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NEWSLETTER

December 2014

President's Report

Greetings to All Members,

As I write this I am conscious that classes are meeting for the “last” class of the year and many are enjoying “break-up” treats.

Even as we step away from one year we are preparing for the next. Our last Newsletter included 2015 membership application forms and for anyone who did not print out the whole newsletter the same application form may be down loaded from the web site as a single item.

Speaking of down loads from our web site I have heard of a number of people who have practised the “buddy” system of sharing on line items with member acquaintances who do not have web access. Thanks to all those who are doing this as I know your actions are appreciated – if anyone else knows of someone they can assist in this way please consider helping.

It is appreciated that so many current members have already mailed in their 2015 membership application form and have either sent in the fees per post or have used the introduced direct payment to our credit union account. The purpose of encouraging membership payments prior to enrolment day is simply to avoid queues and delays on enrolment day. As advertised there will also be a fee paying day the week before enrolment day – another chance to have membership registered. I especially add a reminder, that if paying your fees directly to the U3A credit union account it is also very necessary to mail in an application form.

We have received some fees into the account without receiving a corresponding application form. It is a legislative requirement that **each applicant member must complete and sign an application form before we can register their membership.**

The committee has been asked “when will we know which courses will be available next year?” I can certainly appreciate the question but the fact is that definite list may not be available in accurate form until January. Our volunteer class facilitators need to be accommodated with times that are suitable to the individual and it is a giant puzzle to arrange accommodation places and hours to suit. Please, **when looking at a course list, check the date of publication.** We can **expect that the newly published list will have some changes,** perhaps even additions by enrolment day. Our Class Co-ordinator has a complex job to work out schedules as there are on- going changes to accommodate.

May I close with sincere greetings and best wishes for the festive season and the summer break ahead. There will be both familiar and new courses in 2015 so we may all look forward to a year of renewing acquaintances, making new friends and learning one from the other.

Sincerely, *Helen Squires*

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF U3A

Based on the philosophy of the UK co-founder of the U3A movement, Dr. Peter Laslett

To provide affordable learning opportunities for older people, using the skills and abilities of the members themselves.

Those who learn shall teach and those who teach shall learn, and there shall be no distinction between the two.

There shall be no qualifications for membership, and no awards, degrees or diplomas shall be given.

The emphasis shall be on learning for the love of it, and shall include an emphasis on the values of making things and improving skills of all kinds.

Learning shall take place in a friendly, supportive, and social environment.

Those joining U3A shall pay for its upkeep.

There shall be no payment to any person (member or non-member) for teaching or providing a service to members except in the case of reimbursement for travel, photocopying, etc.

The curriculum of a U3A shall be determined by the needs/preferences of members and according to the resources available to it.

To be at all times, non-political and non-sectarian in our approach.

CATCHING A COMET

Most of us can remember where we were and what we were doing when the first Moon landing took place. It was history being made as we watched and listened. As Neil Armstrong himself said –“a giant leap for mankind”.

What most of us perhaps do not realise is another huge leap for humanity is currently in progress – one vastly more complicated and more informative than the Apollo program.

On 2nd March 2004 the European Space Agency launched the Rosetta spacecraft to rendezvous with a comet named after its Russian discoverers, Comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko, or 67P for short. This is a periodic comet (hence the P) that returns every 6½ years to make a close approach around the Sun and then return to the outer reaches of the Solar System to commence another approach.

In order to meet the comet Rosetta had to be accelerated to match the comet’s speed. To do this Rosetta first had to be orbited around the Sun passing close to Earth three times and Mars once, each time like a slingshot picking up additional energy from the planets’ gravity. This process took ten years and over six billion kilometres of travel. Everything was precisely calculated to ensure it arrived at the comet on 6th August last while both were travelling at a speed of over 100,000 kilometres per hour relative to the Sun.

