



## Class News

### Line Dancing Class

Our Line Dancing class has been a constant and successful part of U3A Ringwood for many years. When Jackie Green decided that she could no longer commit to leading the class, we were fortunate that Ruth Wilson (Course Coordinator) persuaded Thelma Hughes who was then a Line Dancing class leader at U3A Croydon and active member of the Victorian Line Dancing Association (VLDA) to make time in her busy line dancing schedule to lead our class.

It is sad for me to report that Thelma passed away suddenly in early February, which came as a great shock to all, as she was so active and vibrant and had made many friends in her short time with U3A Ringwood. None of our Line Dancing class members has been able to assume the leader role so we have canvassed other U3As and the Victorian Line Dancing Association

(VLDA), but have not as yet been able to find a new Class Leader.

The VLDA has been very helpful but their Class Leaders who live in the Ringwood area unfortunately already have line dancing commitments on Wednesday mornings.

We have contacted all Line Dancing class members to advise them of the situation and canvass whether they would be able to attend the class if it was rescheduled to a day other than a Wednesday. Following this, we have also re-approached the VLDA to establish whether one of their members would be prepared to lead our class on a day other than Wednesday morning.

Ruth Wilson is also following up other avenues to find a new Class Leader including the possibility of holding the class fortnightly etc. in an effort to keep this class going.

We are working to determine the future of our Line Dancing class before the commencement of Term 2.

### Julie awaits you!

Julie Wakeham wants to hear from members interested in travelling down the path of Mythology Adventures. She needs the class to be a minimum of eight members to justify all the hard work of preparation she does.

Julie will guide you in the exploration of myths – their meaning and nature, the sacred places of the major and lesser Greek Gods. Other aspects that Julie will share is that of mythical creatures and substances. If your interest is piqued – please leave your name and contact details at the office.

### Are you a budding playwright or would like to try?

Either way, award-winning playwright Joe Fairhurst invites enthusiastic writers to join him in composing a stage play to be performed at year's end in a rehearsed reading. The exercise will not only prove stimulating but immensely satisfying.

If this is your passion or interest, please leave your name and contact details at the office.



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## **Let's Do – Next Outing**

The next outing of Let's Do is on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April with a visit to the Arts Centre which includes a tour and morning tea, starting at 11 am. The cost of the tour is \$20. Please let Carol ([ckmavin@bigpond.com](mailto:ckmavin@bigpond.com)) or Lynn (email [just-lynn@tpg.com.au](mailto:just-lynn@tpg.com.au)) know by 3<sup>rd</sup> April if you are coming.

You will need to phone 1300182183 or 92818000 to book your own ticket and pay for it over the phone.

The meeting place is at the Welcome Desk – just inside the main doors of the building with the Spire.

## **Annual General Meeting**

U3A Ringwood AGM will be held on Tuesday 8 May, 2018 at 1.00 pm at Kevin Pratt Pavilion, Norwood Sporting Club. By having our meeting in the afternoon, there is less disruption to classes than if we stay with the morning timeframe. Following the meeting there will be afternoon tea and time for a chat with your fellow members.

## **Membership Badges**

Starting 2018 we have two types of membership badges:

- A yellow membership badge. This badge is no longer replaced each year when you renew your membership. Please keep it safe and wear it to all U3A classes and events. Please also keep the medical information current on the rear of your badge.
- A green temporary badge for new members. This badge is provided with a lanyard and badge holder. It is given to new members when they pay their fees at our PCH office. New members get their yellow badge once it is available for collection at the PCH office.

When you see a green badge be sure to make the wearer feel welcomed!

## **Getting to Know Your Class**

### **Leaders**

In this issue we features articles on the following leaders :

- Jeannette Bridgeman – Exercise to Music
- Tom Fouracre – Afternoon Table Tennis
- Patrick Bishop – Folk Music
- Viki Wright-Rivett – Adventures at the end of a pen

### **Jeannette Bridgeman**

Here is another leader who thinks she is boring – no way –the more of the story the more interesting it gets.

Jeannette grew up in Camberwell then moved to McKinnon/Ormond area. She went to secondary school at Star of the Sea in Gardenvale and from there to Frankston Teachers College.

Her first teaching appointment was at Tarwin Lower Primary School in Gippsland which was a two teacher school where she taught grades Prep, one and two the other teacher covering grades three to six. It was at the nearby town of Middle Tarwin where she met her husband, also a teacher. The next move was to Maffra and after they were married they moved to Benambra near Omeo. This was again a two teacher school where they were Infant Mistress and Head respectively. Jeannette and her husband both loved the country and another move then was to Lethbridge, outside of Geelong and finally to Warrandyte where they reared their four children. Jeannette stayed there until after the 2009 bushfires and Warrandyte being a bushfire prone area, prompted the

move to Croydon.

