



Newcastle U3A NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019

Welcome!

Dear Members

We have a busy year ahead of us. Newcastle U3A will be celebrating its 30th birthday next year and Celebrations will kick off with the Tutors and Course Clerks Morning Tea at Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club on 30 September. Our hard-working Program Coordinator Beth Elliott and her helpers are already planning specific anniversary events and classes to be held throughout next year. We will also be screening a documentary of events, activities and people, which will be produced by our own very experienced and capable members.

We, as members, are extremely fortunate in receiving the benefit, in so many ways, of the overwhelming range and depth of experience, talent, knowledge and achievement that exists amongst the almost 700 members of Newcastle U3A.

Some of our Programs and classes have been running for many years, such as the Mediterranean Dance classes. Colleen Potts started giving dance classes in 2005 and continues to this day. The oldest members in her dance groups are a proudly 92 (and still agile) Joan Tibbits, and long-time Course Clerk to the dance groups, Sherrill Jones. Joan and Sherrill both joined the classes in 2006, and feature in the photographs on page 3.

Moves are afoot to paint and recarpet the Meeting Room at 21 Gordon Avenue, which will be a great improvement, and we have been advised that the hallway will be laid with a new bamboo flooring on the last weekend in August. These works, when finished, will give both the entry and the meeting room a fresher and brighter look and feel.

The code lock on the front door of 21 Gordon Avenue has been causing some problems for some of our members. If you are a Tutor or Course Clerk who needs access to the building and do not have the code please contact either of the following numbers 0479 193182 or 0414 433 008. Please do not wait until you are standing at the door needing the code as we may be in a class at that time with the phone turned off.

Our half-yearly General Meeting on 19 September will be held in an exciting new location this year, the Newcastle Museum, followed by optional lunch on the waterfront at the Honeysuckle Hotel.

The monthly lunches and morning teas, held on alternate fortnightly Fridays continue to have very good numbers attending, where old, new, and potential members get to meet, chat and enjoy themselves. There is no better way to get to know your fellow members and make friends than in an informal and friendly setting.

From the President...

Best wishes and good health to you all,

Julie Newing
President, Newcastle U3A

NOTICE of U3A GENERAL MEETING

Thursday September 19th commencing 10.30am
McIntyre Theatrette, Newcastle Museum
6 Workshop Way, Newcastle

Note the venue!

Tea and coffee available from 10.00am
and the meeting will be followed by
lunch (your expense)

on the veranda at Honeysuckle Hotel
Lot 31 Wharf C Honeysuckle Drive Newcastle

Guest speaker:

Julie Baird

Director, Newcastle Museum
And curator, earthquake exhibition

Financial Reports and Agenda will be
available prior to the meeting

NU3A TURNS 30 IN 2020!

2020 is the 30th anniversary of Newcastle U3A, an incredible achievement for a non-profit, voluntary organisation that has relied on the generosity, passion and drive of its tutors, course clerks, committees and volunteers, past and present, in their commitment to keep learning and growing in what is euphemistically called the "Third Age".

There will be a number of events during the coming year to celebrate this important milestone. Your Committee will also be focusing on the future and seeking the views of every member on what you value about Newcastle U3A and what could be improved as we move into the next decade.

NEWCASTLE U3A TERM DATES

2019 Term 4: 14 October – 6 December

2020 Term 1: 10 February – 3 April

2020 Term 2: 4 May – 26 June

2020 Term 3: 27 July – 18 September

2020 Term 4: 19 October – 11 December

TREASURER'S REPORT 23 AUGUST 2019

Following is a summary of cash receipts and expenditures for the financial year to date (1 January to 31 July) compared with the previous corresponding period.

<i>All figures in dollars unless otherwise indicated</i>	YTD 2019	YTD 2018	Chg %
Receipts			
Membership fees	32,740	19,410	+69%
Excursion and course fees	5,130	6,120	-16%
Donations	682	700	-3%
Interest from term deposits	434	602	-28%
Sundries	0	75	
Total	38,986	26,907	+45%
Expenditure			
Membership refunds	120	410	
Excursion/course fee refunds	121	1,443	
Excursion costs	3,236	3,117	+4%
Venue rents	17,595	10,584	+66%
Equipment purchases	274	1,480	
Telecom, stationary, printing	1,783	1,785	
Insurance	858	200	
Information technology	383	189	
Sundries	1,162	1,658	
Total	25,532	20,865	+22%
Cheque account			
Opening balance	14,670	13,845	
Receipts as above	38,986	26,907	
Payments as above	-25,532	-20,865	
Capital transfers	-8,310	-5,000	
Closing balance	16,901	14,836	
Financial resources			
Cash account	16,901	14,836	
Term deposits	34,000	31,000	
Total	50,901	45,836	+11%

Note: Sundry outlays in 2018 included a \$600 donation to the Art Gallery for boats, which was matched by \$600 in donations from members.

