a Pharmacist in the East Gippsland area.

Brian joined U3A in 2007 and was Secretary from July 2012 to June 2014. He tutored Excel classes for a time and was Enrolment Membership Officer (a complex task) for 12 years until 2019.

Brian and Eril were both awarded Life Membership of Bairnsdale U3A in 2018.”



In attendance were David Jensz, (Network Representative), Member for Gippsland East Tim Bull, Mayor East Gippsland Shire, Cr Dick Ellis, Joan Race, U3A President

The thirtieth anniversary of U3A was celebrated in 2017 with an appropriately decorated cake pictured (left) with future President Joy Green



ONGOING INNOVATION

Innovation on many levels continued during this decade. In 2015 Deputy Premier Peter Ryan announced a grant of \$300,000 and the Council contributed \$117,000 for improvements to the Hub. This included the rooms rented by U3A. Ramps were installed, buildings painted, smoke alarms and electrical wiring replaced. It was during this time that the library room was set up. Michael Fox established the library; Maureen Symmonds placed books in alphabetical order; Carol Busch organised the non-fiction section and Beatty Blennerhasset provided alphabetical markers.

Michael Fox played a significant role as Welfare coordinator for several years. During a health crisis two members reported that Michael's visits and support were appreciated. It highlights the important pastoral care that can be offered informally by local organisations.

OBSERVING A DECADE OF CHANGE



Life Member Bonnie Walker has observed and participated in this decade of change. Bonnie joined U3A at the end of the decade (2010). An energetic and committed member of the Bairnsdale Community,

Bonnie is enthusiastic about U3A stating that it enables people to follow up interests that they were not able to during their working lives. She says it provides support, stimulation friendship and exercise of brain and body. "Being a tutor is great" Bonnie says. "I really enjoy the research."

A TIME TO REFLECT



In every organisation there is a time to pause and reflect. Although serving on committee and participating in a range of activities, Margaret (Marg) Hallett's time as president was short. However, it created time for consultation through committees and a general meeting to allow members to raise items of interest or share ideas.

Margaret (Marg) first joined U3A in 1988 while living in Melbourne. After moving to Bairnsdale and establishing her home and garden Marg joined Bairnsdale in 1999. "It was very small then...we were in Rupert Street" Marg went on to say that U3A was a wonderful organisation. "I was always involved in education, in adult education" she said. Marg has served on U3A committees, organised speakers, and courses and for a brief time in 2018 filled the role of President. Marg established a series of committees and encouraged members to share their views and consider what U3A offered.

**Leonie Cascajo, Joy Green,
Judy Mann, Marg Hallett,
Marion Matcham, Sue Cade,
Helen Crosby,
Roger McCracken, Bonnie
Walker**



REFOCUSING THE ORGANISATION

Sometimes fate brings people together that are ignited with energy and passion for an organisation. In this case a knowledge of people and community combined with business administration skills and available time set a scene for revamping the organisation. Judy Mann and Joy Green could best be described as the 'action duo' meeting the above criteria.

Judy Mann developed her business knowledge in the very volatile and competitive garment industry and her time on the St Kilda Social Club and St Kilda FC Board between 1989 and 1992. Joy Green developed her skills working with government agencies in payroll for 26 years and child protection for 14 years. Joy and Judy both have two children, and both have been widowed. Both are very generous with the time they give to U3A.

While on Committee they followed on from the work of Bernard West to promote the organisation out in the community. This was by having a physical presence at local events such as the local show open days at the Hub and during Seniors' Week. Successful events included a Tutor and Volunteers Afternoon Tea and a Christmas Breakup held at the Golf Club. Taking on major executive roles President (Joy), Secretary and Program Organiser (Judy) required them to develop a shared understanding of the task ahead of them.

FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

The platform Joy and Judy set for themselves builds on the best practices of the past. As organisations grow and develop a malady can set in that is based on 'there is no need to tell as everybody knows,' there is no need to change. Marcel Proust (a French novelist and critic) summed up what U3A required when he said, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new sights but in looking with new eyes."