Jeannette has a love of reading and has belonged to the Warrandyte Book Club for 42 years. She loves gardening but calls herself a “fair weather gardener”, as lots of us say. Like many of us she also loves to travel.

Upon retirement she started learning a language, calling French her retirement project. Another of her achievements is the creation of the most stunningly beautiful leadlight work. Get her to show you some of her photos – they are just gorgeous!

Apart from being a co-leader with Helen Garbutt of our Exercise to Music class, Jeannette also attends other U3A classes of French, Book Club, Let's Do, Film Appreciation and A Taste of Life where her interest here stems from the fact that her son and daughter-in-law are wine makers in the Yarra Valley under the labels of “Levantine Hill Estate” and “Bird on a Wire”.

Jeannette joined U3A Ringwood in 2009. She has always been interested in modern dancing (none of this ballroom dancing she says). Her love of dance and exercise extends to Tap Dancing with the group doing three concerts at the end of each year. She likes to have a strong beat to the music for their class, but definitely popular music, which she downloads to CD using 7-8 numbers per session. This gets members using brain and body co-ordination. Between Helen and Jeannette they make the class a fun and fitness essential for our third stage of life.

### **Tom Fouracre**

This leader helped in the air ground search for the late Prime Minister, Harold Holt and received commendations from Melbourne

Airport Manager for his efforts – keep reading to find out more!

Tom's education started at Essendon Technical School and upon leaving there he trained for 9 months to become a telegraphist with the Post Master General's Department. His work in the Chief Telegraph Office in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne involved transmission and receipt of telegrams via morse code and teleprinter operation. Tom still remembers morse code today – one of the things you never forget.

At that time there were 3,000 telegraphists working in Melbourne CTO and he was transferred to Sydney for a period in the same role. This was definitely before the digital age!

Later he joined the RAAF for 3 years as a telegraphist and did training at the RAAF Ballarat Radio School and was then transferred to the Radio Base in Perth. Tom was involved in intercept communications from Indonesia. At that time, in 1955 there was worry about Indonesia's intentions towards Australia. The Base was top secret. Later the Australian Government admitted that intercept communications were taking place.

A slight change of pace (or maybe not), and Tom decided to join the Victoria Police Force where he stayed for 7 years. After rookie training at the Police Barracks in St. Kilda Road, he did general police work and then was employed in the radio communications area at D24. His main reason for joining the Force was to work in the communications area where they required experienced communications officers and he was certainly that.

Tom decided to reply to an advertisement for Flight Service Officers

with the Department of Civil Aviation, and was subsequently employed there for 6 years. Flight Service Officers did flight briefing, fixed ground communications and air ground communications, mainly for aircraft outside controlled air space. Here, Tom worked on military aircraft at high altitude and smaller commercial planes. Also, most private aircraft were covered by Flight Service air ground operations.

Our experienced communications man finished his working career with Ansett Airlines and was there for 20 years until retirement. His job title was Network Control Supervisor in charge of a group of operators. Tom was one of five communication specialists employed to institute Ansett's real time communications reservations system. The work involved main frame computer operations, and help desk duties, fault finding and comprehensive system monitoring. From his start at Ansett in 1969 until retiring in 1989 there was massive progress in communications. In the morse code days, he would never have envisaged something like the internet.

After retiring, Tom assisted two of his sons with their fencing business of commercial, pools and temporary fencing whereby he became the truck driver for them.

After complete retirement from all this, Tom now plays golf twice a week. He and his wife have completed 23 cruises to many parts of the world plus other travel. Tom enjoys movies, local travel, Family gatherings with children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and has lived in Ringwood North for 28 years.

As to U3A, Tom is leader of the Friday afternoon table tennis group. In the two hour time slot members often manage several games between them, but a large part of the class is the very necessary social in-

teraction. Tom's other U3A class which he greatly enjoys is The Sciences.

## **Patrick Bishop**

Here's an Irishman who just loves Australia and all things Australian.

Patrick was born in Bray County Wicklow, twelve miles south of Dublin. He was one of seven and all kinds of songs and music was part of every day. His father was the last of five generations of hand crafted shoes and had his own small workshop. The advent of mass production reduced that to mainly shoe repairing by the late fifties so there are no shoe makers in his generation. Patrick started learning to play guitar when he was twelve and played with various amateur groups and it was all great fun. There were lots of bands and live music was on everywhere so it was easy to get somewhere to play but as now, earning money from it was difficult so they never took it too seriously. You had to be very good to make the big time back then.