Rosetta went into orbit around the comet where it will remain throughout next year observing and imaging the comet as it passes close to the Sun and begins to melt and form a tail. It has already sent many close up images of a misshapen mountain of ice about four kilometres across covered with craters, and over the period since it arrived, has tried to find a suitable site to drop a landing craft called Philae packed with instruments.

That did not go so well as Philae bounced off the comet in the low gravity, eventually returning to land in a different part of the comet which unfortunately is shaded from the Sun. This means the solar panels on Philae are out of action at least until about May next year when the comet will be a lot closer to the Sun.

The good news is that Philae carried a battery which gave it about 64 hours of power before it went flat. During that time Philae was able to complete most of the tasks assigned to it and transmit the results to Rosetta and thence to Earth some 600 million kilometres away.

It is anticipated from this probe we will learn a great deal more about the formation of the Solar System as comets comprise some of its original materials unchanged over billions of years. They may also be the primary source of water on our planet without which there would be no life here. They may even contain organic chemicals from which life may have emerged. We will also learn whether comets are dense and rocklike or loose and fragile – useful to know when attempting to deflect one on a collision course with Earth. Then there are always the unexpected discoveries made from an undertaking such as this.

Join our Monday afternoon Astronomy class meeting at the Community Village at 3:15pm. if you want to learn more and keep up with the latest news.

Win Howard Class Tutor.

Not a Great Start!

When Charles Kingsford-Smith and Charles Ulm set up an east coast domestic airline using the Southern Cross and five similar aircraft built under licence in Britain as the Avro ten, they called it Australian National Airways, not to be confused with the later ANA which was taken over by Reg Ansett in the 1960's).

Always looking for publicity, Kingsford-Smith arranged that on the first day, 1st Jan 1930, he would depart Sydney for Brisbane at the same time as Charles Ulm departed Brisbane for Sydney, so they would pass en-route, quite a novelty at the time. Most of the eight wicker chairs per aircraft were filled, at nine pounds thirteen shillings each. No cabin service, but they each got a daily paper and a map.

However, Ulm was not a pilot of the same calibre as Kingsford-Smith, and when he found a large cloud mass building up over the McPherson Range, he first tried to out-climb it, then finding himself in turbulent cloud and in danger of losing control, he decided to descend and try to find a way through underneath (never a great idea when you don't know exactly where you are). When he popped out, he was in a blind valley with cloud-covered hills all around. There was an isolated farm with a clearing of a couple of acres and he decided to land.

The press at the time were even more inclined to embellish a news item than at present, and they reported the unlikely story that a small girl rode her pony along a fence-line, waving a pillow-case to draw attention to the fence. In any case, Ulm did a good job of dropping the aircraft neatly over the trees to land safely, except that he didn't quite stop short of some stumps and there was some repairable damage.

The passengers continued their journey by car and train and a reporter said that they were "keen to fly again". Kingsford-Smith flew the aircraft out a fortnight later. The airline continued for a couple of years until the inevitable happened. The contrast with the safety record of modern Australian airlines could hardly be more dramatic, with tens of thousands of passengers safely transported each day. Safety is one of the subjects to be discussed in the "Flight" course for 2015.

Barry Kemp

Gourmet Walking Group.

This U3A activity is run by Lesley Davison and Rob Chapman, and will continue next year. Our walks are generally quite easy, covering 6 – 8 kilometres at a gentle pace. We normally stop for a tea break, and toilets, and at the conclusion of the walk the "Gourmet" comes into play where we go for a cheap and cheerful meal! This is a sociable group so why not join us in 2015 to discover new friends, and some beautiful new areas around Coffs that you might not know?

Shakespeare

PUBLISHED: 02:21 AEST, 26 November 2014 | **UPDATED:** 03:25 AEST, 26 November 2014

By **ELLIE ZOLFAGHARIFARD FOR MAILONLINE** and **AFP**

- **Shakespeare's First Folio found in France: Bard's 400-year-old book was overlooked on library shelf - and it's worth £3.5 million**
- **Found in St-Omer, the book is the first compilation of the Bard's plays**
- **Book is the 231st copy found in the world, and only the second in France**
- **Because it is in English, it is thought French readers overlooked it**
- **It is in good condition, but missing 30 pages, including the title page**
- **First folio is the only source for 18 of Bard's plays, including Macbeth**
- **Published seven years after Shakespeare's death, it originally sold for £1**

A rare and valuable copy of William Shakespeare's First Folio - the first-ever compilation of the Bard's plays - has been uncovered in a provincial library in France.

