



University of the Third Age
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FROM PRESIDENT LYNNE....

As we are now one month into winter, we are still experiencing some beautiful sunny, but cold weather. The days are getting longer and I am sure people are starting to enjoy the extra daylight.

U3A has had some publicity in The Ararat Advocate recently with a photo of our Committee and details of what we have on offer for Term 3. We have since had three membership enquiries.

A photo of U3A's donation of \$600 to the Patricia Hinchey Centre which was surplus from our very successful Vintage Fashion Parade 'Threads' held last year during Seniors' Week was also published. This donation was put towards the purchase of a defibrillator, which is considered vital for people suffering a cardiac arrest.

The Committee is in the process of getting quotes to have the Aradale premises professionally cleaned and disinfected before we resume on 13 July.

I am looking forward to catching up with as many members as I can very soon.

Commit yourself totally to your goal. Only you can do that.

[U3A ARARAT WEBSITE FOR ALL THE CLASS INFORMATION YOU NEED AND ALSO OLD AND NEW NEWSLETTERS!](https://u3aararat.org.au)

Thank you Carmel Stringer!

<https://u3aararat.org.au>

**Member of the month
 John Mawson.**



I was born in Geelong in 1951 and lived on a mixed farm in Wensleydale until I was seven. I had one older brother.

It was a good job that the motor car was becoming common around Wensleydale, because all the people in our neighbourhood

came from about five families, from which most of the adults I called Auntie or Uncle. Dad did marry out. He had a horse and met my mother at Modewarre. Still I found life pretty lonely as there were not many kids around.

My parents then bought a larger mixed farm at Wurdale, milking cows, by hand in the early days, separating cream for sale and feeding pigs on milk and grain, as well as sheep for wool.

Primary school at Wurdi Boluc State School which is now at the bottom of the Wurdi Boluc Reservoir which supplies Geelong with drinking water. About 10 to 12 kids in a one teacher school. Went to secondary school in Geelong. About half an hour's trip on the Dean's Marsh bus.

Oberon High School was a brand new school with 70 kids in two classes. It started its first year in the buildings of the old migrant hostel on the Belmont Common until they built the school, which then was on its own in the middle of farmland. It's not now. I helped blaze the way at Oberon for the great Patrick Dangerfield. In those days, the top league footballers took time to visit schools. I remember Polly Farmer coming to Oberon, and doing his trick of handballing the footie through the open passenger window of some teacher's car.

Oberon High School was a huge plus in my life, because by the time we got to Year 12, the original number of 70 kids was halved and we enjoyed what then was the luxury of very small classes, and unusually back then, all my teachers were actually qualified in the areas they taught, and were really good people.

I was lucky enough, with a lot of my schoolmates, to win a Commonwealth Scholarship to go to Melbourne University, where I slacked my way through a degree in Agriculture, which I enjoyed and found to be very interesting. It was a great general science course offering things as diverse as entomology, biology, geology, botany, horticulture. In retrospect I should have pursued a couple of these subjects.

While at Uni, I always went home to work on the farm in holidays, given that my parents were paying for me to live in Melbourne. But that meant that I socialised in Winchelsea and played football there. Also was involved

in the Young Farmers movement, which didn't have much to do with farming, but was involved in a lot of drinking and partying.

Going back on the farm was never an option, and I wasn't that interested in other fields of Agriculture, so I applied for a teaching scholarship for my last two years at Uni. Great money back then, but the proviso was that you were bonded to go where you were sent, and you had to teach for three years. It was a pretty sweet deal. We always used to joke about where you might be sent. I hit the jackpot and was sent to Ouyen. What a shock to the system. I could not believe that a place could be so hot. And the mouse plague. No air conditioning in the school or in any of the houses I lived.

It was the most friendly community. Almost every social event was an open invite for the whole town. I remember going to a Cabaret Ball one night. The teachers were on one table, some year 10 and 11 kids were on the next table, and their parents were on the next one down. Grog was a big problem there then. There were large numbers of young single men working on the farms, but no single women because there were no jobs for them. No single women for single male teachers either, so a mate and I decided to resign from teaching and head overseas for a year. You could save a lot of money on first year teachers' wages back then.

We flew to Nepal, went on a 3 month bus tour along the Freak Route to London, through all the places you can't go now. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt (I wouldn't go there now – a murderous dictatorship).

I worked in London for six months, as a porter in a women's clothing store, before hitching around Britain and Western Europe. We were in Barcelona in November '75, and were surprised to see the headline in the local paper that Gough had been sacked. Back to Australia, re-joined the Education Dept., had an interview to decide where I would teach, and was asked, 'Where would you like to go?' I chose Ararat. After one year here, Kay arrived to teach at the High School. We have been here ever since. We have two daughters and one grandchild. It's a wonderful place to live.