This is what Joy and Judy, and the new committee did. The first obvious step was the "Spring Clean." For organisations as well as homes a major clean is important for several reasons. In shared facilities cleaning and presentation is often overlooked. In this case it demonstrates the first sign of change. Interestingly, a clean environment improves people's moods and helps them focus and be more productive. Often overlooked is the importance of minimising allergies by removing dust and allergens. The upgrading and reorganisation of the kitchen area enhanced food and drink management making it easier for members to grab a cuppa.

UPGRADING EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

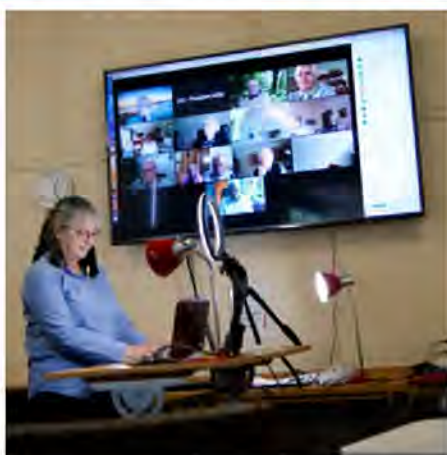


Following the Clean-Up was upgrading of furniture. Chairs and tables were upgraded with thought to the needs of movement and problems associated with aging and safety. This was followed by addressing the teaching requirements of tutors. Computers, TV, and internet facilities were all addressed. Avril Yates (President from 1994-2003) had listed this as one of her priorities and would approve of the ongoing use of facilities and the resources available to tutors today.

The library area saw comfortable seating provided. A jigsaw is set out on the table and members can be observed sitting chatting while they add to the puzzle.

Interestingly, the library is well used. In many ways it is a no rules way of borrowing. It does not require a trip to the centre of Bairnsdale with parking issues. There are less risks in moving around and easier overall access. . In a world where books are said to be on the decline there is still a remarkably high interest at U3A.

COMMUNICATION



Improving Communications was given a high priority. When communication breaks down suspicion and unease develop. Notice boards were upgraded, and relative information readily provided. A communication screen in the common room was installed and contains information about the committee, coming events and other news items. One does not think of computer screens as welcoming, however the screen provides a sense of welcome and information as well as consistency. It is always there.

Making it easier to listen

While written and visual communication is important the ability to hear what is being said is also important. There are two major causes of hearing loss in Australia. One is noise and the other is aging. In an organisation supporting the aging, being able to hear speakers and programs is essential. Recognising the needs of an older population U3A Bairnsdale invested in Front Row Juno; a system that makes speech easier to understand and multimedia easier to hear. A great asset for those with receding hearing.

PROFESSIONAL OFFICE

Sue Cade played a significant role in reorganising the office and this has continued. A well-ordered office with clearly labelled resources, staffed by volunteers is open daily. Safety and evacuation plans are now easily found. Simple things such as the relocation of rolls to the common room provide easier access for tutors. It makes things a lot easier for those who follow. The access to ongoing facilities and an office and storage has in many ways changed the expectations of members. An office staffed by volunteers provides a permanent front of house and the expectations of a professional organisation. This has its strengths and weaknesses especially if new members are not aware of the fully volunteer nature of the organisation or perceive that filling a role in the organisation would be too demanding.



Hard working Leadership teams

All teams work to provide and improve courses and facilities and this team demonstrated great enthusiasm

Joy Green (President) Marian Matcham, Judy Mann (Secretary)
Sue Cade, John Mills, Bonnie Walker.

RECOGNISING CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEMBERS



Life Memberships were awarded recognising contributions to U3A. Long term membership was also recognised as many of the members had participated for more than 20 years, while others had been with the organisation since the foundation years.