The 1623 book, which is one of the most coveted in the world, lay undiscovered among hundreds of others in St-Omer, near Calais, for some 400 years. Worth up to £3.5 million (\$5.5 million), it was discovered when librarian Remy Cordonnier dusted off a book of Shakespeare's works for an exhibition. 'It occurred to me that it could be an unidentified First Folio, with historic importance and great intellectual value,' Mr Cordonnier told AFP.

Shakespeare received comparatively little acclaim for his work up until his death in 1616 but, seven years later, two of his best friends, John Heminge and Henry Condell, produced a collection of 36 of his plays. Known as the First Folio, it was an authentic record of comedies, histories and tragedies, which originally sold for £1 (\$1.60).

It is believed that the copy found in France was taken to Saint-Omer by English refugees from Anglican persecution, said Mr Cordonnier. The book, a compilation of 36 of Shakespeare's plays, is in good condition but missing about 30 pages, including the title page, which could explain how it went unnoticed for centuries.

The copy of the book, which was published seven years after Shakespeare's death, was authenticated on Saturday by First Folio expert Eric Rasmussen from the University of Nevada.

Dr Rasmussen wrote a book on the First Folio called *The Shakespeare Thefts*, detailing his thrilling global hunt for what remains of the initial 750 copies of the book, a favourite for thieves across the centuries. He describes 'run-ins with heavily tattooed criminal street gangs in Tokyo, bizarre visits with eccentric, reclusive billionaires, and intense battles of wills with secretive librarians,' according to the publisher. Dr Rasmussen's book speaks of several First Folios, which have had pages ripped out of them, and one with a bullet lodged in it.

The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington said on its website that the First Folio is the only source for 18 of Shakespeare's plays, including *Macbeth*, 'which would otherwise be lost.'

It was designed, according to the editors, 'only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive, as was our Shakespeare'.

Helga Jones Coordinator

Seniors Week Art Exhibition

commencing March 13th 2015

University of the Third Age Art classes
join with
Bishop Druitt College Primary Students

To present an exhibition themed
"Social Issues through Artistic Expressions."

Venue

Bunker Cartoon Gallery Coffs Harbour.

This exhibition will be hosted by U3A members throughout Seniors Week and will then remain on display until early May.

General Information for U3A members entering art in this exhibition ;

Please contact Lesley 0140 083 502 with queries.

Entry Forms available from Lesley1943@bigpond

Entries need a short synopsis to be emailed to Bunker Gallery,
and "drop off" and pick up information will be available.

The Bunker Gallery does have some frames for loan

Entries may be for exhibition only or for sale.

Winners and Losers in the History of Civilization

A Guided Tour of Western Thought Straight and Crooked Thinking

A Trilogy? In Ancient Greece, a trilogy was a series of three tragedies performed one after the other. In *Winners and Losers* we spent most of the year looking at the fate of those down the bottom in any civilization – the ‘hewers of wood and the drawers of water’. Not a pretty picture. In *A Guided Tour*, we moved (very slowly) from the heights of classical Greek thought to the somewhat murky depths of late twentieth century philosophy. And in *Straight and Crooked Thinking* we finished the year by examining whether bastards are born or made. Either way, a disaster.

