



Meaning and Origins of the University of the Third Age – (U3A)

There are currently 107 U3As in Victoria with 39,000 members and about 300 U3As in Australia with about 100,000 members and more than 3,000 U3As throughout the world.

Extracts from The U3A Network-Victoria Incorporated Reference Handbook

Why “Third Age”?

The complete experience of life can be more simply divided into three stages. The First Age is that of childhood and youthful dependence, leading to the Second Age of Independence, maturity, work and home building. Next comes the Third Age, the age of active retirement.

Why “University”?

The first University of the Third Age began at Toulouse University in France in 1972. In our context the term “University” is being used in its

original sense, to describe ‘a whole body of teachers and scholars engagedin giving and receiving instruction...’

This sharing of knowledge differs from today’s more recognised use, implying high admission standards, examinations and formal qualifications.

While we are a community of scholars, U3As have no entry requirements and no assessments. Instead it is a time of creativity and learning for older people. In this environment, learning is an end in itself; individuals learn what they like, at the pace they prefer. U3As have been recognized by UNESCO and UN and they can be found in approximately 30 countries around the world.

A Brief History of Universities of the Third Age

Most international movements have small beginnings: this one was started by a summer school, held at the University of Toulouse in 1972. Organised by Pierre Vellas, professor of Political Economy, it offered to retired persons, a program of lectures, concerts, guided tours and other cultural activities, making use of lecture halls and classrooms not in use at that time

of the year.

‘Like all actors in human history, and the more so all pioneers and innovators, Vellas “did not know what he was doing”. When after a few weeks the program came to an end, such was the determination and enthusiasm of its participants that, instead of preparing a repeat for the next summer, Vellas was forced to launch a program for the forthcoming academic year, to find rooms, lecturers and tutors... In no time similar undertakings mushroomed in France and abroad...’

Origins in Victoria

The Australian initiative came from a group of four people, working professionally in either adult education or organisations concerned with the welfare of the aged, who met and discovered that they had each developed an interest in the U3A concept and had been following its growth, both through international literature and occasional contacts at overseas conferences. They decided to see if the idea would successfully transplant to the Australian environment. A public meeting was held in July 1984. That was sufficiently encouraging for the first Aus-



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tralian U3A to be established, with support from the Council of Adult Education, which found space for this City of Melbourne U3A in its Flinders Street headquarters.

The second public meeting, in November of the same year at Hawthorn, attracted an overflow audience of about 250; U3A Hawthorn was duly launched. The third, at Monash University in February 1985, was even larger. A 350-seat lecture theatre was packed and, with the support of the Vice-Chancellor, the University's Centre for Continuing Education helped U3A Monash to get under way. Groups at Ringwood and Frankston soon followed in 1985

Lockdown Baking

Since it has been reported that we are all baking more in lockdown (and snacking too) it seems timely to share a few recipes from our female committee members – but possibly we could give our Vice President a bowl and a spoon (*let's face it, he admits he can't even make toast, ha, ha*) and Heather could tip in the ingredients and Alastair could stir them and then he can say "*he has made a cake*". Recipes from male committee members in the next issue.

Chocolate Fruit & Nut Pate – from Jeanette

Ingredients:

- 25g Margarine or Butter
- ½ cup Condensed Milk
- 300g Dark Cooking Chocolate, chopped
- 2 teaspoons Orange Liqueur
- ¼ cup each of Toasted Hazelnuts, Macadamia & Pecan Nuts

- 2-3 tablespoons Toasted Flaked Almonds
- 4 Glace Apricots Chopped
- 2 Glace Figs Chopped

Method: Combine margarine, condensed milk, chocolate and liqueur in saucepan and stir over low heat until chocolate has melted and mixture is smooth – transfer to a bowl. Add nuts and fruits to chocolate mixture, stirring to combine. Spoon into lined loaf tin and smooth surface. Refrigerate two hours or until firm. Cut into thin slices to serve. Freezes well.

Sesame Seed Slice – from Diane

Ingredients:

- 125g Butter
- ½ cup Sugar
- ¼ Honey

Melt all together in a large saucepan, then add –

- ½ cup Sesame Seeds
- ½ cup Desiccated Coconut
- ½ cup Raw Peanuts
- 2 cups Oats

Press into greased 28cm x 18cm tin and bake at 180 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Cut in the tin before cooling.