Judy Mann (Secretary) June Treadwell, Bonnie Walker, Noel Moline, Joy Green (President)

YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP



Mayor Dick Ellis presents Recognition of Years of membership Certificates to long standing members, Trudy Homberger, Merle McRae and Eril Andrews

COMMITTEE MEMBERS



2019 Front Row - Roger McCracken, Judy Mann (Secretary,) John Mills, Leonie Cascajo, Kathy Gallagher, Bonnie Walker. Back Row Marion Matchan (Vice President) Joy Green (President), Sue Cade (Treasurer)

RIGHT: Outgoing U3A president Joan Race welcomes Kath West into the presidential position at the Bairnsdale U3A annual general meeting held at St Mary's Parish Centre last Wednesday morning. Other executive members are vice president Genevieve Bolleman, secretary Brian Andrews and treasurer Stella Tyers. The committee is made up of Bernard West, Jenny Eckhardt, Pat McKeown and Jenni Staniforth. K628-315



COMMITTEE OF THE TEEN DECADE OF 21ST CENTURY

EXECUTIVE

Presidents

Joan Race 2010-2011
Kath West 2012-2013
Eril Andrews 2014-2015
Bernard West 2016-2018
Marg Hallet 2018
Joy Green 2018-2022

Vice Presidents

Eril Andrews 2011-2012
Kath West 2012-2013
Genevieve Bolleman 2014-2015
Peter White 2015
Sue Tanian 2019-2022

Secretary

Eril Andrews 2010-2011
Brian Andrews 2012-2013
Judy Ballingall 2014
Virginia Rowley 2015
Claire Dingey 2016
Vanessa Clarke 2017-2019
Judy Mann 2018-2022

Treasurer

B West
Stella Tyers
Kate Dick
Marian Matcham 2017-2018
Sue Cade 2015-2019
Nikki Francis 2021-2022

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2010

Eril Andrews.
Claire Beecher.
Ray Newnham.
Joan Race.
Jim St John.
Jennifer Speer

2011

Genevieve Bolleman.
Pat McKeown.
Ray Newnham.
Bernard West.
Terry Moore.
Jenny Eckhardt.
Ted Gibson.

2012

Claire Beecher.
Jenny Eckhardt.
Judy Ward.
Genevieve Bolleman.
Pat McKeown.
John Rigg.
Jenny Staniforth.
Bernard West.

2013

Claire Beecher.
Judy Ballingal.
Jenny Eckhardt.
Judy Ward.
Genevieve Bolleman.
Pat McKeown.
John Rigg.
Jenny Staniforth.
Judy Ward.
Bernard West.

2014

Claire Beecher.
Jean Daniel.
Michael Fox.
Ann Jesty.
Virginia Rowley.
Jenny Staniforth.
Judith Ward

2015

Claire Beecher.
Sue Cade.
Michael Fox.
Ann Jesty.
Jenni Staniforth.
Kath West.
2016
Jean Bourne.
Francis Bright.
Michael Fox.
Marian Matchan.
Phil Searl.
Stella Thompson.

2017

Michael Fox.
Joy Green.
Margaret Hallett.
Stella Thompson

2018

Sue Cade.
Leonie Cascajo.
Helen Crosby.
Roger McCracken.
Rosanna Tabone.
Bonnie Walker.

2019

Maureen Barnes.
Kath Gallagher.
John Mills.
Jenny Stray.
Bonnie Walker.

2020

Jill Gayton.
Jo McKean.
Kate McLean.
John Mills.
Jenny Stray
2021/22
Robyn Counihan
Jill Johannsen
Kate McClean
John Mills
Brenda Murray
Bonnie Walker

THE TWENTY TWENTIES

2020 and beyond- A changing population

Australia entered 2020 with a population of 25,499,884 compared to 16,532,164 in 1987 when U3A Bairnsdale was established. In 1996 the population of the Shire was 37,775 compared with 47,725 today. Surprisingly 1 in 5 people in Australia are now over sixty. There are more 65-year-olds than one-year-olds in the population. Life expectancy at birth has increased to eighty-four. The much-discussed baby boomers overall have now retired.

In Bairnsdale people aged sixty-five and over make up 24.5% of population (2016 census data) with 4.3% over 85. (This compares with the Australian average of 2.1%). Interestingly over the past two decades, the number of people aged 85 years and over increased by 117.1%, compared with a total population growth in Australia of 34.8% over the same period.

So, it is not surprising that U3A Bairnsdale has a considerable number of nonagenarians who attend programs. For this group fires, floods, wars, economic recession, high interest rates, low interest rates and pandemics are nothing new. They have lived the history of their times



An afternoon tea especially for nonagenarians provided an opportunity to meet and share stories.

