

# Coffs Harbour Newsletter



September 2019

## Understanding Poetry

When participants in "Understanding Poetry" turn up each week, they never know what to expect. They know copies of two or three poems will be handed around and read aloud. But they never know whether they'll be by an English poet of the sixteenth century, (possibly Shakespeare) or an Australian poet of the twentieth century (maybe Les Murray).

They don't know if it will be something they seem to recall studying in school (like "Dover Beach"), or it might be paired with something they probably didn't (like "The Dover Bitch"). But they do know, they'll be worth talking about. And so they do. So come and join the conversation, it will be an enjoyable learning experience and you may find you read poetry, with new insight.

Anyone who would like to join this very active group of learners, is invited to sit in on a class to see if it is for you.

Classes are held on Wednesdays at 10:00 - 11:30 at the Naomi England Lodge, Curacoa Street, Coffs Harbour  
**Enquiries**, please contact facilitator David Boyd on 0403 679 854

## DID YOU KNOW

The poet mentioned by David (above) Leslie Allan Murray was born in 1938 in Nabic, just down the road from Coffs and spent his childhood and youth on his father's dairy farm nearby. The area is sparsely populated, hilly, and forested, and the beauty of this rural landscape forms a backdrop to many of Murray's best poems, such as 'Spring Hail'.

His parents were poor and their weatherboard house almost bare of comforts. Murray remarked that it was not until he went to university that he first met the 'middle class'. His identification was with the underprivileged, especially the rural poor, and it was this, that gave him his strong sense of unity with Aborigines and with 'common folk'.

He is widely recognized as the outstanding poet of his generation in Australia, and he has been the recipient of numerous awards and prizes.

Until 1988, he lived chiefly in Sydney; from that year on he made his home on a small farm just a few miles from where he spent his boyhood. His volume of poems, "The Idyll Wheel", reflects his sense of joyful renewal at this return to his rural roots.

Leslie Murray died this year on 29 April, aged 80,. He had been in a nursing home in Taree. He is survived by his wife and 5 children. He himself was an only child.

## QUIZ

- 1 Which actor is best known for his role as Patrick Jane in the hit series The Mentalist?
- 2 Born in Townsville, Queensland, which Australian was the founder of WikiLeaks?
- 3 In which year did the Redex trials begin?
- 4 On which Australian decimal banknote was the portrait of Henry Lawson?
- 5 What was a 'deener'?



## U3A Scrabble Class

News from U3A, Senior Citizens Renascent Alert Baby Boomers Lexicography Exemplified... that is scrabble.

Several of our players use OXYPHENBUTAZONE (1458) as it's WHIZBANG (76) for BURSITIS (only 64 with B on a triple). However it's QUIXOTRY (77) and would require SYZYG (42 double word, needs a blank) to get it out of the handbag and onto the board.

One JEZEBEL (75) doses on OXAZEPAM (106 triple Z and M) to QUELL (45 triple word) her ANXIETY (91 triple X and Y) in an attempt to MAXIMISE (126 double double word) her scores and shows CHUTZPAH (77) when we QUIZZIFY (92 blank and double word).

Last week one player got ECZEMA, DIARRHEA and HEMORRHOIDS. It was the first time he ever won a game of Scrabble.

Enough FRIVOLITY (68) !! We learn a lot of words @ scrabble. Our group uses more 4 letter words than respectable seniors should know. With ZEAL we vie for the highest score. We strive to keep our brain cells in working order but resort to our dictionaries, thesauri and cheat sheets of 2, 3 and 4 letter words when all else fails.

Only those who dabble in scrabble with U3A understand..."I don't know what it means, but it's on the list"; "I was going there!" ; "Bingo"; "Where's my cheat sheet?" and "It does not get many points but it's opening up the board for you!!"

Scrabble, it's all fun and games until someone loses an i. Scrabble Babble join the rabble for some fun and the odd pun.

Join us on Tuesdays at 2 to 4pm in the rooms behind the Uniting Church. New members are welcome. Please feel free to sit in on a session to see if it's to your liking. For further information contact Anna on 66528521.



Some of the Scrabble Class at the Christmas Trivia '18



Heather Welsh and Pat Johns cutting their surprise Birthday Cake during the Mahjong class

Heather and Pat were treated by their class mates with a cake and a rendition of "Happy Birthday" during the tea break.

These ladies are Senior Members of the class, attend regularly and have been playing in the U3A Mahjong class since it's inception.

### Thank You John

The recent Annual General Meeting, saw a long term committee member, hang up his hat. John Clingan has been a committee member for thirteen years, initially as the Course Coordinator and for the last three years, as President. All U3A members sincerely thank John for his commitment and a job well done.

### Changes in Committee Members

Following our Annual General Meeting on 30 August, your committee welcomes incoming committee members, Joyce Lillyin as President and Karen Boyd as committee member. Thanks to retiring members Di Chapman and Karl Robertson for their contribution.

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### Answers to Quiz

1 Simon Baker 2 Julian Assange 3 1953 4 Paper \$10 note 5 one shilling

## GUATEMALA

I visited this country earlier in the year, and found it to be full of history and certainly a joy for those interested in nature.

The Republic of Guatemala is a country in Central America It has a population of 16.6 million and is now a representative democracy .

Guatemala once formed the core of the Mayan civilisation which extended across Mesoamerica. Most of the country was conquered by the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but gained independence in 1821. During the Spanish occupation the Maya were forced to abandon their customs but its clear that they cleverly adapted and went underground to preserve their lives and social structures.

Many very interesting adaptations are now seen in daily religious practices. Catholic churches are still used for services but all seats have been removed. The floors are covered in pine needles and a range of saints and gods are worshipped , with medicine men and women using the churches as healing centres. Wedding ceremonies are not held in the church but christenings are. Firecrackers are regularly let off to ward away evil. Influential local families compete to manage and oversee the religious calendar for the coming year.

Guatemala experienced a civil from 1960 to 1996 between US backed government militia and leftist rebels. This war left the country in a very fragile economic and social state from which it is still recovering to this day, with poverty, lack of education and health services and a high crime rate.

Given all this, it is a wonderful country to visit and the people are kind and happy to welcome visitors. The accommodation was of a high standard with big double rooms, comfortable beds and very obliging staff (compared to some of the shoe boxes called bedrooms in Europe). Corn is a staple food and is presented in many ways, very similar to Mexican food, lots of chilli and chicken.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Howler monkeys high up in the trees sounding like jaguars roaring.

Spider monkeys swinging across roads, pulling down branches as bridges for the family to cross.

Toucans and their wonderful colours, as well as red and blue Macaws...very loud and social.

The Cenote or underground cave systems culminating in wonderful sink holes, housing much bird life.

Volcanos, both active and passive, some smoking and very active.

The Mayan ruins, The Iguanas, the Storks and Crocodiles .....a trip out of the ordinary.

Lesley Meredith



**Tikal ruins, built circa 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, UNESCO listed**



**Lake Atitlan and volcanoes, the deepest lake in Central America formed 84,000 years ago**

Fellow members, this is our newsletter, your participation is sought. Please forward your contributions to: [info@coffs.u3a.net.au](mailto:info@coffs.u3a.net.au) ie special birthdays, marriages, wedding anniversaries, jokes, stories, special travel destinations, a limit of 400 words due to space restrictions. Thank you, Karen Baff, Editor