



University of the Third Age
U3A Ararat & District Inc.
PO Box 531 Ararat Vic 3377
u3aararat1@gmail.com

No A0053715K

NOVEMBER, 2020 NEWSLETTER NO. 59

Message from President Lynne Wilson.



WELCOME BACK!!!

As you all have been advised, the Committee agreed at a meeting held on Friday 30 October, that most of the activities offered previously will resume on Wednesday 4th November. I am sure that many of you are keen to get back to catching up with your friends at U3A.

This Covid-19 has been a real tester!!! What a trying time for all, especially people living in Melbourne and all those who have been unable to visit sick relatives. Let's hope that we are able to move positively forward, especially now better weather is approaching. Going out in the sunshine sure makes a difference and lifts the spirits.

I would appreciate, in my new role of Welfare Officer, being advised about any member who is not well, so that I could follow up with them to see how they are faring. On two occasions during Covid-19, phone calls were made by members of the Committee to those who we thought lived alone, and were very much appreciated.

Thanks to Pam Brennan for organising the Term Program and also huge thanks to Margaret Burbidge for putting together our informative Newsletter which I am sure is appreciated by all.

Take care and hope to see most of you soon.

Lynne

0417 524 054

Member of the month George Dunkling.

I was born in Folkstone in England in 1932, the first of two boys, Brian was a year younger. Father worked for the local council. Things were pretty normal until 1939 – wartime - and by 1940 the government decided to evacuate the younger household persons from the considered areas of danger; Folkstone and Dover, being the closest point to the French coast, were in this category. (We never thought about it as kids, but we actually spent time playing in the damaged houses not repaired from the previous war). We were soon on the move. I was 8, on a train to London ending up at Paddington station with plenty of others, gasmask boxes around the neck ready to go, where!?



We ended up in a hostel in Raglan, in South Wales. Three weeks later I was taken to my first billet, I was with two different families over the next 9 months, one home was with an older couple who had just finished digging out their air raid shelter in the back yard! Returning German aircraft flew over the Welsh coast to avoid attention when going back to Europe, sometimes they would drop their bombs on the Welsh countryside. Schooling during this particular time was you might say, unusual. We had to walk about 2 miles and being a very small school, local children attended in the mornings, evacuees in the

afternoon. Then I was placed with a young family, where I stayed for over 3 years, normal schooling and the school was a lot closer. I didn't know where Brian had gone, I didn't see him again until the end of 1944.

On the move again at the end of 1944, back home to Brighton to where my mother had moved after the parents split up. I started school almost straight away at Brighton Secondary school which I was entitled to go to after passing my eleven+ exam required at that time. Not going too well at school, struggling with French and Latin amongst other subjects, (Welsh schools hadn't set me up for these areas), I persevered until 1946, but left school just after my 14th birthday. The government at the time were running a scheme '*British Boys for British Farms*' obviously trying to replace some manpower lost during the war. I put my name forward and within a few days I was leaving home again, being placed on a farm down in the West Country. That's where I stayed for the next 3 years.

Back home again, getting a job in a shop close to home, this lasted about a year. On my way to work I had to go by a Royal Navy recruiting office and I called in one day and in May 1950, I decided to join, signing on for twelve years. Mother was not impressed.

Away again, down to Portsmouth for initial training then some sea time for a while. As I'd joined the Fleet Air Arm branch, I had to do some extra training as I had decided to become an Armourer, dealing with explosives and weaponry for aircraft use. This ended up being at Naval Air Stations in the country, rather than on board ship.

In 1953 I married my wife Shirley, who I had known since she was about eleven years old.

After spending 6 months on a ship in dry dock in Plymouth in 1953-54, I actually got some sea time, heading to Gibraltar and Mediterranean ports. Back to shore for a while, I got sick and was hospitalised with T.B. at the end of 1954; discharged as unfit for duty early 1955 spending the next 6 months in a sanatorium.

Back home to married life working for a local builder for a few years. By 1965 we were a family of 5 and decided to emigrate to Australia. That was in March but because of my earlier T.B. situation the authorities were holding things up for a while, so it wasn't until November we were allowed to move.

Five or so weeks on the *Fairsky* and sailing through Freemantle on the way, we arrived in Melbourne and then Ararat two days before Christmas to join Shirley's parents who had been here for about two years.