For the rest of the U3A community in East Gippsland the twenty-twenties have brought together a range of circumstances. The 2019–20 Eastern Victorian bushfires were significant. Lives were lost, thousands were displaced, and numerous communities were temporarily isolated. The bushfires were unlike previous fire events because they burned over many months and occurred alongside bushfires across the eastern seaboard and other parts of Australia. The New Year was welcomed with a declared State of Disaster in East Gippsland that lasted for 10 days with more than 60,000 people evacuated from the area.

However, U3A opened its doors as normal for first term with lots of enthusiastic participants. Little did members know what would happen next. News of a spreading virus in Italy led to an announcement on 10 March by the Victorian Premier warning Victorians to expect "extreme measures" in the wake of the federal government updating the travel advice for Italy. This would include cancelling major sporting events, requiring entire economic sectors to work from home, and calling recently retired health professionals to return to work.

COVID 19 WAS WITH US

Covid 19 and its variants created several changes. The most difficult to explain was the rush and shortages, not of food but toilet paper. Freezer sales became remarkably high and mince steak and pasta were also in high demand. The focus was still on numbers but not Olympic medals. Rather the numbers who had caught Covid 19 or were in hospital.

Members became familiar with being the most at-risk group because of their age. Masks became mandatory. For those who follow politics there was an interesting irony as not long before the wearing of facial coverings was causing considerable debate. Now there are no differences between cultures. We are all masked. Isolation became a new experience. Closures of workplaces and lockdowns created financial difficulties for individuals and businesses. Many retail businesses were forced to close.



State borders closed. Movement between states required permits. For border towns in Victoria this caused great difficulty. However, as Graham Keil and others commented, a comparable situation occurred in 1930's with polio that also resulted in closures.

Like all crises while some lose others gain. On-line shopping became a focus, post offices and delivery services were extended to the limits delivering packages. Companies producing drugs and injections to address the pandemic boomed. Daily news was consumed with the epidemic. Even the Olympic Games in Tokyo, usually something that creates great media attention was downgraded in headlines.

The size of this pandemic cannot be underestimated. Two hundred and twenty countries and territories around the world have reported around 458 million confirmed cases as of March 2022 and a death toll of six million. The emergence of the Delta variant occurred, and lockdowns, masks and curfews were a focus again.

For U3A it was the on again off again situation. Classes would begin, and then pause to meet the regulations applicable at the time

MANAGING DURING COVID

All was not lost at U3A. It is often a crisis that changes the way things work. With indefinite lockdowns, an older community, remote communities, and many living alone the committee decided to look for alternatives. The president (Joy Green) initiated regular calls to members living alone. Newsletters were sent out and tutors were trained in using "Zoom" online communication.

Zoom was established in 2011. By May 2013 Zoom had over one million users. Introduce Covid 19 and in April 22 Zoom had more than three hundred million daily meeting participants. While many city clubs found Zoom a great connection point and used it extensively this was not the case in East Gippsland. While this approach was used extensively by the Environment group, other groups tended to operate more spasmodically. Fifty-two members of the Bairnsdale Group are not connected to the internet and confidence in using the medium varied.



COMMITTEE WORKS ON



Lockdowns have not proved a problem for the U3A Committee who have continued to operate effectively using Zoom. For the Secretary Judy Mann even being in her hospital bed recovering from a hip replacement did not stop her actively participating much to the chagrin of the nursing community who closed doors to keep out the hilarity.

While communicating the varied lockdowns and managing the facility requirements the down time has provided an excellent opportunity to upgrade facilities and records. The Committee has used their time to upgrade communication systems and install UMAS, an online U3A Network initiative that enables online enrolment, keeps records, and provides valuable data. A giant step forward for the organisation, remaining mindful of the fifty odd members without internet connections.

Successful grant applications have played a significant role in upgrading facilities and supporting the health and wellbeing of members during Covid.

Creating an All-Abilities Garden

U3A has operated a gardening group for many years. As members age gardening can become a most relaxing activity especially if the facilities are enhanced to meet changing needs. A grant has enabled the upgrading of facilities to provide an All-Abilities Garden enclosure with raised garden and propagation beds. A socialising area has also been installed. Research has shown that learning new skills and obtaining added information is an important maintenance activity for older Australians. As part of the Mental Health project one group of U3A members found an opportunity to do just that.

