

Learn, laugh, live

Welcome!

Autumn 2020

From the President...

Dear Members

We hope you are well and are keeping physically isolated as much as is possible, though hopefully not at all socially isolated. Thank goodness for the modern age with telephones, email and internet.

While we remain homebound as the weeks add up, and after we have turned out and sorted our cupboards and drawers, rearranged the garage, and taken some of those long awaited jobs off the list, most of us will be missing our involvement in Newcastle U3A classes and activities, and the associated social connectivity.

Fortunately, we have two initiatives that could help you get through the coming weeks.

We are accessing some online independent learning courses that will be available to all members to work at yourself in your own time, and some of our dedicated tutors have indicated a willingness to facilitate some online classes in Term 2, that will be open to all members to 'attend'. We also have some hints for other online means of keeping the 'little grey cells' bopping.

We are also facilitating telephone contact with, and between, members who would like this form of contact.

These initiatives are dealt with in greater detail in this newsletter, which I recommend you read, and think about taking advantage of at least some of what we are offering to try and brighten up all our lives.

Stay safe, stay well!

Best wishes

Julie Newing

## "Coronavirus Madness"

by NU3A member Roy Bisson



**NU3A 30<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
DEFERRED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**NEWCASTLE U3A TERM DATES 2020 – TO BE ADVISED**

THE OFFICE IS CURRENTLY CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, BUT PHONE AND GMAIL ARE BEING MONITORED AND WE WILL RESPOND TO MEMBER ENQUIRIES

## KEEPING MEMBERS CONNECTED

Members know that your Committee adopted the “go early and go hard” approach to the COVID-19 situation, cancelling all courses from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March – as it turns out just a few days ahead of Government requirements to do so in this rapidly changing situation.

We have not been idle in the 2 weeks since, working on a number of ways to continue to provide learning opportunities and connections to NU3A members. We know NU3A is an important part of life to many of our members, and one of the key recommendations to getting through the long haul of social distancing is maintaining your normal **routine** – as much as possible – and keeping your **connections**. Fortunately, as Julie says, most of us have the (perhaps hitherto unrealised) benefits of phone and internet.

## NU3A INITIATIVES TO STAY CONNECTED:

**Regular updates via emailed news:** This longer newsletter combines the usual Quarterly Newsletter with updates on NU3A and COVID-19. The plan is to supplement it with a fortnightly 2-page “**NU3A Connected**” news email giving updates about online learning opportunities, but mostly to **share YOUR news** about what you’re doing and how you’re faring while at home, reviews of any online learning you’ve found, **JOKES** (please), anything you would like to share with the rest of us.... These updates will be ‘snail mailed’ to the very small number of our 700+ NU3A members who don’t have email.

**Phone buddies:** Committee members phoned all current members who do not have email a week ago to enquire whether they would like to have a regular phone buddy. That process is still rolling out to other members who have email, but are isolated for other reasons. And we know some members are

keeping in touch among their own social groups within NU3A. In addition:

## **STAYING IN TOUCH**

*In these constantly changing Covid-19 times there may be some members feeling somewhat lonely or isolated and would appreciate a buddy contacting them.*

*If any member knows somebody who might like such contact perhaps you could call them and ask how they are coping and if they would like or appreciate further calls (from you or other members) from time to time.*

*Any member who might like such a call, or anyone who knows such a member, please contact Margaret Flood on Tel: 49292950 between 9am and 5pm.*



**Online learning opportunities:** We have been working to develop a number of options:

- NU3A will shortly offer FREE to all members who have the necessary devices some online courses through **U3A Online** (you don't need to register and pay fees as an individual) and possibly some in collaboration with Newcastle Region Library – see the fortnightly news for details.
- Several tutors are keen to provide online access to their programmed courses in “**Term 2**” (dates to be advised) and we are investigating interactive platforms to enable NU3A to offer a **limited** (skeleton) range of the courses previously planned that can be adequately adapted to an online format.
- Various institutions already provide some **free online learning** options and activities, and others (like the Sydney Opera House) are rapidly developing alternatives to their live performances. Some also offer tips for learning online.

Have a look at:

- edX at <https://www.edx.org> for a huge range of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), mostly from universities, all over the world
- TED talks at <https://www.ted.com/talks> which says it offers “3300+ talks to stir your curiosity”
- The Sydney Opera House new “Digital Season” [here](#) starting with a recorded performance by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra of Beethoven’s 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony this Saturday (4<sup>th</sup> April)
- A cut-down version of the cancelled Newcastle Writers Festival will also be online this weekend – 25 sessions (!) at <https://www.newcastlewritersfestival.org.au/newcastle-writers-festival-takes-program-online/>

**PLEASE SHARE WHAT YOU FIND AND WHAT YOU THINK OF IT!**

Stay safe, keep well, and watch this space 😊😊...

