



# U3A NETWORK WA

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

**SPECIAL LOCKDOWN EDITION**

*(Guaranteed virus free)*



*International U3A President Professor Francois Vellas and Peter Alcock in Toowoomba in February*

# From the President

This time will be remembered as no other in our memories. Our parents and grandparents would have lived in more unsettling times through the prospect of imminent war and frightening pandemics.

Now, however we have the means of instant communication from our homes to virtually anywhere on earth. While our face to face U3A activities have been suspended at virtually all our groups around the state we do have the ability to be virtual U3As through the medium of the internet and telephone.

The State Conference that was planned for October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> in Busselton has now been cancelled. The hard working committee and volunteers in Busselton are to be commended for all the planning and hard work they have done. However, the current uncertainty and recognition of more immediate priorities convinced the committee that it cannot proceed in this timeframe. The Conference committee will reconvene to discuss future options when the COVID-19 emergency is over.

The Perth Group is trialling the Zoom platform which is increasingly popular for remote learning in schools and clubs around the world. While technology such as Skype and Zoom can be challenging at first, most people with the suitable equipment (a device with camera and sound) cope very well. I believe we can continue to present courses, talks, music and poetry for example with this technology. With this in mind the Network has purchased a Zoom Pro licence for use by member groups anywhere in the State to run virtual meetings where the meeting time is expected to be more than 40 minutes. Contact the Network Committee for further information.

The Geraldton group although quite small has managed to continue under the leadership of Delys Weller and making use of U3A online. This is a resource which will become increasingly popular for people who are isolated. For group meetings however there still needs to be a means of disseminating the programme and this is where Zoom comes into its own.

I ask you all to put on your thinking caps in true U3A style to come up with new ways of keeping members engaged and taking leadership roles in these difficult times. You know the old saying: when the going gets tough.....

During this time of isolation let's not allow it to get us down. Get on Facebook , email or phone to lighten your day and that of someone else.

## VISIT TO TOOWOOMBA

Some of us were fortunate to meet up in Toowoomba in February where the local U3A group hosted International U3A President Professor Francois Vellas and ran a seminar entitled U3A Globally. Francois takes a global perspective of Seniors' Learning and is keen to bring together the 3 main strands -the European, UK and Chinese models. He advocates more intergenerational learning and the opening up of Universities to U3A members, making the point that Universities need seniors and

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The Toowoomba meeting focussed quite a lot on international travel for U3A members but that is likely to be postponed for a while. The Toowoomba meeting did however give several of the State representatives an opportunity for face to face discussions.

Peter Alcock President

## HONOUR FOR CLUB STALWART

**U3A** Margaret River Chapter celebrated with a special presentation after their recent Annual General Meeting.

Life Membership was awarded to Carol Orchard in recognition of her outstanding service to the Margaret River group.

As a club we are very proud to honour Carol's contribution in many areas but particularly her long commitment to U3A since its inception in Margaret River. She has earned our greatest respect.

**Martin Luther King. Jr. "Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."**



*Marg Taylor, Carol Orchard and Joan Malcolm, foundation members of Margaret River U3A*

In 2011 founding members met to establish the Margaret River Chapter of U3A. They voted to form this new chapter with Margaret Auld (decd) President, Marg Taylor, Secretary and Carol Orchard as Treasurer.

Carol later took over the role of Secretary; she is a continuing Course leader and was the sponsor of the very popular “Playtime” – an opportunity to play card games and Mah-jong at the District Club with other members.

- **University of the Third Age -U3A** formed in France in 1973. **The policy of the French Model being:**
- The three ages, school, work and retirement- so open to anyone over retirement age. This is defined as being over fifty and not in full time employment.
- No qualifications are required – and NO examinations!
- First Semester in Margaret River was 2012 and every year since more courses by number are added. Members now total 207. Margaret River is second largest U3A in WA.
- All Course Leaders give their time voluntarily
- The culture suits retired people in Margaret River (they do not have to identify as Pensioners or Senior Citizens) and are out there doing Music, Art, History, Philosophy, Cycling, Swimming, Cryptic Crosswords, to name just a few. Our only limitations are finding voluntary tutors. And often members of the greater community will contact us to share their particular expertise on a voluntary basis.

Carol was also recognised for her work with local charity River Angels . She recognised the good work that founder Linda Donovan was doing in our community, and she not only put up her hand to help but took on the role of Secretary. (From *Bunty Paramor* )

## NORTH COAST U3A SAILING ON THE DUYFKEN



*U3A members from North Coast (Hamersley) on board the Duyfkren on the Swan*



Members of North Coast U3A discovered that you're never too old to learn to sail - on a replica of a 400-year-old Dutch sailing ship built for war, exploration and treasure hunting for spices.

Twilight sailing in well-catered comfort on the Swan River, North Coasters learned about the harsh realities of life at sea on the original Dutch East India Company Duyfken, which usually left with a crew of 30, returning with around 15/20 men. Many were lost at sea, died from disease or were killed by hostile tribes.

Nigel Ridgway, who is a veteran ocean-going yachtsman, said: "At U3A we have several sailing enthusiasts who were keen to "help" the crew to set the sails, pull on the sheets (ropes) and halyards and even steer the ship using the ancient, traditional Dutch whip staff, which was in use 50 years before ships' steering wheels were invented.

