

President's Column

It is with great pleasure that I welcome Elena Scifleet as Editor of Newslink. Thank you Elena for taking on the editing of our flagship communication newsletter.

As editor, Elena will bring her skills to the modernising of Newslink and will welcome continued contributions from Members.

I also wish to acknowledge Ainslie Lamb's lengthy contribution to the U3As of NSW and her sterling work in editing our Newslink for many years. On behalf of the Members and Associates of Network NSW, I visited Northern Illawarra U3A on 17 August and presented Ainslie with a floral tribute to express Members' gratitude.

Although retiring from Network activities, Ainslie will still be involved with her local U3A and will be much sought after for her counsel and knowledge of the growth and development of U3A in Australia.

As Members will be aware, the Census to determine Insurance and licences for 2023 has commenced. Your U3A's adherence to the communication deadlines required to complete the process by the end of November is paramount if we are to have the task completed before U3As take a break during the Christmas holidays. Those U3As that do not pay their invoices on time will cause their insurance and licences to be delayed.

As mentioned in my last column, your Committee is still in need of four Regional Representatives. This lack of U3A Members' support means that your Committee, all volunteers, have to take on excessive workloads to provide the services that are required and initiatives to aid members cannot be provided.

This is particularly relevant in the updating of technology to facilitate data and activities management, for which the Network needs current knowledge and expertise. Despite many requests for help, none has been received.

On a more positive note, the 2023 Conference details and the planning of some smaller face to face geographically more convenient gatherings are being considered. Your RR will be in touch with more detail as soon as it is available.

Your Network Committee is also investigating the possibility of making available, using Zoom, presentations from other U3As, which may be useful to supplement or add to your U3A's presentations. These could be used for face to face meetings or, depending on circumstances, for members unable to attend your meeting.

One possible source of available U3A webinars can be found on U3A Melbourne City's website under Courses and Activities. Here you will find 21 Summer Schools, which are available for Members to use at no cost. Melbourne City has agreed that these can be used by Network NSW's Members and I commend them to you.

Finally, the incorporation of U3A Australia Ltd to replace the U3A Australian Alliance is nearing finalisation. The obvious benefits of this NFP company are already being seen in three States where digital literacy for "older Australians" is being rolled out through U3As. Your RR will keep you abreast of developments.

On behalf of the Management Committee of your Network, I wish you a happy and relaxed Christmas break and sincerely hope that 2023 will see a return to pre-pandemic activities and experiences so valued by our approximately 30,000 individual members who spend more than 5,000,000 hours per year participating and volunteering to ensure the principles of U3A are maintained and the needs of members are fulfilled.

- Denis Simond (South Coast Regional Representative and President U3aA Network NSW Inc.)



SAM's day out

Although one of the smallest U3A's, SAM U3A(Scone, Aberdeen, Muswellbrook) is always looking for activities to interest their members. We tend to focus on physical and social activities, rather than intellectual pursuits. Our latest activity was a trip to see the Van Gogh exhibition at Newcastle.

Using our Opal cards, which had been mothballed through Covid, we took the train, then the light rail down and back. It delivered us within easy walking distance of the exhibition. Luckily for us, it was one of the few days it didn't rain. The exhibition gave us an insight into the development of Van Gogh's painting style. Although he died young, he was a prolific painter.

We treated ourselves to a lunch out as well. Even the conversation on the train was enjoyable and made the journey pass pleasantly. A group ventured down to see Fort Scratchley last term and we are already planning another venture down to Newcastle next month. Before Covid we had day trips to Sydney using our Opal cards thanks to the organisational skills of one of our members. It was a long day, but quite popular with members.

- Anne Mason (SAM U3A)



It's a Great Day for the Irish

One of the groups most affected by COVID-19 restrictions over the past couple of years has been our choir, U3A Laurieton Voices, who were not able to practice regularly because of the risk of transmitting the virus.

Before the pandemic hit, the choir performed at least four public concerts each year in the heritage-listed Laurieton School of Arts. Admission was by donation with the proceeds going to local charitable and community organisations.

We're relieved to say that the concerts resumed in July this year and a second was held in early October. The theme for June was It's a Great Day for the Irish and, as you might guess, amongst the songs were 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling' and 'The Rose of Tralee'. The theme for the latest concert was Thanks for the Memories – Songs Mother Sang. The program included nineteen songs, finishing with an up-tempo rendition of 'Blue Skies'.

The proceeds on this last occasion, amounting to \$300, were donated to Community at 3, a local organisation which provides support to those in need.

We, and the broader community, owe a debt of gratitude to the choir's leader, Sue Bartholomew, for keeping the choir together during a difficult period and look forward to a further concert before the end of the year.

- Tony Dawson (Port Macquarie Hastings U3A)



Five U3As join for regional Ukulele event

What a great event! In a first for our Region – and we believe the biggest of its kind in NSW – 100 plus members from five U3As across the Central Coast Hunter joined forces on Tuesday 18th October at Wallsend Diggers Club, with their ukuleles, to celebrate the 60 th anniversary of the Beatles’ first hit in 1962.

