



<https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>

21 Years of U3A Online

December 2020

Summer in Australia



May we all have as 'normal' and happy a season as we could wish for!

May 2021 be a much more content, healthy and safe year for everyone.

President's Report

for December 2020 Newsletter

As this will be the final Newsletter of 2020, a year none of us will forget, I want to wish all our members and their families a very happy and peaceful Christmas with the hope of better things to come next year.

We have been pleased to be able to assist local U3As with online courses during the lockdowns, and in some Australian States, and in other countries, that will continue.

For those fortunate enough to be in places with more freedom, we hope you keep accessing and enjoying our courses. Our course co-ordinator, Bev, reported that during the last nine months or so every course has had at least one enrolment.

We recently added "***Geometry, Different Worlds, Different Geometries***" to our list of courses. This course writer adds, *"this is not just mathematics but includes design, mosaics, and craft, designed to exercise the mind and lift the spirits"*. And so that members can have a taste of the full course, we also have a short course of the first three units.

As so many organisations have been using **ZOOM** for meetings, **Be Connected**, the government funded company delivering IT learning to seniors, now has a free online tutorial on ZOOM. You can access it from our Home page by clicking on the **Be Connected** link on our top menu bar.

And please remember to let us know if you change your email address or any other contact details. Every time the **GEMS** newsletter is sent out we get quite a few returned as the email address is unreachable.

Finally, I want to thank our Newsletter editor, Colette, for continuing to create a series of interesting and vibrant Newsletters.

And thank you to all members for their continuing support of U3A Online.



Jean Walker

President

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“The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up”

- Mark Twain

Course Matters

Course Co-ordinator's Report

The closing of the year can be a busy time for some of us, so our **Short Courses** may be ideal when we only have a few hours to relax, and the hot weather can make it hard to concentrate on big subjects.

Most of our Short Courses have been provided by Jean Walker, President of U3A Online and U3A Glenorchy in Tasmania. Jean has written several courses for her local U3A and shared them with U3A Online. She has given us *The Life and Works of Henry Lawson* and *Banjo Patterson*, as well as *Shakespeare, Rediscovering the Bard* and *Property to Partner*.

The Short Courses '*Picnic at Hanging Rock*' and '*the Short Story in Literature*' are a further two of Jean's courses.

We have another new course in Development. *The Annunaki* - the people before ancient history, mythological creatures or extraterrestrials? This one will be a real challenge for the New Year.

The lead up to Christmas always reminds me of John O'Brien's poem –
Tangmalangaloo –

I hope it makes you laugh as it does me –

TANGMALANGALOO by John O'Brien

The bishop sat in lordly state and purple cap sublime,
And galvanized the old bush church at Confirmation time.
And all the kids were mustered up from fifty miles around,
With Sunday clothes, and staring eyes, and ignorance profound.
Now was it fate, or was it grace, whereby they yarded too
An overgrown two-storey lad from Tangmalangaloo?

A hefty son of virgin soil, where nature has her fling,
And grows the trefoil three feet high and mats it in the spring;
Where mighty hills uplift their heads to pierce the welkin's rim,
And trees sprout up a hundred feet before they shoot a limb;
There everything is big and grand, and men are giants too -
But Christian Knowledge wilts, alas, at Tangmalangaloo.

The bishop summed the youngsters up, as bishops only can;
He cast a searching glance around, then fixed upon his man.
But glum and dumb and undismayed through every bout he sat;
He seemed to think that he was there, but wasn't sure of that.
The bishop gave a scornful look, as bishops sometimes do,
And glared right through the pagan in from Tangmalangaloo.

"Come, tell me, boy," his lordship said in crushing tones severe,
"Come, tell me why is Christmas Day the greatest of the year?
"How is it that around the world we celebrate that day
"And send a name upon a card to those who're far away?
"Why is it wandering ones return with smiles and greetings, too?"
A squall of knowledge hit the lad from Tangmalangaloo.

He gave a lurch which set a-shake the vases on the shelf,
He knocked the benches all askew, up-ending of himself.
And so, how pleased his lordship was, and how he smiled to say,
"That's good, my boy. Come, tell me now; and what is Christmas Day?"
The ready answer bared a fact no bishop ever knew -
"It's the day before the races out at Tangmalangaloo."

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Bev Tapper

Course Coordinator

*Editor's Postscript to John O'Brien's poem above..... many years ago that poem (and some others by John O'Brien) were part of my mother's repertoire for family parties and get-togethers in Dublin.
Thanks for the memories, Bev!*

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“Books are mirrors: you only see in them what you already have inside you.”

— Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The Shadow of the Wind*

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REQUEST FOR COURSE LEADERS OR CONVERSATION STARTERS!