One bright light on the horizon, however, was the discovery that, in relation to those ‘down the bottom’, western civilization has seen a number of people who have stood up, spoken up, put their necks on the line, for the exploited, oppressed and despised. This led to a series on the *Heroes of the Common People*. The emphasis was on studying the lives of ‘heroes’ who have tended to be forgotten or pushed to the margins of history, particularly in their roles as defined above. The series included people like John Ball (radical cleric and ‘rap poet’ of the Peasants’ Revolt); Dick Whittington; John Bunyan; Leo Tolstoy; Clement Atlee; Leonardo Boff; among others. One of the ‘heroes’ we looked at was William Langland, otherwise known as Piers Plowman: (see next page). Stimulating contributions to the series were made by John Imrie (on Australian ‘heroes’) and Kevin Good (on Charles Dickens).

As all this was a bit heavy, we concluded the year with a brief overview of the history of terrorism.

Next year, in *Winners and Losers*, the aim is to conclude the study of the ‘moral imperatives of civilization’s main players’ by focusing on the lives, roles and impact of those peoples and groups who have acted as predators on respective civilizations: raiding and pillaging from their bases in the hills, in the deserts and across the sea. A common if misleading term for these groups is ‘barbarian’. As an introduction to this section, the slightly tongue-in-cheek assertion, ‘We are all barbarians!’ Alongside a study of barbarians and barbarianism will be a look at tribalism, ancient and modern. And, all being well, a short but riveting history of China.

A Guided Tour of Western Thought in 2015 will focus on twentieth and twenty-first century thinkers, including those who have made an impact outside the boundaries of conventional, academic philosophy. The idea is to relate what these thinkers have to say to the basic perspectives and principles of western thought as previously studied. New members to this class are welcome and should have no difficulty picking up the loose threads.

Straight and Crooked Thinking will be in recess for the first half of 2015. If and when it resumes (same time and place) it will continue to examine contemporary issues in the light of what euphemistically gets called ‘clear thinking’, as well as exercise the grey cells with the odd, sometimes very odd, intellectual conundrum. The focus next time will be on the strategies and tactics of the ‘crook’ thinker. I think!

Heroes of the Common People ...

William Langland

1332-1386 (approx): presumed author of *Piers Plowman*

William Langland was the first *peoples’ poet* writing in English. Previous poets, and contemporary writers like Chaucer, were writing for the upper or middle classes – they were court bards. King Alfred had written for everybody, in a sense, but from the top down. Also, he had written in Latin and Anglo Saxon and at a time

when the ‘common folk’ were not such a distinct, oppressed class. Langland, on the other hand, was one of the ‘common folk’; educated to join the Church and either didn’t quite make it or was disillusioned by the prospect. His main criticisms are of the Church and of Church ‘dignitaries’. His voice is best heard through his poetry. He describes a world that is set between heaven and hell:

A fair feeld ful of folk fond I ther bitwene
Of alle manere of men, the meene and the riche,
Werchyng and wandryng as the world asketh.

The ‘werchyng’ of the common folk involved hard labour – digging, hedging, ploughing, sowing, reaping, repairing, etc, in all weathers and under all conditions. The ‘werchyng’ of the well-to-do people, however, involved either parading in their best clothes or oppressing the poor. The worst oppressors, according to Langland, are clerics or one kind or another because they have been entrusted with Christ’s vision for mankind, a vision based on compassion and hope.

Langland, unlike John Ball, his contemporary, is not calling for revolution. He is what might be called a conservative communist. He is calling for reformation – the reformation of the ‘manners’ and moral imperatives of the rich and the powerful. He is the fourteenth century equivalent of Charles Dickens. He is asking those ‘on top’ to examine their consciences, if they have one. What they lack in conscience, he makes up for.

As a common man, the voice of the common people, Langland writes in common English. It is almost entirely Germanic and much broader, fuller and rounder than the educated, middle class English of Chaucer. It reflects the working class preoccupation with rhyme, alliteration and rhythm – the bush ballad as opposed to the Renaissance sonnet. He repeats himself incessantly, as do many popular forms of poetry and song. It has parallels to Hebrew poetry where repetition is common.