I started work after Christmas with a local builder, fairly busy then but by 1969 things were getting quiet. One of the relatives who lived in town said what about getting a job at the Mental Hospital, Aradale, which I did; quite a contrast with any previous working situations! Working on the wards for about fifteen months, one of the head nurses said what about doing your nurse training. Back to studying again – over three years. After twenty years I retired, spending the last three years at JWard which I preferred over Aradale. I later started as a tour guide at JWard in 1997.

Music has been a part of my life for over 40 years. I'm a founding member of the Ararat Musical Comedy Society that was at the start of 1974. Two nights in October that year for the first show, one of those nights was supposed to have been my nurses' graduation! Thirty years on the stage. In 1974 was also when I joined the City Band, playing trombone for over 20 years. Later on it was church choir for a few years and for over 30 years, made some great friends in the Barbershop Quartet.



Night, Gibraltar

HMS Eagle 1954
Gibraltar at night.

Once this great situation (Covid) sorts itself out, I'll be looking forward to joining the good crew and our U3A singing group. GD.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Margaret Wright! It was her 95th birthday on Monday 12 October.



Interview with Ararat historian Judy Barry.

'If there is anything that you wanted on any historical aspect – Judy would know it or (know how to..) find it'. The late Cr Peter O'Rorke dubbed her a "living treasure".'

Hello Judy. What is your cultural background (parents), where were you born, and where did you live when you were young?

Dad was of English/Irish stock and Mum of English, Irish and Swiss Italian origins. I am the 4th of 5 children born to Gerald Lillis & Myra Jones, I have two older brothers and I am the middle one of 3 daughters. I was born in Ararat and lived here all my life, firstly I lived towards the eastern end of Barkly Street then to Albert Street until I was married. My parents both worked at Aradale, Dad was painter, glazier, and worked between Aradale and J Ward whilst Mum worked in the laundry at Aradale after us kids were older. My memory of J Ward was that it was always there, I have slept there on many occasions as My Uncle Tim Stapleton was the boss and the family lived there in the 'Governor's quarters.' My Aunt was Mum's twin sister. My brother was a psyche nurse, between there and Aradale, my husband Danny was a cook at Aradale and was based at J Ward for 13 years, so the place was a second home to me.

Was history a favourite subject at school?

Believe it or not – I hated history as it was all English and no Australian history, so at that age I was not interested at all, I preferred to learn about my own country, State and town. I seemed to be often asking questions about this, that and the other and soon learned that if you didn't get an answer, then go and find it for yourself.

Your first work place was

The place that was my first job, was at Cannon's Newsagency as a shop assistant and then I went to work at Prestige as a Linker in the hosiery department for 5 years and then in the last year before I married I worked in the canteen. It was while I was working here that I first heard about Ararat's 1st Cemetery.

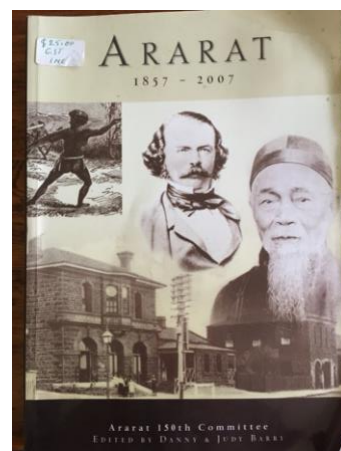
Did this influence you to start taking note of the progress and change in Ararat and then to go back and research earlier times.

Yes, probably – for some reason I was always interested in something or another about our families or some building, etc and I would have to search around until I found the answer. Us children weren't told things and it was apparently the same for my parents, therefore it was quite a hard chore to find the answers, but persevere long enough and you will get there, there were no CDs, no internet, it was just one step at a time backwards – this then expanded to my interest in local history. There wasn't really much to read about so I decided to find out things for myself. As I mentioned about the 1st Cemetery – there were no records of who or how many were buried there and what happened to them – because of a development this involved me in a very public way of trying to protect the people in there – I was able to learn, along with Merryl Wooley, that there are approximately 500+ still in there – the public treatment that I received was that 'she is only a woman, what would she know' – that hurt but I had done my homework and had the facts to prove what I was saying. To do this Merryl and I worked in the BDMs Vaults for 2 to 3 days at a time and stayed in Melbourne to do this each time. It was hectic but very enjoyable, it was probably the

best history and geography lesson all combined as we waded through the beginning of Victoria with the Port Phillip Bay district and Portland Bay – as the gold and settlers occurred, these stretched into several towns.