Savoury Bread – from Lynn

Ingredients:

- 8 slices of Sandwich Bread
- 2 rashers of Chopped Bacon
- Small onion – finely diced
- 2 Eggs
- 1 cup of Grated Tasty Cheese
- Salt & Pepper
- Cayenne Pepper to your own taste.

Method:

Cut the crusts off the bread, butter liberally. Cut the bread in half and place buttered side up on a shallow oven tray. Butt the bread together for ease of spreading the topping. Mix bacon, onion, eggs, cheese, salt and pepper and cayenne pepper together. Spread over the buttered bread and bake in quite a hot oven (200 degrees) until topping is cooked, about 15-20 minutes. Serve immediately. Quantities can vary according to your own taste.

Malted Milk Biscuits – from Heather

Ingredients:

- 115 g Butter or Margarine
- ¾ cup Caster Sugar
- 1 Egg
- 2 cups Plain Flour
- ½ teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda
- 4 tablespoons Malted Milk Powder
- 100 g Chopped Glace Cherries

Method:

Cream butter and sugar, add beaten egg and beat until soft and fluffy. Sift flour, soda and malted milk together. Fold through butter mixture. Add glace cherries. Roll into small balls and place on tray lined with baking paper. Flatten with the base of a glass and bake in a moderate oven for 12 minutes. If desired an almond can be placed in the centre of the biscuit before baking.

Cinque Recipe – from Kathie

An easy 5 (cinque) ingredient recipe for lockdown:

- Peruse the takeaway menu
- Pick up the phone and place an order
- Get in the car and drive to Cinques restaurant
- Collect and pay for meal
- Bring it home and serve delicious meal.

Kitchen stays clean and minimal washing up

Australian History Memoirs

Former Tutors Rene Day & Ken Yelland have put together a Program Summary from 2003 to 2018 of our Australian History Class of that period.

Extracted from this information are some interesting excursions members have enjoyed. Of the total 92 excursions, one has been listed for each of these years.

- October 2004 - Twilight cruise – Tramboat on the Yarra ‘Docklands & Williamstown’
- July 2005 - Ripponlea
- May 2006 - The Immigration Museum – Flinders Street
- May 2007 – Heide Museum of Modern Art
- September 2008 – National Gallery of Victoria Exhibition – ‘Art Deco’
- April 2009 – Mont de Lancey Homestead, Wandin
- February 2010 - City Museum ‘The Toy Box’ Exhibition and Victoria Barracks
- March 2011 – The Polly Woodside
- September 2012 – Public Records Office of Victoria - Victorian Archives Centre
- October 2013 – Old Melbourne Cemetery
- September 2014 – Old Melbourne Goal – Guided Tour
- June 2015 – The Melbourne

Cricket Ground

- March 2016 – Mulberry Hill – ‘Picnic at Hanging Rock’ Exhibition
- October 2017 – Treasury Building Exhibition – ‘Melbourne 1860s & 1870s’
- October 2018 – Jewish Museum of Australia

Remember When

Early memories of U3A Ringwood and how it is possibly different from today in this our 35th year. Some of our long-time members share their memories.

From Bep Wolfers – Foundation Member

Cliff Picton, our Patron, on a visit to France in 1983, learned about U3A and brought the idea home with him. Then, Ringwood Council called a meeting in March 1984. Our first classes were held in the Council building and shortly thereafter at the North Ringwood Senior Citizens building.

Our U3A was allocated use of the building on weekday mornings until 12 noon. Tutors and workers are hard to find but we were lucky. Gwen Horman led the Armchair Travel Class for many years. Neil Howard and his lovely wife Josie looked after the Christmas Party in their garden. Neil also took over the newsletters when Lola Fogarty left. Cyril Handoll, over many years, looked after Photography and provided the Armchair Travel Class with many interesting sessions. George Lucas made his house available for Hydroponics, a novel gardening idea. Francis Holmes gave Art Lessons and later branched out in the Sciences, on top of that he was the Property Officer.

Dot Ward and I started a Bush Walking class in combination with our new U3A friends at the Peninsula. Dot also introduced the new popular

line dancing activity and when she left to start up the new U3A Croydon, I took over Line Dancing and for a while helped to set up Tai Chi at Croydon. At our U3A Hazel Kempton (and later Val Budds) and I introduced Tai Chi followed by Shi-Ba-Shi. Toni Driessen, my colleague at Croydon High School, introduced Japanese and until recently held his class in the Annexe, a place used by the Marching Girls who left it in a dirty state. Some of our good members used a lot of elbow grease to make the place acceptable. One of my favourite classes, Secret Societies, was given by an excellent academic who left as he could not run a class where members would disappear for holidays at different times.

