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# 21 Years of U3A Online

June 2020

## Winter in Australia

Glorious wattles in June



Now, that great love poem by the Irish poet, **W.B. Yeats**, which focuses on the **Winter of Life**:

### When You Are Old

WHEN you are old and gray and full of sleep,  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty with love false or true,  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face among a crowd of stars.

# President's Report

## for June 2020 Newsletter

As we all know, local U3As have had to temporarily close due to the COVID-19 pandemic and while this has been very unfortunate for members of local groups, it has significantly increased the role of U3A Online.

We contacted all State Networks asking them to pass on to their groups a message explaining how they can utilise our courses either by their members joining individually, or by a U3A becoming an organisational member. Organisational members may purchase courses which their members can study either by themselves or together, by doing them at the same time in their homes, and accessing the online discussion forum which is available with each course. We have had a good response to this and have been kept busy responding to queries and keeping the website in good working order.

We have a new course now online, **Domestic History**, covering the development of houses and furniture. And if you are interested in **IT courses**, keep an eye on the **Be Connected** site (on the top menu bar, then click on the blue *Be Connected* link) which continues to add courses to its offerings. They have recently added courses on **Apple and Android smart phones** and **setting up laptops and desktops**.

All of this has greatly increased the use of our website at a time when the internet is also under greater pressure, so we are recommending that members download the courses as pdfs (there is a pdf link at the top of each unit) and file to their computer rather than studying on line.

As computers and websites are not 100% foolproof at any time, glitches may occur from time to time and we do our best to respond and fix these as quickly as is possible with a small but dedicated group of volunteers. We often find that something appears inaccessible then corrects itself on a second attempt or that certain browsers work better than others.

This current situation has certainly been a learning curve for all of us, and U3A Online has been happy to be able to provide at least some continuing learning for seniors during it.

***On a different topic***, I was recently delighted to be invited to be a guest on the Saturday evening radio program broadcast by 3AW, 2GB, 4BS and 2CC. The interviewer was knowledgeable about the U3A movement, and keen to spread the word about U3A Online.



***Jean Walker***

***President***

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# Course Matters

## Course Co-ordinator's Report

**Feedback** received from one of the participants of the following courses:

**Autobiography & Journaling** course March/April 2020 - Course Leader  
Mardi Sands

*This is the first time I have had a course with a course leader; what a difference it makes to have someone to answer to. I feel as if I have written more than I had expected to, and I enjoyed the challenge.*

*I would love to see more variety in courses with leaders. I would sign up all year long! I have tried a course without leaders but I can't get motivated.*

**Philosophy 2017**

*I usually felt rushed to complete discussion submissions before I had really given the subject the attention it deserved. Some of the areas covered are very challenging in terms of personal beliefs etc. More time to think, reflect and explore new ideas could only be good.*

*Forum discussions certainly were helpful. I was fortunate enough to do the course with two others who were very good at sharing their thoughts, as well as suggesting new sources of information. Their contributions were always eagerly awaited, and so often contained lines of thoughts that I had not considered. The course would have been much more challenging without them.*



**Courses with a leader** are offered when we have enough members interested in the course and a course leader available for that course.

The U3A ethos is that students learn from teachers and teachers learn from students. Everyone is a volunteer and we rely on volunteer course leaders, course writers, proof readers and administrators.

*If any members are willing to act as course leader for any of our courses in which they have an interest, it would be greatly appreciated. You only need to have an interest in the subject and be willing to help others to learn together. No need to be a subject expert.*

If everyone takes part in the *Course Discussion Forum*, it does make the course more enjoyable. Please do not feel that you cannot contribute – everyone’s opinion or perspective on a subject is of interest to others and adds to the discussion.

We should all be aware that sometimes the written word can be misinterpreted, as we can’t hear the tone of voice or see the body language, as we can in face-to-face or telephone conversation. Do ask for clarification of written comments. It is possible to make a different interpretation to that which the writer intended, but this can be quickly clarified if asked for more information - *with courtesy & respect.* ☺



***Bev Tapper***  
***Course Coordinator***

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# Member Profile

## Retirement in the Tropics

**Margaret Morris**

At the end of 2019 I retired from a part- time role having completed Transition to Retirement over several years. In effect I now have an extra 2.5 days a week spare. For something new to do this year I joined **U3A Cairns** to learn “Chimes” and “Square dancing” initially. I totally agree with **Mardi Sands'** statement “*Groups have a magic, which is greater than the individual members*”. (Ref: U3A Online March 2020 Newsletter)

Although I can read music I've never played in a Chimes group before. We each have two or three notes and play together to make melodies. There is lots of fun and laughter every week. I was a bit hesitant to do Square dancing as I've always had two left feet! There are 51 steps which I didn't realise can be called in any order! Luckily the group are very forgiving and really good at hand signals to point me in the right direction. I'm glad I joined! I'm also looking forward to lots of other classes in future like Mahjong, English country dancing and more. There is also a monthly luncheon group that I attend when I can.