## from the Treasurer

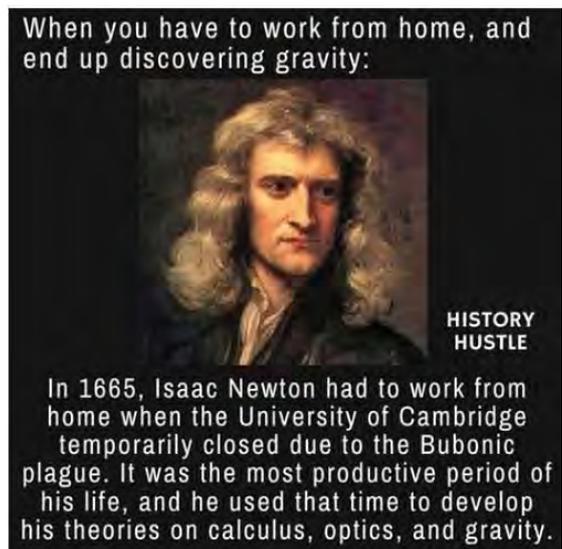
Hello everyone. Just to let you know we are still in a good financial condition; I expect the month of March will close with financial resources of about \$67,000, which would be about \$8,000 more than this time last year. This is after refunding almost \$2,200 to those who paid their fees for the now cancelled Hawkesbury Riverboat Postman cruise.

Other excursions for which refunds will likely need to be made are:

- Dobell House (course 554) scheduled for 22 May, at \$16 per person,
- Maitland Gaol (course 450) scheduled for 28 May, at \$38 per person,
- Newcastle Christ Church Cathedral (course 556) scheduled for 12 June, at \$8 per person or \$16 per person with the stair tour.
- Which Wine? (course 117) scheduled for the 7 weeks from 4 May to 22 June, at \$60 per person.

In aggregate refunds for these excursions could total a little over \$3,000. We will let you know closer to each scheduled event whether they will be cancelled and thus refunds made.

Graeme Newing



## From the Program Coordinator

To all of our tutors and leaders who have so supported us in this and past years offering courses that are world class, **THANK YOU**. You can be sure that Newcastle U3A will support you and our members through this current crisis in every way possible and that together we will come out of this stronger and better.

Due to the current situation nationally where many institutions including our libraries, have had to close their doors, the special program “**Learn, Laugh, Live,**” to be presented by the Newcastle City Library during Adult Learners’ Week – 31 August – 4 September to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary has been finalised at this end and I want to wholeheartedly thank all those tutors who put their hands up to make what was – and is – an exceptional program showcasing a cross section of our courses over five whole days.

Thankfully we were able to finish photographing all the tutors involved for the printed program before this crisis took off and the whole program was sent to Carol Edmonds at the Library. In the last few days I’ve been in touch with Carol Edmonds and at this stage we are still hoping to go ahead with this as planned, but that will be dependent on the state of affairs. However, I will keep you all updated as we work our way through this crisis.

I’m sure all of you are using this valuable time to refresh, relax and renew so in the meantime, be well, stay safe and use those innovative and creative powers not to just survive, but to thrive.

**Beth Elliott**

## 30th Anniversary documentary

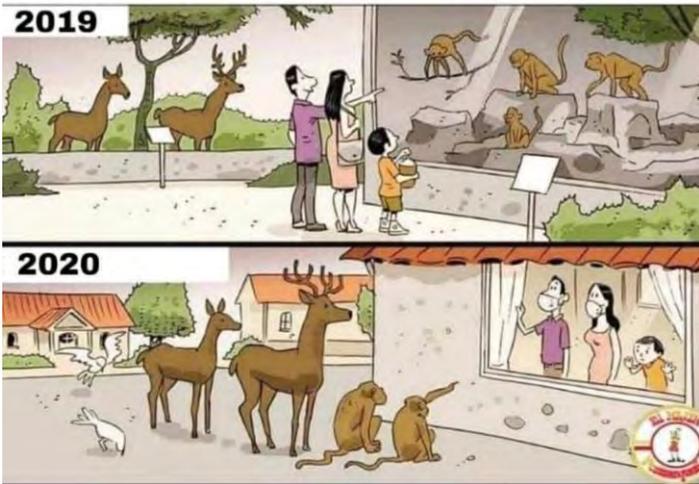
As continuing members will know from our last Newsletter, filming of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary documentary was to continue throughout 2020 by Joy Barrow and her husband David, an award-winning director. Work continues behind the scenes and filming will resume when the “coast is clear”.