*Pauline Yarwood*

## TAKEN FROM THE NATURALISTE NEWSLETTER

(Naturaliste U3A started the year with a wealth of courses. Unfortunately, just as with everywhere else, they are on hold until times improve. I include some information about two of these courses Ed)

### BIODIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA – Wanderings of a Zoologist in Wildflower Country – Leader: Patrick Prevett



Hello there students of the Wandering Zoologist in Wildflower Country. It was like being back with old friends to see so many familiar faces when so many of you enrolled for more biological studies. The picture shows the lead slide that featured in my first lecture. A stunning wildflower most easily found by listening intently to the network of fanatical field botanists out there who search high and low for it. Best of luck searching for it but I have my sources too. I will shortly be starting work on the next set of 6 sessions entitled Crossing the Boundaries but I am not telling you any more at this stage.

### INTO DRAMA – Gwyn Cracknell

We were off to a good start with sixteen enrolments, including three new. Much to Wendy Beames enjoyment we started with Dylan Thomas's 'Under Milkwood', a delightful expose of one day in the life of a Welsh fishing village created with the amazing sound effects of Thomas's prose/poetry. We all had many parts as there were up to fifty characters.

Through Colleen and Richard Liston, we were requested to participate in a dramatised reading of how the Busselton Oral History Group need to run their interviews. Janet and Frank Dickinson volunteered with Gwyn the Observer indicating the correct procedures. In keeping with our Conference Theme for 2020 that we are hosting in Busselton, we were

pleased we could offer 'Connections' with the vibrant Oral History Group. BOHG Heather Hill co-ordinated the recording of the dramatised reading.



Janet, Heather Hill, Richard, Joan, Gwyn, Frank.

Recording in Session

Photos – Kathy Armstrong – Vice President BOHG>

### ***Historical Feature***

## **SPANISH FLU IN WA 1918-19**



*Woodman Point Quarantine Station – filled to overflowing*

Spanish Flu (so called because it first hit the headlines in Spain) arrived at the tail end of the first world war. It was caused by a H1N1 type virus (as was swine flu) and spread across the

globe killing at least 50 million people. Unlike other flu viruses it was more fatal among young, healthy adults than younger or older people.

Spain was one European country not involved in the war and hence reports were not censored. Hence came the name Spanish Flu. Exactly where it did come from is still unknown. The end of the war with large scale repatriation of troops on ships meant it was spread widely around the world late in 1918 and into 1919.

The troopship, Boonah, was on its way to Europe with new recruits when the war ended . It reached Durban, South Africa, where the flu was already rampant. It then turned back to Australia. By the time it reached Fremantle there were reports of 100 cases on board. On reaching Gage Roads it was quarantined.

Medical inspection revealed 337 men on board were sick with the flu. It was decided to send them to Woodman Point Quarantine Station. Armed guards were placed to prevent movement in or out. Two days later the Port Lyttleton dropped anchor. The ship was ordered to proceed to Melbourne. The WA contingent on board mutinied, commandeered four boats and came ashore. They were rounded up and taken to Woodman Point. There were now over 600 men there, straining the resources to the limit.

Nurses aboard another ship nearby were asked to volunteer to serve at the station. More volunteered than were required. Unfortunately four of them died from the flu as a result. 27 soldiers also died.



*The Boonah was built in Germany in 1912 and seized in 1914 after hostilities broke out.*

After nine days the Boonah was allowed to continue. This proved insufficient – more problems emerged as it headed East. There were 14 new cases by the time they got to Adelaide.

WA went into isolation. The Trans Train was topped at Kalgoorlie ( it had just started the year before). This caused a political row between Federal and WA authorities.

After those remaining at Woodman Poinr recovered, WA seemed to be free of Spanish Flu and restrictions on movements were lifted. Unfortunately, this was a premature assessment. In July 1919 there was a new outbreak. Altogether there were 638 deaths in te state

*(Compiled from various sources. Peter Flanigan.)*

## SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

Isolation, lockdown, deep freeze – whatever you might call it, 2020 is U3A with a difference. It is not the end, however, just a bit of an impediment. The great thing is that people are getting creative. We might not be able to meet as groups but we do have a wealth of electronic means to catch up, continue learning, keep our brains active and maintain some semblance of social contact.

U3A Online is not affected at all. Courses continue as if nothing had happened. So join up and enrol in any number of excellent courses that have been compiled over the years.

Local groups have also racked their brains for solutions. At North Coast (Hamersley) weekly meetings are continuing via Zoom.( Must confess I am having some trouble with this! – Ed) Peter Alcock has been the driving force here. Well done Peter. Last Friday there was a power point presentation by Don Manning on “The Planes That Saved Britain”. Next up is a “Round Table” where members have five minutes to talk on any topic of their choosing. Our indefatigable secretary, Val, has put together some kits of activities to while away a slow hour or three.

Ideas from other groups would be very welcome. If we are still in lockdown in July they will all be published.

Others have shared websites such as museum, art galleries or digital concert halls. The enormous spread of YouTube holds a wealth of wonderful performances from which anyone with web access can choose a host of delights. Someone sent me an email with a Ronnie Corbett skit. This lead me to some more of the Two Ronnies – great for a laugh.

For classical music lovers try this one: <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/home>. Theatre lovers might like to try this one: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage>.

Other suggestions are to read that book you’ve been hanging on to or to start (or continue) those personal or family history stories.

IF you have a garden, now is the time to get out there. It is mid-autumn, the ground is still warm – the perfect time to plant, prune, strike, rearrange, fertilise or any other of the myriad rewarding garden tasks. I leave you with a picture of an epiphyllum (one of the cactus family) that appeared in our garden last Spring.





*Epiphyllum "American Sweetheart"*

*Thank you to all who sent contributions. The next issue will be in mid July.*

*Keep safe!*

*Peter Flanigan, Editor.*

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