Once I found out that there were classes available online, I enrolled and started the “**Ageing and Retirement**” course as my first trial. I'm impressed that **U3A Online** has been around for 21 years and really pleased I joined. It has been a slog for me with slow internet access and learning how to do things at home without all the technology I had at my fingertips at work. *The course has been a great review of perceptions and a reality check for me.* Even though I was confident I had a realistic grip on my living costs, one of the exercises was to actually complete a budget. This helped me to get a more accurate understanding of all my expenses.

Luckily I have given myself Fridays off to relax and read.

I joined the Australian Caravan Club online and regularly attend local musters so I've had a gentle social start to this style of travel.

I am so over the long plane flights to Europe that I decided to see Australia instead. Because of the high cost of travel in Australia I decided to look for a cheaper alternative. My criteria for a campervan was pretty basic as I had never camped in my life before but I knew I didn't want a tent. I wanted a permanent bed and small kitchen inside. Now I'm like a crab with my home on the back.

It was a steep learning curve using a 3-way fridge, understanding that DC only works while the engine is running, and that gas bottles screw on anti-clockwise. The funniest thing I found out after a few horn blasts and waving hands was that the small round mirrors stuck on the side mirrors are to help magnify following traffic. Now I'm a pro at changing lanes and feel confident driving long distances. When I learned that I was going to be travelling solo, I invested \$1,650 for airbags to pop the top automatically. Twice previously I had ended up with severe shoulder pain before I decided it wasn't physically possible for me to push the pop top up manually

**My big trip this year** is Cairns to Katherine, Perth, Port Augusta and back through central NSW and Queensland. I've allowed three months and this will be the biggest trip I will probably do. With a five year plan I'm looking at three-month trips each year to cover NSW, Victoria, ACT and Queensland. I guess by then I'll be happy to attend local festivals and musters and do shorter trips.

After a two month break from work I have just started weekend shifts again. This is great as it will help with my holiday costs. After Easter I'll be away on my Perth odyssey so there will be no more shifts till August.



When I travel I use Facebook to update friends of my location and highlights. I also keep a personal trip diary for highlights and to track costs. Facebook makes me feel that I'm in touch, and should I disappear at least my last location will be known. For some of my family and friends who don't use the web I have to copy the Facebook post and send it to them in a text.

I did a lot of planning for my big trip and tossed up getting a Satellite sleeve for my phone but decided against it. Instead I have purchased a PLB, Personal Location Beacon, that will travel with me all the time in case of emergencies. I've joined the highest breakdown coverage with RACQ so that's the best I can do in case the worst happens. Using a CPAP machine means I will be stopping at powered sites mainly, and I'll also be staying on main roads as I don't have a 4WD. I should be as safe as I can be.

**My hobbies** in addition to reading and crosswords include gardening, movies and musical events. I'm now a regular at Seniors movies and local Film Club events. I enjoy going to both local football clubs for free musical dos. I also enjoy the local Classical music group and Concert band events. With other events at CPAC I have to be careful not to double or sometimes even treble book myself! Even two events on one day can clash if there isn't much time between them. I have now learned to check when the Seniors film finishes so I know if I have time to go home for lunch before my afternoon Chimes group. I guess it's all part of my being in the "honeymoon period" of retirement at the moment.

Best wishes

***Margaret Morris***

**Editor's Footnote:** It will be obvious that Margaret wrote this article earlier this year – before the Corona Virus changed all our lives! We hope that her 3-month trip won't be postponed for too long.

Happy and safe journey, Margaret! Many thanks for your interesting Article, and please send us anecdotes and a photo from your travels.

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## COFFEE BREAK!



I promised you an **Aussie Quiz** in this edition,  
so here you are:

1. Australians hold the world record for which amazing feat?
  - A) Fastest Beer bottle opening
  - B) Largest Christmas Cracker
  - C) Most Sheep Sheared in 24 hours
  - D) Largest Chicken Dance
2. Who was the first Australian to win the Booker Prize?
3. The landmark Katu Tiuta is also known as what?
4. In which State/Territory is the Brisbane Ranges National Park?

### Answers:

1. B. Largest Christmas Cracker
2. Thomas Keneally
3. The Olgas
4. Victoria

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## Things to keep in mind!

- Remember the Gift Cards for friends/family, giving them U3A Online Membership – the gift that keeps on giving! Just ask us.
- 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 and Margaret Morris* have set the scene for you already. We look forward to hearing from you. *Please send your articles to us before the end of August.*

(I've noticed that two of our three contributors to 'Member Profile' are from Queensland! C'mon you other Statesiders/Territorians.... Don't let us Queenslanders get away with this!!)



- Keep talking to us about the kind of articles and courses which interest you. Also... Feedback regarding this Newsletter is always welcome- what works, what doesn't work!. We want to keep it relevant to your interests.
- Photographs are very welcome too - e.g. photos of you doing what you do in retirement, etc.

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

Alternatively you could write to us at: [enquiries@u3aonline.org.au](mailto:enquiries@u3aonline.org.au)

Keep well, and live life in the best way possible!



**Colette Kinsella**

**Newsletter Editor**

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