You may remember that our President, Jean Walker, mentioned in the September 2020 Newsletter that we are always looking for members to volunteer as **Course Leaders**?

Jean assured you that it is not an onerous job, and you don't need to be an expert in the course topic – just have an interest in it. It simply involves checking in to the topic discussion forums once or twice each week of the 8 weeks of the course and joining in the conversations of the enrolees and assisting them where you can.

Now... *you* know and *I* know that we have a wealth of talent in our membership of over 1,000 people! C'mon folk! Make it one of your New Year Resolutions to participate in our University of the Third Age Online as fully as possible. Not only will you find it rewarding for yourself, but you will assist in keeping U3A Online a vibrant, inclusive, knowledge-sharing and caring organisation.

Naturally, you will be given more detailed information to assist you, so... respond **now** while you think of it! Contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

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Member Profile

Kathy Slater

How often do I hear the comment *“just as well I am retired as I would not have time to work now. My diary has so few spare slots”?*

So... ‘What is retirement’?

From my perspective ‘retirement’ was the reality that I did not have time-structured days, ie no driving into University in the morning, no scheduled meetings with students, colleagues or presentations to attend, and coming home at night often with hours of marking ahead of me.

However I have been fortunate to continue with my teaching role at University on a very part-time basis. That gives me considerable freedom to say ‘yes’ when someone suggests coffee, lunch, walking, swimming, theatre, concerts, going to school events to support grandchildren and all those other activities which, when working, I would have to carefully consider and balance against my teaching commitments.

I do enjoy retirement in that I have a balanced range of activities –

my University role that continues to provide me with a level of intellectual stimulation (and at times frustration);

the opportunity to be a volunteer once a week for both Meals on Wheels and the local Hospice Shop;

involvement with St. Heliers U3A, now Immediate Past President;

participation in and contribution to 4 study groups;

membership in 2 book groups – having the time to read - actually sitting down with a cup of tea and a book and having no guilt;

walking down to the beach with a book – often not read but spend time ‘people watching’ (always a fascinating activity) and listening to the waves and just thinking;

not really being a gardener but enjoying those moments of pulling out weeds, smelling the flowers and picking roses;

sitting down with family and enjoying listening to the banter that evolves when people get together.

How fortunate I am in that I can live my life in the knowledge that all those years of working, often long hours, has enabled me to be positive in respect to my future and I can look forward to further retirement years, and maybe that book that is simmering in the back of my mind may become an actuality.

Kathy Slater

Past President U3A St Heliers

Auckland, New Zealand

**Note: Kathy is also currently on the Committee of Management of
U3A Online**



Don't let time slip by before you write that book, Kathy!

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"Medicine, law, business, engineering—these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life, but poetry, beauty, romance, love—these are what we stay alive for."

— Dead Poets Society

COFFEE BREAK!



QUIZ

(We are having a Literary Quiz this issue!)

Questions:

1. Which two authors won the Booker Prize in 2019?
2. Who wrote *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?
3. In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, what is the name of the classmate with whom Tom falls in love?
4. Who wrote *Black Beauty*?
5. In *The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams, which character chose his name because "when he first arrived fifteen years ago, the minimal research he had done had suggested to him... that it would be 'nicely inconspicuous'"?

(Find the Answers further down..... just so you are not tempted to cheat!)

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Best Christmas Gift idea



Your friends and family will love you all the more when you give them the gift which keeps on giving - **the Gift Card which gives them U3A Online**

Membership. Then for a whole year they may choose to access as many of our wonderful online courses as tickle their fancy! Just ask us!

But hurry up to avoid the Christmas rush!!

...And don't forget

,,, to write to us about your experience of retirement – short anecdotes, poetry or longer articles – giving us a glimpse into life as you now know it! *Jean Walker, Mardi Sands, Margaret Morris, Celestine Conroy and Kathy Slater* have set the scene for you already. Members are interested to know what other members have been doing with their lives. Please be generous and share.

Photographs are very welcome too – e.g. photos of you doing what you do in retirement!

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Answers to Quiz:

1. Margaret Atwood and Bernadine Evaristo
2. Oscar Wilde
3. Becky Thatcher
4. Anna Sewell
5. Ford Prefect

To contact us about these, or any other relevant matters, please click on 'Contacts' on our website: www.u3aonline.org.au and share your thoughts with us.

Alternatively you could write to us at: enquiries@u3aonline.org.au

I am also quite happy for you to write direct to me if you would prefer that: colettekinsella@iprimus.com.au

Every good wish to you all...



Colette Kinsella

Newsletter Editor

<https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>