Friends of J Ward was started over in 1994, during another period of social stress in Ararat. Ararat had just been through a period of social upheaval with the general downturn in the Australian economy. Consequences of this included the closure of J Ward and Aradale, the reduction of many public services in Victoria, which led to other job losses in many sectors of our local economy, and the consequential effects these had on the private businesses in the town.

My recollection of that time in many empty shops in the main street and many houses for sale throughout the town.

I think it was the editor of the Ararat Advertiser, David Brehaut, who came up with the proposal that the town should open up J Ward as a tourist attraction. The idea was picked up by a small group of people in the town who set up a committee, and after a great deal of work, it was opened for visitors on the Easter weekend in 1993.

At that stage I had had nothing to do with Friends of J Ward, but there was a call of members of the Ararat Community to help out. So I turned up on the day and said, 'What can I do?' I sat in the Lions Caravan with a couple of other volunteers, outside the front gate of J Ward for a couple of days, collecting money from the throngs of people who turned up. It was amazing.

Because of the notoriety of J Ward, its opening had enormous publicity in the metropolitan media. Estimates say four to five thousand people went through J Ward on that weekend.

I went on tour and I was blown away by the place. I had never been inside before, and even though I live only a couple of hundred metres down the road, I had no concept of what it would be like. With so many people going through, there was no way you could have guided tours. Visitors just wandered around the building, with J Ward members scattered at points of interest, repeating their part of the story as visitors walked past.

There were, compared to now, rudimentary displays of artefacts in the cell block and dining room, as well as a collection of newspaper articles. The success of that weekend inspired Friends of J Ward to open regularly for guided tours. And they called for volunteers to try and open every Saturday, Sunday and school holidays.

After a couple of months, I decided to join and became a gate keeper for a while, until one day, just before closing, there was a group of people ready for a tour and there was no guide available, so I took them on tour and have been a guide ever since.

And I can say that it has been a very rewarding experience. I would have done over a thousand tours of J Ward and hundreds of tours of Aradale, and I can honestly say, in that time, I have not had a single customer who was offensive or rude, which has to be an amazing thing in what is really a retail setting. And their feedback has been amazingly positive.

About ten years ago, our then president, the late John Mason proposed that we should take tours of Aradale. I have to admit that I thought that it would never work. John persisted, and one afternoon he organised to take J Ward members on a tour of Aradale. Again I was blown away. The grandeur of the buildings and the atmosphere is fantastic. And tours began.

Before Covid, our tour numbers reached record levels at both J Ward and Aradale. Friends of J Ward tours of Aradale and J Ward, combined with the very successful 'ghost tours' of Aradale by Nathaniel's Eerie Tours, and of J Ward by Lantern Ghost Tours have brought thousands of people into Ararat. Post Covid everyone is trying to start up again on a reduced scale.

Given that many members of Friends of J Ward are well past retirement age, many members are cautious about resuming tours, particularly with the recent outbreak in Victoria.

So hopefully, in the near future we might be looking at elimination of Covid, which New Zealand and several Australian states have shown to be possible, with competent quarantine procedures, with no special exemptions for footballers, wealthy skiers, cruise ship passengers etc. we may get back to relatively normal life again (or if we get a vaccine).

If that's the case, or if now you would like to be involved, observing strict social distancing rules, I can recommend a rewarding career as a friend of J Ward. You don't have to be a guide to take part. We have lots of activities for anyone who wishes to join. I look forward to seeing some of you, at a sensible distance, when U3A resumes.

John Mawson

Update on Covid19 and U3A: from Committee -

Before classes commence, the rooms and furniture will have been thoroughly commercially cleaned and disinfected.

For ongoing use, hand cleanser will be available at the entry door and all rooms. All members are to bring their own mug/cup for their own protection.

After each session, we request that all used furniture used be wiped over with disinfectant and that fabric chairs be sprayed with Glen 20.

If you have a cough, sore throat or other symptoms, best to stay at home. Remember distancing. Arms out to check, and if there is a tickle, cough into your elbow, facing away from class members.

As a precaution, Singing Group is postponed for now. Experts agree on this one — singing has been found to be a very effective way of spreading COVID-19.

If there are any queries or concerns, please contact Pam Brennan on 53562520/0419 314 849 or Lynne Wilson on 0417 524 054.