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

An extended break from COVID restrictions provided the opportunity to explore other options. Despite the focus being on the threat of Covid the Australian Bureau of Statistics Provisional Mortality Statistics, 20,143 deaths from cancer occurred between January and May in 2021.

While recovery rates in Australia sit around 65%, treatment and recovery can be stressful for all concerned. Many of U3A members experience having or living with someone with cancer. While cancer in women is often highlighted this is not always the case for men. In May 2020, the Fly-Tying Group of U3A supported by the U3A's Healthy Living Grant Mental Health Hosted Reels Recovery a national non-profit organization that conducts FREE FLY-FISHING RETREATS for men living with all forms of cancer. Members of the U3A Fly Tyers were either participants or coaches for the weekend activity which was a tremendous success. As happened in the past with the Long Walk and Australia Consults there is a role for U3A to participate in joint ventures such as this.



U3A Members Ian and Anne Curry with Bob and Val Young from Reel Recovery Australia

ENRICHING VISUAL KNOWLEDGE

East Gippsland can appear to be a long way from the centre of the art world. However, despite Covid two exhibitions touring Victoria were awarded to East Gippsland. One was the long running Di Vinci Exhibition that examines his life, research, and art. The firsthand experience and life size inventions provided many talking points for participants in this activity. The second exhibition is the Archibald Prize Regional Touring exhibition. The exhibition features entries for the Australian portraiture art prize. This is a very prestigious competition with prize money of \$100,000.

“It was first awarded in 1921 after the receipt of a bequest from J. F. Archibald, the editor of The Bulletin who died in 1919. It is administered by the trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and awarded for "the best portrait, preferentially of some man or woman distinguished in Art, Letters, Science or Politics, painted by an artist resident in Australia during the twelve months preceding the date fixed by the trustees for sending in the pictures".
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archibald_Prize

This exhibition offers a lot for U3A participants. For history buffs the collection of portrait winners over the years tells the story of many well-known individuals, major controversy and social reactions to winners and portraits. For Art lovers it not only shows the history of portraiture in Australia but can provide an interesting challenge and debate as to what portraiture is or is not. For visitors it can be confronting to one's expectations of art and portraiture in general. Importantly it provides a basis for wide ranging discussions and debate.

Learning New Skills

Paint or Shoot *"it is important to get out and do something that is unfamiliar and mentally challenging"* (Denise Park of the University of Texas at Dallas). Photography is one of the best ways for older people to exercise cognitive knowledge and learn new skills. The grant enabled U3A to employ two well-known artists who were able to share their knowledge in one day workshops.



Sharing in a traditional way

Another group project for U3A is the development of a cookbook. This is encouraging participation and sharing of ideas as well as recipes and providing opportunities for those with artistic skills to contribute illustrations.

Music and Drama

Music in its many forms is a key part of U3A activities throughout the years. While there have been guitar, ukulele, and other groups it is difficult for older people to transport a piano or keyboard. Hence the purchase of a keyboard that will find active use in all types of U3A music groups and drama classes strengthens the opportunities for further development of courses in this key area as illustrated in the quote below.

The British Association for Music Therapy states

"Music is something that we can all relate to regardless of age and is often central to a person's sense of identity. It provides us with ways to connect and share feeling, memories and moments with others, and offers stimulation and encourages expression. Music therapy can also enhance exploratory and creative abilities, as well as foster self-esteem and the sense of feeling valued and heard."

<https://www.ageukmobility.co.uk/mobility-news/article/the-benefits-of-music-for-older-people>

Conversations in many forms

Over the last three years a group of U3A members have explored new ways of telling personal stories. Participants are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones when it comes to writing biographies, autobiographies, and personal histories. This approach is applied to the task of drafting the stories of U3A Bairnsdale senior members and a history of U3A through context and conversation. On this journey a summer school was held January 2019, a writer's workshop program through 2019 where several members completed booklets of their journey, short stories and explored who they were as writers producing a documentary that shared this overview. Taking older people out of their comfort zone and challenging concepts is important for cognitive wellbeing. Looking at writings through various frameworks certainly did this.