Treasurer's comments

Membership fee receipts were up 69% for the 7 months to 31 July due firstly to an increase in paid members (688 compared with 596 at the same time last year) and secondly to the increase in fees charged per member (\$60 for the year and \$40 for S2 in 2019 compared with \$50 and \$30 in 2018).

While venue costs are also up sharply they did not increase as much as expected. This has resulted in our financial position improving still further.

**FROM PROGRAM COORDINATOR –
30TH ANNIVERSARY NEWCASTLE U3A – EXCITING
NEWS**

Throughout this very special year, we will be celebrating and honouring those members, past and present, who have made NU3A what it is today with a series of important events and projects starting with the 2019 Tutors and Course Clerks Morning Tea at the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club on 30th September.

The primary event will be the screening, later in 2020, of a documentary to be produced and directed by new NU3A member Joy Barrow and her husband David Barrow. Joy and David are retired documentary makers who have produced television programs that have screened in over 40 countries throughout the world.

To research and write the 30-minute program Joy will be out and about in the coming months, sitting in on various course sessions, meeting tutors and class members and getting a feel for Newcastle U3A and its history. David, an award-winning director, is currently volunteering for DFAT in Fiji and is looking forward to joining NU3A on his return in the new year and to directing and narrating the documentary.

Newcastle U3A has a mother lode of talent, skill and life experience in its membership and we will be drawing on some of that for various projects.

Mansel Williams is one such member. He will be joining the documentary team on his return home later in September. Mansel is not only an NU3A member but an experienced member of the Newcastle Video and Movie Makers that has produced short movies, documentaries and filmed community events for over 35 years.

It is the Committee's aim to capture Newcastle U3A's rich history in this documentary and in other projects currently underway and we look to you, our tutors and members, to help us preserve it.

Beth Elliott

COURSE REPORTS

Bards and Ballads, Tuesday afternoon, monthly:

What a busy world we live in! As WH Davies says in 'Leisure':

*"What is this life, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare."
A great advantage of getting old, I have time to read the old poets. Makes such a difference to my day. 'So say all of US'. There should be more poetry in our frantic world.*

Daphne Roper

Let's Write:

The 'Let's Write' Class is in its third year and meets Monday mornings to enjoy a wide range of stories from the factual to the fictional, from the heart wrenching to the humorous. On 17 June 2019 Diane Ryan read of her travels with her husband in the attractive vastness of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. While in Kyrgyzstan she noticed that men were wearing a very impressive hat of unique shape and with many adornments as everyday dress. The hat is called a Kalpak. The Kalpak is a highly revered national symbol and worn by Kyrgyzstan males of all ages for many centuries.

Diane was advised to refrain from making any comment on the Kalpak, particularly if critical, as it could land her in hot water. Diane's husband purchased a Kalpak and is contemplating wearing it out. We haven't heard how that has worked out.

Earlier this year Kyrgyzstan drafted a Bill that if passed will make the "ak kalpak", or white kalpak, an official Kyrgyzstan national symbol alongside the country's flag, coat of arms and national anthem. In this event, disrespecting the kalpak offenders will face a fine or up to one year in jail.

Our notable "akubra" started life over a 100 years ago but falls far short of the status of Kyrgyzstan's Kalpak.



Middle Eastern Choreographies:

Four of our members – Joan Tibbits, Diane Halliday, Sherill Jones and Sandy Grahame danced (not representing NU3A but as friends of Joan who was asked to dance) one Thursday during the holidays for the Seniors group that meet under the Parking Station in the city. They took extra belts and veils, showed a few steps and got the audience up to have a go. They were told it was the best concert they had ever had in there and even recruited a new member to the course!