The event was the brainchild of Newcastle U3A’s Ukulele Course Leader, Susan Coggan. The invitation from Newcastle U3A to others in our area to combine for a singalong-style performance was enthusiastically accepted by those with Uke groups from Lake Macquarie, Southlakes, Eastlakes, Maitland, and Port Stephens U3A. We scouted suitable venues and Newcastle U3A made the arrangements with Wallsend Diggers, who generously gave us use of their auditorium without charge, including seating, set up, and use of their sound equipment. Course Leaders Chris and Lorraine Charters (Lake Mac) and Paul and Pauline Kelly (Southlakes) checked out the venue and loaned and set up their professional sound equipment for everyone to use.

Dressing up in Beatles-era (1960s and ‘70s) gear was the order of the day! Susan adapted and distributed a booklet of Beatles numbers to suit all levels of skill, for all participants to practice during Term and the mid-Semester break. The four large groups each led (from the stage) songs, such as “Ticket to Ride”, “Let it Be”, “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da” and “Eight Days a Week” with the finale (“Yellow Submarine”) led on stage by the Course Leaders. Each group introduced those playing along in the audience to their particular style and approach, adding to the understanding and repertoire of all participants. Between sets, Susan entertained us with Beatles jokes, and at half time Pauline ran a Beatles trivia quiz – all great fun. The Club’s Events Coordinator, nominated as an independent judge, awarded the best dressed male and female “Beatle” – a hard decision, as she said!

Everyone had such a great time (just look at the photos!), including lunch in the very pleasant atmosphere of the Club’s bistro courtyard. Plans are already afoot to do a similar combined event next year!





COFFS HARBOUR U3A 30TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Shellharbour U3A Jindabyne trip

On Sunday, 18 th September 2022, 30 members of Shellharbour U3A Inc. left on their annual holiday. We had been trying to go for the past three years, but cancelled due to COVID.

We bussed down to Jindabyne for 5 nights, staying at the Jindabyne Hotel which is right on the banks of Lake Jindabyne. Each day we travelled out into the local area, to places including Cooma Jail Museum, where we did a terrific tour. One group was led by a prison officer and the other by a prison inmate.

Another morning we went to the Wild Brumby Schnappery (the only one in Australia), for a tasting. It was very interesting and a fun way to stock up the liquor cupboard!

As the snow was still on the ground, we enjoyed games at Dead Horse Gap, where Virginia made a great snow angel and Joanne “surprised” a few people with snowballs.

It was a perfect day when the group took the gondola up to the pub at Thredbo. Bright sun, no breeze and colourful skiers taking advantage of the great conditions! Even the older members were able to board the gondola with no problems and the resort staff made sure everyone was safe and comfortable.

We were taken to Guthega and Smiggin Holes on another day and the bus trip through the snowfields was spectacular! The coach driver and hostess were very knowledgeable and made the trip a success. The weather was also great, with sunny days and no winds.

A good time was had by all and we are looking forward to our next holiday.

- Sue Moran (Shellharbour U3A)

Lake Mac SMART LIVING Festival

U3A collaboration is a wonderful thing! Recently, three groups – Eastlakes, Southlakes and Lake Macquarie U3As joined forces to promote our organisations at our local council’s Smart Living Festival. It was a wonderful success, with the three groups going home with a long list of names of people interested to join or learn more about what U3A has to offer.

“ The opportunity to talk to people face to face is a great thing,” says EU3A President, Lorraine McEwan- McKenzie. “It never ceases to amaze me how many people still do not know about U3A.”

The day was perfect and the connection between U3A groups was a bonus. We heartily recommend getting involved in your local councils activities as an effective promotional tool.

- Annette (Eastlakes U3A)



Maitland U3A Social Club Out and About



Since coming out of lockdown earlier this year Maitland U3A members have enjoyed three adventurous outings.

Back in April members met at Newcastle Harbour and embarked on a “Nova Cruise” bound for Raymond Terrace. Refreshments were served on-board and everyone relaxed

and enjoyed the scenery and the excellent weather. One highlight of the voyage was seeing the historic Hexham Bridge open to allow us passage. Feeling like VIPs, we sat back and enjoyed the experience. Lunch was at a hotel at Raymond Terrace, then it was back on deck for the return voyage.

Two excursions were organised for September. One of these was a relaxing visit to the famous “Bath House” Gardens near Maitland. These gardens are a splendid example of what vision and hard work can accomplish.

The Postman River Cruise was also very popular. Members met at Maitland Railway Station and bussed down to the Hawkesbury River at Brooklyn. From there it was all aboard the Mail Boat. Marvelling at the expanse of water under road and rail bridges we headed up the Hawkesbury with its turns and bushy bends. A tasty light lunch was served.

The feedback and comments from these excursions were all positive. Members were grateful for the organisational work provided by the Maitland U3A Social Committee.

- Alan Pring (U3A Maitland)