During 2021 the focus has been on how each of the decades of the last century have influenced what has happened to the lives of everyday people. A focus group was assembled consisting of members in their late eighties or nineties. This provided a wealth of information as well as a valuable time for social interaction during the Covid pandemic.

In addition to obtaining information this way a statistical survey was conducted to provide additional data on the population that makes up U3A Bairnsdale today.

Managing Health and diverse needs in multi-use facilities.

Throughout the history of U3A equipment that meets the needs of older people has been a concern. The Committee focus on addressing this concern has finally achieved the last piece of this jigsaw with the purchase of tilt and castored tables. That should reduce the need for any lifting. Human nature being what it is, one can be assured that it will not suit someone.

Sharing and supporting.

U3A Bairnsdale is the largest U3A in the Gippsland region. Judy Mann is the Gippsland Regional Representative of U3A Network Victoria (represents the interests of the 104 U3As in Victoria) and will visit all Gippsland U3A's to provide support, seek out concerns, issues of wellbeing of their members and directions that she can take back to the U3A Council.



WHO ARE WE TODAY? U3A IN ITS 35TH YEAR

Looking into the past is always interesting and the phrase the “good ole days” was once a common expression, but was it? As several interviewees stated of the past “we were so poor only we did not know it.” Depression, war, pandemics and economic booms and busts have all influenced the makeup of who we are as Australians.

U3A today contains many baby boomers. Perhaps the luckiest generation of all times. The improved health care of the nation sees us living longer, being fitter and better educated than ever before and until recently not affected by much at all. So, who are we? A random volunteer survey of unidentified members was conducted with 150 surveys being distributed via class rolls. A response rate of 50% was achieved. This data was supplemented by the data analysis provided by UMAS. Simple analysis has been used with collected data.

U3A Bairnsdale consists of 25% male and 75% female members spread across the age group of 54 to 96 with seventeen people over 90 and 35 in the 85-90 age bracket. Fifty percent of members are aged between 70 and 80 years. The background of members tends to professions including teachers, doctors, nurses, accountants, chemists, administration, engineers, carers, farmers, and graziers to list a few.

The importance of Talk

The major way members find out about U3A is through word of mouth (75%) followed by newspaper advertisements (15%) or online (10%)

Length of Commitment

There appears to be a correlation between age and length of commitment to participation at U3A. Fifty percent of participants, the majority in the lower age bracket state that they have been involved with U3A between one and five years. Ten percent indicated membership of between 6-10 years, 20% between 16 and 20 years and 20 % in the 20 to 30 plus bracket.

Information gathered across this project indicates the strong belief many members have in the organisation as several regular members were on the initial development of the organisation in Bairnsdale.



Mayor Dick Ellis presenting Years of Membership Certificates to Brian Andrews, Marie Potter, and Joan Race

SKILLS VERSUS SOCIAL INTERACTION

The issues of aging in our society are only at the beginning of investigation. Gary Gaffney (former CEO of Bairnsdale Shire) completed a study on the impact of aging on local government over 15 years ago and was surprised to learn local government showed little forward planning on the issue or a willingness to do so. However, nothing was going to stop the “silver tsunami” a term used to describe greying global population trends (Mitchell, 2014)



Older adults are encouraged to stay active and engaged to keep their minds sharp, that they must “use it or lose it.” But new research indicates that only certain activities, learning a mentally demanding skill like photography, for instance, are more likely to improve cognitive functioning.

(www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/learning-new-skills). Responses from U3A members clearly indicated understanding of this with 81% listed learning new skills as a high priority when attending U3A courses.

“It seems it is not enough just to get out and do something—it is important to get out and do something that is unfamiliar and mentally challenging, and that provides broad stimulation mentally and socially,” says psychological scientist and lead researcher Denise Park of the University of Texas at Dallas. “When you are inside your comfort zone you may be outside of the enhancement zone.

<https://www.lindenwood.edu/academics/beyond-the-classroom/publications/journal-of-educational-leadership-in-action/all-issues/volume-5-issue-2/lifelong-learning-the-key-to-successful-aging>

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2017) suggested that “Societies that adapt to this changing demographic and invest in Healthy Ageing can enable individuals to live both longer and healthier lives and for societies to reap the dividends”



Elspeth McCrae and Michael Owens

Current research supports in so many ways the origins of U3A. In Australia education levels of the older generation reflect the change of status over the years with more people completing training, apprenticeships, TAFE and Certificate courses and degrees. From the completed survey learning new skills (81%) and social interaction (68%) can go hand in hand.