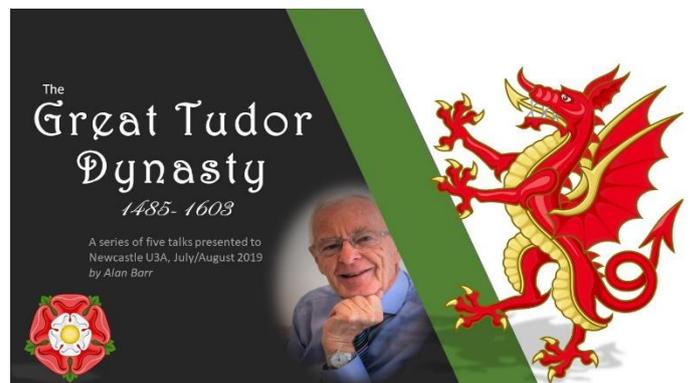


The Tudor Dynasties:

New tutor, Alan Barr, presented a fascinating series of five lectures on Henry VIII, Mary I ('Bloody Mary'), Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots. As one member put it: *"Just had to say how good was the 'Tudor Dynasty' course! Each week presenter Alan Barr expressed his vast knowledge and enthusiasm on the subject (illustrated beautifully) with wit and made each lecture extremely interesting and entertaining.*

More please!!"

Happily, Alan has already agreed to present his series on 'The Stuarts' next year.



Excursion to Hunter Wetlands Centre:

Our excursion to the Hunter Wetlands, Shortland, turned out to be a most educational and wonderful day. It was so interesting to learn that the Centre is a not-for-profit organisation and is run completely on securing grants, donations and hundreds of hours of dedicated volunteer work. The company and weather were perfect. Morning tea on arrival was followed by several talks given by our very knowledgeable tour guide. We were told the very interesting history of the Wetlands Centre and how it all came about, the importance of wetland conservation, environmental education and eco-tourism. We wandered lazily around the bushy tracks, weaving in and out of the tall swaying trees, smelling the different plants and flowers, overlooking the reedy ponds where thousands of water-birds nest and bugs, frogs and reptiles make their home. We strolled through the nursery where many of us purchased some lovely plants. We then meandered to the café, finishing the day lazily chatting over a delightful lunch, followed by dessert. We must give a big thank you to Cathy Haddow, who has volunteered at the Wetlands for many years, for arranging the outing and being our Course Clerk for the day, rounding us up, making sure we were all where we should be! Also thank you Beth Elliott our ever-enthusiastic course leader. We all had such a great day.



Ever wanted to sail but didn't know where to start?

Come and try the Discover Sailing Experience with NU3A and Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club in October! Emphasis on safety, with one of our own members, Henk Zeeman, as Course Leader and one of the qualified instructors who train our members. Photos from Semester 1 courses show the fun to be had on the Harbour:



Website and IT update:

NU3A Webmaster, Phil Warren, is in the process of updating the 'look' and 'feel' of our website to make it more 'user friendly' on your computer or tablet or smartphone, and easier to find information. Phil has also taken on the huge role as Webmaster for Network NSW, which supports some 65 U3A branches across NSW and the ACT – congratulations Phil!



At the same time, IT Coordinator Joy Carlin has been working to improve the efficiency of all our systems by centralising admin information in one place on the 'Cloud'. This makes it much easier for all of the Committee and our office volunteers to find and access the information they and members need.

New Committee members appointed:

Two casual vacancies on the NU3A Committee have been filled by the energetic core of the Program Coordination team – Beth Elliott and Excursions Coordinator Michelle Deeg. As you may gather from earlier items in this newsletter, your Committee has a number of projects under way with the aim of improving the experience of NU3A for members. Please buttonhole any member of the Committee you come across with your ideas or questions!

Office volunteers wanted:

We continue to open the office for enquiries each Monday and Friday during Semester (Fridays only during the break) from 10-11am. This is dependent on volunteers being available, and there is always a friendly welcome for new volunteers. You don't need computer skills – just an interest in NU3A and its members, and willingness to be familiar with the details of the Program. It's a great way to meet other members too!