Langland writes from his heart: heavy, languorous, stricken with existential angst. Like the milkman in *Fiddler on the Roof*, he has a deep-rooted faith in the moral order and fitness of the universe and yet rails against the injustice of the way things have turned out. He is in the tradition of those who ended up as the working class authors of the twentieth century: angry young men, like Osborne; sons of coal miners, like Lawrence; Welsh drinkers, like Dylan Thomas; ordinary blokes with ordinary names, like Alan Sillitoe. That he has been very largely relegated to Medieval literary studies is what he might have called, ‘a crying shame’ – that, after all, is what he was doing. At the time, however, he was very much the ‘voice of the people’ and remained an inspiration as such for several centuries.

Robert Walden

[Flight 2015](#)

A wide variety of aeronautical subjects, like how does a 500 tonne vehicle get airborne, why do airliners have bent wingtips, which part of a helicopter flies backwards at all times and why did the first jet engines only last for 20 hours?

Barry Kemp

2015 Geology Course

Many people take a keen interest in natural history and will enthusiastically seek out rare birds and interesting vegetation but will give the rocks over which they are scrambling just a cursory glance. Perhaps this is because they think that the rocks all look the same or because they feel the rocks could not possibly be of interest. If you feel this way then this course is for you. The aim of the course is to help participants to recognise different types of rocks and other geological structures and to understand the story that the rocks and landscape reveal about the distant past.

Initially we will review the way rocks are classified and learn how to recognise the main types and what they tell us about the world in which they formed. As we become familiar with the various rock types and other readily observed features, we will look at the geology of our region and its geological history. Ultimately we will learn how the local geology fits in with the Australian continent and also gain a world-wide perspective. In doing so we will be considering ancient supercontinents, extinctions of organisms, plate tectonics and major volcanic eruptions. Emphasis will be on the evidence that supports such grand events.

As part of the course we are likely to have some easily accessible excursions to examine local rocks.

I would encourage you to consider joining us for this course which in 2015 will run over 6 weeks.

Rod Nazer

Movie Appreciation group

U3A's Movie Appreciation group continues to flourish and we have for the past year enjoyed the comfort offered to us by Birch Carroll in their coffee lounge at Bray Street every alternate Tuesday from 2pm. Birch Carroll very generously turn the machines off while we are there and if it is school holiday time they provide us with a quiet room upstairs which is much appreciated.

As we people of a certain age continue to travel, we currently have a core group including myself who float in and out throughout the year. It is nice to have a course where we enjoy the time we are there but without affecting in anyway those who for any reason are absent.

The fairly loose discussion is guided by myself using a format supplied some years ago by a Sydney U3A movie goer friend and which seems to work well.

In 2015 we will commence again on Tuesday 10th February back at Bray Street with the first movie for discussion to be advised to all movie goer members. We will discuss this movie on 10th February, give it a score and then democratically? choose the next movie to view.

I look forward to welcoming back all the old faces as well as lots of new faces.

Jill deClercq

Some Changes Ahead

The 2015 Membership Application Form & Enrolment Day

The form now caters for one or two people living at the one address.

Each person may include his or her own email address.

Bank details are listed for an alternative way of paying fees.

Please note, when sending membership fees by post or by paying into the bank ***please do so at least three (3) working days before Enrolment Day*** so we have your details added to our database otherwise we cannot enrol you.

When paying into the bank, make sure you advise the bank of the surname to which the money is attached and then **post your Membership Application Form that same day**. If there are two different surnames on the form please use Applicant No. 1's, as you would have banked \$100. This will make the Treasurer's life a little easier.

If you are intending to pay early please do not get concerned if you do not receive your U3A badge, as they will be posted around the last week of December or the first week of January in plenty of time for Enrolment Day.

On Enrolment Day members with a 2015 badge will be the **ONLY** ones to enter the Cavanbah Centre Hall to enrol. All others who have **NOT** paid their fees by that date will have to proceed to **Room B** at the back of the Centre to hand in the forms and join the queue to pay their fees. It does make it easier for all concerned if you pay your fees on FEE PAYING DAY or before Enrolment Day.

Ruth Baker & Ray Wilson
On behalf of the Management Committee