Meeting new people ranked as important by 68% of survey participants. This supported by data previously recorded in this document. Anecdotally a member stated that becoming a member of the local community was enhanced by joining U3A and this view is endorsed by several other members. Given that meeting new members requires social interaction of some kind it is not surprising that social interaction also rated highly at 70%.



A QUESTION OF FOCUS

Growing up in the country it was customary practice for women to have specific days to complete tasks such as Monday was washing day and Friday shopping day while men had days to transfer cattle or meet with mates. Reviewing literature and interviews from this research a probable reason emerged. It provided focus to the week. In many ways U3A does the same thing. As 68% of the sample indicated that attending U3A provided a focus and organisation for the week. It was often something to look forward to.

Living Arrangement

Twenty six percent of the sample lived alone while 74% lived with others (being a general term for all other types of arrangements). Fewer men lived alone than women. One male to ten females. Older males and females were more likely to live alone.

Enrolment in U3A classes

Most members enrolled in one (33%) or two (33%) classes. However, 36% enrolled in three or more classes. Members in the 85-95 age bracket were the most likely to enrol in multiple classes with the most enrolling in six classes and one in seven classes. Interestingly half the number lived alone.

The Issue of buildings

Two questions in relation to buildings have been discarded for several reasons. One, the wording of the questions in future surveys would need clarification. Secondly there is a need to clarify whether members want buildings, owned by U3A, shared, rented, or other. Thirdly there was confusion on fit for purpose. For instance, should courses suit available facilities and consideration given to renting alternative facilities for physical activity courses? Fourthly consideration to “down time” (not in use) in facilities with careful thought given to time used and size.

While the buildings may be historic, and like all of us aging and in need of a little repair, they are a great asset and provide a unique opportunity for U3A Bairnsdale and certainly contribute to the administration and social context. The buildings have been a continual issue for U3A Bairnsdale, yet the programs continue to operate, and the current buildings adequately meet the needs of members.



THE FUTURE

U3A will continue to operate if a need exists in a community. The grey tsunami is reality and will require consideration by local government authorities. The trend is for older adults to lead healthy, active, and independent lives well into their later years. There will always be a desire for initiatives that promote physical, psychological, spiritual, and socioeconomic well-being for older Australians who will want control over those options.

U3A does that and will continue



Photos by Bonnie Walker

POSTSCRIPT

This project has led to U3A reviewing its purpose and practices. Common issues that emerged from the task include:

- 1.** Addressing the reinvention of the wheel: - the change of Committee members every year meant that directions and projects rarely came to fruition.
- 2.** The number of members who elected the committee was very small. The question of how to involve more members in selecting a committee was reviewed and the trial held in 2021 clearly indicated that more people were interested in participation in this process.
- 3.** Avoiding Coups. The records suggest that familiarity breeds contempt as happened in the 90s.
- 4.** Avoiding “burn out” Willing executives can continue to take on more and more and this leads to greater expectations of them and their role. It can also lead to less contribution by members in general as the expectation is that x or y will complete the task.
- 5.** Clarifying the purpose of the organisation. This is often just assumed and does not become an issue until different interpretations of general aims arise and cannot be resolved. Doing less to a higher standard is better than trying to accommodate everyone’s, wishes or concern.
- 6.** U3A Bairnsdale and Districts Inc is fortunate in being able to rent a retired school facility. An outcome of this requires members learning to be a tenant and working through the managing body of the facility.

Ensuing discussions have seen measures put in place to ensure that jobs are spread evenly across members of the Committee. Arrangements to ensure information and records are passed effectively on, have been addressed by establishing specific computers and hard drives that belong to U3A and establishing specific email addresses for Executive and Committee members, so contacts and information is not lost.

A major task has been the updating of the Constitution or Rules of the organisation. Positive outcomes from this have included asking members to review and provide comment on suggested changes. It was surprising to see how many responded. The second important outcome was the involvement of the Committee in developing an understanding and contribution to the review.