The Beginning of Music Appreciation in Newcastle U3A Remembrances of John and Dawn Allen –

a condensed excerpt taken from a recorded conversation with John and Dawn by Jenny Williams and Beth Elliott

As schoolteachers in Singleton, John and Dawn Allen were heavily involved in the drama school at Singleton College, putting on one act plays. Moving to Newcastle in 1956 they set up the Newcastle New Theatre where they chose and performed plays with social content. They deliberately chose Australian writers such as Richard (Dick) Diamond, a satirical, political writer and activist, and others at the Roxy Theatre in Beaumont Street, Hamilton.

In conversation

(John) When retirement came for me in 1987 I was ready to do something – that’s why the music happened. With some other friends who had retired, we helped John Robson set up the ABC Newcastle branch – that took some activities. Over the years, Dawn and I had become very interested in music. In fact, we were one of the first members of Musica Viva when it started, I think the year was 1963. We went to ABC orchestral concerts at the Civic Theatre for a couple of years, and, of course, we had started buying records and ended up with a heck of a lot of LP records.

I heard that Tom Naisby had just retired and he was, in fact, a music consultant to schools. He used to go around to all the Primary Schools in the District helping the teachers to teach music. So I thought AH! He’ll be interested in doing something. I ran into him and said *“Do you think we could put some sort of group on that listens to music and talk about it?”* – that was the key – talk about it. I didn’t quite know what we would do, but he said *“Yes!”*

Good things happened quickly because Tom had connections to the Conservatorium of Music. We approached Michael Dudman, the Principal of the Conservatorium, and he was very receptive to some sort of Music Appreciation Group starting – (didn’t know what to call it) – *“Of course you can have a room etc”* – so that’s how we set up the first group which had a great turnout. Tom also wrote a weekly music column in the *Herald* and he put a big ad in that about having a meeting to set up some sort of music group and we got over 50 people at the first meeting – which was amazing.



That was early in 1989 – the year of the Newcastle earthquake. I think we had the first meeting in March and Tom made the first presentation in April. Only once a month it was. We picked the second Tuesday of the month to start off with. Michael Dudman gave us the rooms to go to and he wouldn’t even charge us any rent – so that was a good start. Disaster happened immediately; Tom, having just heard a Mahler symphony on record, came down the stairs and said *“Mahler is the greatest...”*, had a heart attack and died. So straight away we lost our No.1 guiding light. It was an utter shock of course, but we did keep going. Very soon after, Michael Dudman had a heart attack and died, so suddenly we were out on a limb. Anyway, the group kept going at night – we had called it *“The Music Lovers Club”* – meeting every second Tuesday evening in a room at the Conservatorium. Now – I think I’ve got my year right here – yes – by 1992, one of our members, Tom Molesworth, said *“Look! I think there’s another seniors’ education group started – do you know – it’s called the university of the third age – they’ve said they would be interested in setting up some sort of music appreciation courses too. Give them a ring.”* They had started in 1990; it was now into 1992 and very bravely I said *“OK, would you like me to start in 1993?”* Yes, Yes! And I think for the first year or two I started the first ones. We met in a church opportunity shop in Devonshire Street across from the Salvation Army near the old Coop store, and they had lecture rooms and we used their rooms for a year or two – and I

don't remember for how long. Two years before that, the evening group had suggested we also have a day group. We picked a Thursday morning for a couple of reasons – one, that was the day the Conservatorium students did mass rehearsals of the orchestra and choirs and rooms were empty so we had a room. Secondly there was often a lunch time concert on a Thursday. Perfect.

So, you see by 1991 and a bit, we had two groups going; the Tuesday Evening once a month – *The Music Lovers* – then once a month on Thursday which we called the *Music Appreciation Group* (MAG) and then, in 1993, we added to that *The U3A Music Appreciation* on all the other Thursdays in the month because the rooms were available. The Conservatorium was very pleased – so off we went.

Everything then seemed to flow along quite well and some good luck appeared about the mid-nineties when I got a phone call from a young man called David Barker, who claimed I'd taught him at Boys' High only in year 7. He was keen about getting to know classical music, could he come? Certainly. Not only did he come but he brought fabulous skills. He was a chemistry lecturer at TAFE and he was a computer expert (which I wasn't) and that transformed our presentations. At the same time **Philip Sketchley**, a retired school music teacher, returned to take over the Conservatorium office and was a valuable help for many years.