U3a Book of the month. Some enjoyed it, some said so so. *'On the move'*. By Oliver Sacks. Neurologist. Doctor. Author. Pianist. Motorcycle enthusiast. Amateur weightlifter.

"I am a storyteller, for better and for worse. I suspect that a feeling for stories, for narrative, is a universal human disposition." — Oliver Sacks

Oliver Sacks packed a lot of life into his 82 years (he died in 2015). And this incredible volume, the second part of his memoirs (the first is 2001's *Uncle Tungsten*), chronicles his busy, fascinating adult life: Oxford, navigating his way through research and clinical studies (a trip to an Israeli kibbutz helped him focus on his career), his move to the U.S., his travels ("On The Move" indeed), discovering his passion for writing, finding his subjects, publication ups and downs, maintaining his deep friendships (among them the poets Thom Gunn, whose poem gives the book its title, and W.H. Auden), his family — both parents and two brothers were physicians, a third brother was schizophrenic. His battle with substance abuse and his late-in-life romantic partnership.

A tougher editor could have tightened some of the prose (*some U3A book group members nod their heads*) it is not hard to lose count of the number of times Sacks refers to someone as "genial" — and the science gets pretty dense near the end. But this is quibbling.

Sacks gives you the backstory to all his books (including *Awakenings*, which was made into a film featuring Robin Williams and Robert di Nero, and his breakthrough book of essays, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat*), including some of his earlier written sketches that recount experiences more accurately than memories can.

What emerges is a portrait of a deeply complex, private, brilliant man, who seized hold of life and found a way to utilize and appreciate all the gifts he was given. I'll return to this inspiring book many times. **Glen Sumi. Reviewer.**

*I wouldn't have chosen this book, like some other books chosen by our book group, but it took me out of my safe zone, that's got to be a good thing. MB.

JUNE QUIZ! Introduced lots of members (in our silos) we don't know, and reminded us of the 15 listed classes we might try. There was a lot of *talk* about it, but not so many daring to have a go.

Winners winners were **the McAloons with 13 correct!** Thanks to everyone, especially the participants. Have a grin and a moan or two at the correct answers.

Answers: 1 Wendy Lewis. 2 Howard Baker. 3 Margaret Carmichael. 4 Loris Baird. 5 Kevin Free. 6 John Richardson. 7. Helen Boling. 8 Roger Phillis. 9 Phil Goudie. 10 Kevin Hull. 11 Heather Hevey. 12 Robert Frampton. 13 Ferg and Lou Anderson. 14 Tim and Glenis Andrew. 15 Janine Adams.



YOUR SECRET SERVICE DETAIL HAS THE DAY OFF, MR. PRESIDENT! BUT, NO NEED TO WORRY, SIR... MARGARET THISTLEWHACKER, SEVENTH-GRADE MATH TEACHER, PACKING HEAT, REPORTING FOR DUTY AND READY TO SERVE.

ground. Back fill the hole packing the dirt firmly.
 Build a 'water basin' on the outside edge of the hole. Give the tree plenty of water. Add mulch, be sure it doesn't touch the trunk. Water again. Stake large trees for about a year... (saw off the stake then, so not to damage the roots by pulling out). Pruning the tree depends on the look and future shape you want. Two schools of thought in 'bringing it back to size' – latest thinking is don't, the tree is dormant and the roots will speed ahead in the spring anyway. Your choice. Steve Hughan says the time for planting fruit trees was 15 years ago.... So, gift one to your kids/grandchildren?

Plan for woody cuttings in spring especially natives like Correa. An economical and satisfying way of creating new plants.



Friday 10.00 a.m. lake walks and coffee have continued for a bit, with distancing,. Here are Heather, Ian, Leonie, Pam, Val, Margaret, Lynne and Wendy enjoying company and the winter sun.

VEGE GUIDE FOR JULY.

Time to plant lettuce, onions, peas climbing or bush, spinach, silver beet - seeds or seedlings.



TIME FOR BARE ROOT PLANTING while they are dormant:

Deciduous, roses, citrus, and shrubs.

Prepare the hole twice the diameter of the root spread.

Open the packet around the root ball and make sure it's moist. Nip off any damaged roots. Dispose of the saw dust. Allow the tree to soak in a full bucket of water for up to 6 hours.



Plant the tree so that the root collar is **level** with the

Something that we might need reminding of ...

U3A online courses....

Go to: <https://www.u3aonline.org.au> You can browse through the independent study courses. It is possible to join for \$30 a year.

independent study courses of World Affairs and History, Nature, Writing and Creativity, Lifestyle, Science, Short Courses. Maybe you might like to start/lead a group in the subject of your choice?

E&OE. M. B.