When Hans, (my husband) retired, U3A gained a handyman: a large easel for the Armchair Travel Class; a safe cabinet in the Boardroom for the Music Class; a large cupboard for our first computer and copier; dark curtains in the Craft Room and a support for George’s projector; a short class for lonely ladies struggling with leaking taps; hose attachments, different light bulbs, wall hangings, etc.

I miss my handyman, I miss my U3A and hope that things will be more normal soon.

From Val Baxter:

U3A Ringwood commenced in 1985, one of the earliest U3As in the area. They shared the accommodation provided by the Council for the Ringwood Senior Citizens in Warrandyte Road, Ringwood, with U3A having use of the premises up until 12 noon each day, the Senior Citizens used it between 12 noon and 4 pm, and after that it was used by EPR (Early Planning for Retirement).

We moved to Croydon North in 1988, so we must have joined some time in the 1990s. We enjoyed classes in Spanish, Art Appreciation and Armchair Travel. Armchair Travel was run

by Gwen Horman, probably from its inception. In her 80s and 90s she always welcomed and thanked the guest speaker for presenting their travel photos to the group. After she died, Jennie Harvie and Ruth Seferth took over. A long-standing class was Speechcraft, run by Natasha Timms for many years. There was also a Singing Group.

As many of the members of U3A Ringwood came from Croydon, in 1992, Dot Ward, President of U3A Ringwood, decided to start a U3A group in Croydon. When U3A's classes outgrew the space available, the Marching Girls' Annexe near the oval was offered to Ringwood for use as extra classrooms.

When at Croydon, Dot Ward set up "Dot's Rambles", and was happy for Ringwood members to come along. They visited historic homes, galleries, boat trips on the Yarra River, and many more.

One incident I remember was in the Armchair Travel class. The Senior Citizens, for a reason known only to themselves, pulled down the curtains in the large area where Armchair Travel was held. As the class held slide shows of members' or guests' travel, the room needed to be darkened. Council were asked to provide new curtains and refused to do so. Some members went out and bought sheets of black plastic to cover the windows each session. Robert and I were instrumental in writing a letter to the Council saying that U3A members aged over 80 had to climb ladders once a week to install the black plastic over the windows, and this had become rather dangerous. Council provided new curtains!!!

From Pauline Ruse

Looking back at classes available at U3A when we shared the Senior Citizens Hall.

The class I enjoyed was run by Gret: Egyptology. The class was held in the Annexe. I looked forward to it each week, stories about great Kings, Gods, a fascinating belief system and culture.

Who would know that upon the death of the family cat, the family would show their grief by shaving off their eyebrows and spend a fortune upon its mummification?

I ran a short class on Self-defence for Women: this proved to be popular so it was repeated now and then. They were taught to be more confident and assertive, to avoid potentially dangerous situations, by learning physical techniques and psychological preparation. A lot of women were embarrassed to make a fist!

For this class I was qualified as a Judo and Jiu Jitsu belt holder. [Them were the days!]

From Marie Kenney

Visiting my mother in March 1997 turned out to be the best day of my life. It is the day I learned about U3A. She had a friend visiting who asked us if we knew about U3A and if we were interested in joining. Having retired the year before and still being at loose ends we thought this was worth the effort of checking it out.

What we found exceeded our expectations. What a richness of classes, so many lovely people and such a great variety of tutors.

We tried quite a few of the classes and Tom, my husband, and I joined quite a few and I also took my Mum to the Music Class. This was run by Wendy Richards at the time and was a lot more technical than expected. My Mum soon grew tired of it but it was heaven for me. The format has changed a great deal with John Lawley at the helm

but it is still a great class.

We joined Current Affairs with Professor Andrew Ehrenkreutz, Islam in the Middle East was the subject, and also Byzantine History with John Salvaris. What a thrill for a Monday morning. Andrew would set the agenda and we could ask any question. This was well before 9/11 so the questions were different then than they would be now. We had Psychology with Jane Johnson, with John Davies taking over when she had to leave.

There were years of getting the newsletters ready to send out and 2 years of serving on the committee. It was all a great experience.

Things have changed now and the younger people who have come in have brought new subjects, new ways of doing things and running the classes differently. I don't know what I would be doing if it was not for my music and poetry classes. Reading books is only bearable for so long and the TV seems to be getting worse every year. So get yourself out there and see what is available, there has got to be a subject that interests you.