Very early on when we started the U3A group in 1993, two other people from The Music Lovers Club besides myself leapt in with presentations and they were **Lance Close**, who I'd known since my first day at Tech back in 1956, and **Noel Winney**, a maths teacher at Boys' High. Those two had been a massive influence on us with the music in listening to understand what music was about through recordings... so we were very, very close. The three of us were the basis of many of the presentations in U3A music for years and things went along quite well year after year until we get to the early 2000s because, by then, we had, like a juggler, three groups on the go which was quite a big task and I was thinking can I keep this up?

And then of course, we had some more good luck. Suddenly, having retired from lecturing at the Sturt University Conservatorium **Roland Bannister** arrived ... and I quickly got him to join – that was the early 2000s, I think. Then, a couple of years later, Roland's good friend

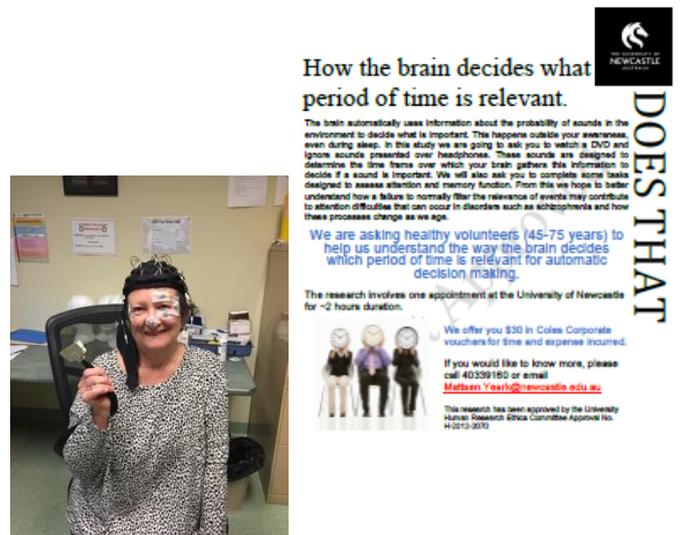
and colleague **Max Reeder** and his wife **Olga** retired from the Bathurst branch of the same Conservatorium, they arrived and they joined. And so between about 2006 and 2008 that changeover occurred. I was so grateful. And as you know, it is going still, with many having been members of Music Appreciation for 20 years or more, such as **Judith Heath** and **Jennifer Dunn** who only recently have retired from the group. The major difference between the early group and the U3A group is that we were all amateur listeners, but people like Roland and Max, who are experts, have made a big impact, a big difference indeed. At this point, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the current Course Leaders **Susan Leembruggen** and **Christine Johnson** for the enormous contribution they have made and are still making in ensuring the standard of excellence we have now come to expect every Thursday morning. Thank you, and thank you all for an amazing 30 years.

CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

From Lake Macquarie U3A:

Hello fellow-U3Aers. Attached is a flier from Newcastle University requesting volunteers for a research study into how the brain functions, with a view to contributing to research into schizophrenia and similar diseases. Our Lake Mac U3A members were invited a few months ago and many of us (including me) spent 2 hours at the Uni doing the study. It is not arduous nor taxing (you watch a DVD while they monitor your brain waves). You wear a delightful cap during the procedure and get a \$30 Coles voucher for your trouble.

If you would like to know more, please call 40339160 or email Mattsen.Yeark@newcastle.edu.au



How the brain decides what period of time is relevant.

DOES THAT

The brain automatically uses information about the probability of sounds in the environment to decide what is important. This happens outside your awareness, even during sleep. In this study we are going to ask you to watch a DVD and ignore sounds presented over headphones. These sounds are designed to determine the time frame over which your brain gathers this information to decide if a sound is important. We will also ask you to complete some tests designed to assess attention and memory function. From this we hope to better understand how a failure to normally filter the relevance of events may contribute to attention difficulties that can occur in disorders such as schizophrenia and how these processes change as we age.

We are asking healthy volunteers (45-75 years) to help us understand the way the brain decides which period of time is relevant for automatic decision making.

The research involves one appointment at the University of Newcastle for ~2 hours duration.

We offer you \$30 in Coles Corporate vouchers for time and expense incurred.

If you would like to know more, please call 40339160 or email Mattsen.Yeark@newcastle.edu.au

This research has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee Approval No. H1212-0970