Joy and David are retired documentary makers and have produced television programs that screened in over 40 countries. Their work has been diverse and they have been fortunate enough to work in many fascinating places throughout the world. Joy began life as an actor and David presented television news and weather before they moved to the other side of the camera and formed their own company.



David and Joy in India

**KARMA**



**Your Committee at Work**

Most of the time, the committee is invisible to most members, working behind the scenes taking care of all the administration tasks required for the running and good governance of NU3A. But on the 6<sup>th</sup> January, some were highly visible. With ladders, tools of all kinds, sandpaper and sanding blocks, sugar soap, paint and paintbrushes, (and a bit of attitude!) a working bee made up of Margaret Finnie, Rosemary O’Neill, Jenny Williams, Julie Newing and myself led by Keith Finnie and Alan West went to work painting the U3A classroom at our home base at 21 Gordon Avenue, something that had long been needed. With each of us on committee attending to our own responsibilities, we don’t often get to work together. It was a lot of fun, but most of all when it was done, we felt a great sense of satisfaction knowing that those tutors who will present in the classroom will now have a nice space to be in – and isn’t that something – especially with brand new carpet to boot!

**Beth Elliott**



Keith Finnie and Alan West hanging an assortment of photos produced by members of Macca’s (Mark McConnell) photography courses.



Keith Finnie, Julie Newing (President) and Alan West busily inserting the new name tags into sleeves ready for collection by members



### THE WRITE STUFF”

The NU3A Writers Group have done it again with the publication of their magazine “*The Write Stuff*” – a collection of stories by members of the group. This follows on from their anthology “*The Tale Makers*” (2018) and Malcolm Bailey’s “*Salt of the Earth – a skinny book of short stories*” (2017).

The magazine came into being as a result of the generosity of Ross Edmonds, NU3A member and collector who sponsored the magazine and the technical skill and wit of Roy Bisson, a Writers Group member whose artistic and editorial experience has given us a very different kind of magazine that has a mix of weird, wonderful and quirky stories by various members of the group and Roy’s cartoons and illustrations.

The magazine was to be launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> March ...watch this space

*Beth Elliott – Course facilitator*



### LUNCH OF THE MONTH

**all dates to be confirmed**

RSVP please: Eric 4957 2211 Venues have been chosen because of parking availability, access to public transport and a reputation for being an enjoyable place to dine and socialise. (Click through the links below for more info and menus).

Join us in the venue at 12.00 noon.

- May and June cancelled at this stage.
- Jul 17 [Lambton Park Hotel](#),  
Howe & Morehead Sts, Lambton
- Aug 21 [Blackbutt Hotel](#),  
Carnley Av & Orchardtown Rd, Kotara
- Sep TBA following General Meeting
- Oct 16 [Benny's](#), Mayfield Hotel,  
284 Maitland Rd, Mayfield
- Nov 20 [Maryville Tavern](#),  
Lewis Street, Maryville
- Dec 11 [Duke of Wellington](#),  
Regent St, New Lambton

Lunches and coffees will be reinstated just as soon as restrictions allow 😊.

ITALIAN CLASSES WITH ELVIRA ABEL

Learning a new language isn't particularly a piece of cake at any age but at our age it is even more of a challenge for the memory. We are grateful to Elvira Abel who has tutored our classes for the past couple of years in the traditional textbook style.

In 2019 Elvira went to the next level by introducing music and song. The group was fortunate to have the very talented Diane Moss who plays the Fisarmonica (*Piano Accordion*) plus some other class members who sing, so it is learn, laugh and have fun at U3A.



Diane Moss



*Helen Ogle – Course Clerk*



CRAFTY CONVERSATIONS

Our last session for the year 2019 was a Show-and-Tell day. Course members brought craft items that they had made, or that family members had made, both recently and in years past. We saw a great variety of items, materials and methods. Most of them had stories attached, and it was great to hear the history of these special things.

We are a happy group. We enjoy both the craft and the conversation each month. So if you are a bit crafty and like chatting maybe you could join us.

*Jan Chandler – Course facilitator*

BEGINNER TAP GROUP  
(Fun, Fitness and Friendship)

With much trepidation, some of the beginner tap group went on stage at the end of last year to perform two routines at Colleen Potts' Celebration Concert. We felt very proud of our performances, especially as it was the first time on stage for some of the tappers.

Many thanks go to Colleen for her dedication, wonderful teaching and patience. We all love coming to class and look forward to the challenges awaiting us.



*Anne Steiner*