Patrick became an apprentice sheet metal worker at sixteen and that took five years. He and his wife immigrated to Australia with an eight month old daughter in 1972 and since he had learned about Australia in school Patrick had always wanted to visit.

For the first five years in Australia he worked in air conditioning and dust and fumes extraction for timber mills and other industries and then started a steel fabrication business with his brother-in-law and brother. Patrick sold out of that when his first marriage ended but continued to work for the company for the next thirty years as factory supervisor.

Patrick was a single parent for several years but was lucky to have family here who helped him, especially his older sister as his daughter attended

the same school as hers. This meant he could work full time and Patrick will always appreciate the help he got during that time.

Patrick got to play guitar with his brother and nephews at family and friends gatherings and when he joined U3A after he retired he played and sang with Terry Stafford's class and Helen Wilby played piano. That was great fun but unfortunately was discontinued when Helen left.

He also joined the Creative Writing class and really enjoyed writing for four years and attended Art Appreciation when he wanted a change. Patrick decided to challenge himself this year by joining Vicky Torresan's Italian for Beginners class which he is enjoying immensely.

When Terry's class finished Patrick started the Folk Music class to get people interested in Australian Folk Songs as he thinks they are great fun and describe early life in Australia very well. They are not heard much here in the media so are not very familiar to most people. The class actually sing songs from all genres and are not confined to Folk Music. They enjoy pop songs from the sixties, the Beatles, some Irish, Scottish and English and even some popular music from the fifties.

Patrick is a keen gardener and he and Kathie like to grow as much of their own produce as they can. Kathie preserves, bottles and makes jam from the fruit they grow. He is an avid reader of mainly non-fiction and anthropology is a particular interest of his especially Australian Aboriginal culture which he finds fascinating and not at all like some of the early descriptions that were written, misleadingly in some cases. Patrick says all Australians should be proud of Aboriginal Heritage as it

is unique in this world.

### **Viki Wright-Rivett**

This leader's story is fascinating - no - make that incredibly fascinating and brave. All her life her name has been chronically misspelt – a spelling mistake when her father registered her birth.

Viki was born in South Africa to an Afrikaner father and an English mother, at that time a divide close to impossible to bridge. Her father was a frequently-transferred journalist, which meant the family moved from town to town, the four children went from school to school. After attending no less than 10 different schools, and at age 16, feeling herself to be stupid, Viki dropped out and informally began a life of self-education. Eventually this led to careers in mainstream media, editorship, authorship, university lecturing, college administration and adult education.

In her mid-20s she fell in love with a charismatic but self-destructive man, despite being warned. He lost two companies to bankruptcy, slipped away to Australia, and then urged her to bring the four children and follow him. It was a terribly hard decision but she came, in March 1973. Three months later he vanished.

Viki's first job in journalism was as editor of Cleo magazine after Ita Buttrose moved to edit The Australian Womens Weekly. She had to send her two youngest children back to South Africa because of lack of child-care in what turned out to be a 12-hour a day job, but this was an unsustainable situation and so after six months she resigned and got her children back. Then Viki joined a (now defunct) Fairfax newspaper as a feature writer. Later, head-hunted by News Limited, she became a senior feature writer on The Weekend

Australian. When her youngest child was in her last year of school Viki was able to give up full-time employment, write a novel, and become a freelance journalist, manuscript assessor and magazine editor. She also became a university student, earning a diploma in adult education, followed by the first of two Masters Degrees.

In 1992 she met Howard Rivett, a doctor and also a "sole-grandparent", and they had a short happy marriage. During this time she started a Writing College in The Blue Mountains in NSW, teaching fiction, non-fiction, play-writing, poetry and whatever else the learners wished to try their pens at. There is a shelf in her house of books by some of her stars. Howard had heart problems and she was his driver and semi-carer as he became increasingly frail, but refused to retire. He died in 2007.

Viki wrote the first draft of another novel, and then began to be ill herself – seriously enough for her Melbourne-based daughter to urge her to move here. She did so in October 2014, believing herself to be on the way out, and miraculously found a specialist who was able to restore her health. This has allowed her to return to her main loves – adult education and writing. "Adventures at the end of a Pen" at U3A combines these loves.

She is working on another draft of the current novel and has also begun a memoir. Viki has twelve grandchildren, six great grandchildren, a very happy family full of interesting people, and has never stopped being grateful to the wicked man who lured her here.

### **Next Term Dates**

Term 2 is from Monday 16 April to Friday 29 June.