So often the comment is made that we won’t get volunteers or replacements for positions or roles. Surprisingly this has not been the case. Developing clear job descriptions for tasks has certainly assisted.

Accurate records of daily attendance are now recorded, and monthly attendance reports forwarded to Committee. This is assisting with decision making and applications for grants as strong reliable data can be provided.

A FITTING CONCLUSION

On 28th May 2022 members of the Nonagenarians Club came together to welcome new members and enjoy connecting with each other.

They shared stories from the past and how they came to U3A Bairnsdale. With no exceptions every-one commented on the importance of U3A in their lives and the enjoyment they gained from being a part of a welcoming and friendly community.

Left: Win Falkiner (96) cuts the cake.

Below: members come together for a group photo presenting over 1,500 plus years of learning.



LIFE MEMBERS



Left: Brian and Eril Andrews

Right: Alan Searl (dec)



Left: Claire Beecher

Right: Bonnie Walker



Left: Anne Cameron

Right: Bernard West



Left: Heinz Homberger(dec)

Right: Kath West (dec)

**Bottom Left: Noel Moline
Bottom Centre: Joan Race
Bottom Right: Avril Yates (dec)**



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Archives

U3A memorabilia

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Surveys

Seventy responses from randomly selected members were distributed and collected by tutors of randomly selected classes. A search of the archives revealed that another survey had been conducted 5 years earlier and results compared. Interestingly the issues raised were identical, with high praise given to the tutors.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the following individuals and were generally 30-45 minutes in length.

Beecher Claire

McCracken Roger

Mel Robinson

Bourne Jean

McDonald Fiona

Rodwell Maurs

Cameron Ann

Moline Noel

Soutter June

Green Joy

Murray Brenda

Walker Bonnie

Hallett Margaret

Race Joan

West Bernard

Keil Graham

Research Co Ordinator and Writer: Lorraine Scott

Research Team: Barbara Rogalla, Jenny Stray, Rosie Thomson, Thelma Rawlings

Thankyou

1. Bonnie and John Walker for photographs and proof reading.

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3. Judy Mann for the original idea, proof reading, support, and encouragement.

Chilli for creating the time to complete the task and growing rapidly

A BRIEF HISTORY OF U3A GENERALLY

An underlying controversy exists around the concept of U3A itself, that relates back to its origins. Would the term University attract or deter participants.? Prof. Pierre Vellas established a university-based program in France.

From this initiative different models emerged.

- The Original Model: -established by the Faculty of Social Sciences in Toulouse France in 1973 offered opportunities for older people to access high quality teaching personnel in a variety of subjects. Renamed the University of all Ages or University of Free Time in recent times, this approach is common across Europe.
- American Model: -Lifelong Learning Institutes established since 1962 are organised groups of people over 50 years of age who meet frequently for college-level study just for its intellectual challenge and social enjoyment.
- United Kingdom Model: -Each U3A is an independent self-financing and self-managing charity with links to a central association. Groups offer a wide range of different topics - e.g., arts, languages, physical activity, discussion, and games. Tutors are volunteers.
- The Australian Model: -This is like the English model. Each U3A is an independent, self-funding incorporated body that provides a wide range of activities for members of the community over fifty-five with links to a central body. Tutors are all volunteers.

U3A Bairnsdale operates as an independent, self-funding incorporated body that provides a wide range of activities for members of the community over fifty-five. As a non-profit incorporated body U3A operates within the governance ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION REFORM ACT 2012 and complies with meeting schedules, financial audits, and reporting as required. All participants unpaid volunteers including tutors.

The Issue of names

The word university is from the Latin "universitas magistrorum et scholarium," which means "community of teachers and scholars" which is exactly what U3A is. Tension exists with the term University and its expectations. Hence there is always an underlying concern as to the quality of lecturers, knowledge level and course content. The controversy goes further as to whether the program should be recreational, academic, informative, or just social.



A Bairnsdale and District U3A Inc Project to recognise the work of past and present members. As stated at the beginning of the book memories will vary greatly. The book reflects the editor's understanding of events based on information made available and apologises and encourages members to write their own memories to add to our archives.



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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