*I've really enjoyed re reading the **Ararat 150 years** that you co-wrote with your husband Danny and the 150 committee. So much research. Could you tell us about this?*

The council decided to produce a book to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the town by acknowledging someone/something relating to each year and we were asked to attend a meeting to discuss what was to be done. We were all asked to come along to the next meeting with names as suggestions for who or what was to be done – we did our list and I think there was one other with a couple of names – and from that we suddenly had to produce a book – I thought My God what have we let ourselves in for? 60 other persons supplied stories and the other 90 were left to us – a couple did not come forth with their promised stories and that is how we come to put Aradale in précis form into the book.



You've researched and written other books. What are their titles?

They were “*Executions at the Old Ararat Gaol*” – “*Ararat Town Hall Centenary Celebrations 1898 – 1999*” and “*Ararat 1857 – 2007*”

The story behind the Executions at the Old Ararat Gaol was that I bought myself a copy of the Victorian Inquest Index on Film and having a look around on it I found a 3rd Judicial Hanging for Ararat, so I rang Mr Blachford who had recorded 2 hangings in his book ‘Anecdotes of History’ to say what I had found and he said ‘Well done Girlie, now you know that you have to put what you have found in writing and let it be available to the public’. I went ahead and got a copy of the original trials of the three hangings and looked up the Ararat Advertiser and found that they wrote up the stories far better than I could and even though I was threatened with court proceedings if I wrote about it I decided to go ahead with it as it was all public knowledge, so I just collated all stories and transcribed it.

What is the most important thing you have discovered in your search for details of Ararat history?

I guess the one that had the most impact was the building of a sort of register for the 1st cemetery. I recall the day of the archaeological dig was to take place - I brought up their names on my computer and said a prayer to them and for them and told them in no uncertain terms that “You buggers had better show yourselves today as I can’t do another thing to save your burial sites for posterity.” We will wait and see what happens next.

Another one that I love is the 100 years of rates for the Central Business District which enables you to see who owned and who occupied each shop from what I call Deans’ corner opposite the theatre up to McDonald’s Bakery and down the other side to the Commercial Hotel, for that period of time.

The 3rd memorable one was learning the names of the prisoners in J Ward when it was a Gaol – this involved a full day in the ‘Russell Street Headquarters’ in Melbourne, but we got what we were after and from there to come home, sort it and transcribe it into some sort of order. From these records I don’t know why anyone has a tattoo as it is one of the first things recorded to identify the person.

So very grateful to Judy for her generosity and the time she took to share these recollections with us.

MB

To read more about Ararat history, check out <https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/ararat>

Spring planting... November

Seeds (+) seedlings (*) under cover first (~)

Basil *+, Beans +, Beetroot +,

Capsicum (*), Carrot (+), Celery(*+~), Cucumber (+*)

Eggplant (*),

Leeks (+), Lettuce (+*),

Parsnip (+), Potatoes, Pumpkin (+*),

Radishes (+), Silver beet (+*), Sunflower (+),

Tomatoes (+*).

Sweet corn (+), Turnips (+), Zucchini (+*)



We will have all tried Brassicas in the spring and summer to the delight *only* of the white cabbage butterfly! Best results planted in late autumn for a winter and early spring crop.....



Viola hederacea.

Angus Stewart formerly of Gardening Australia tells us that this plant is a pretty ground cover and even a lawn substitute for shady areas. It has round leaves and purple and white flowers sitting high above the foliage. It spreads by underground runners, and does best in moist open soil that has some organic matter, but will tolerate a wide range of situations, including under trees. Looks lovely in pots, next to paths and ponds. Propagation is simple, dig up a section of plant with roots attached and replant where you want them. It can be used for a lawn substitute if it doesn't get much foot traffic and if it gets regular care. If it endures harsh conditions, it will tend to die back, but the underground runners wait and it can resprout from once conditions improve. Can tolerate some frost.

The flowers are edible and can be used as garnish on sweets and in salads.



AUSTRALIA COME FLY WITH ME... “Series of 3, hosted by Justine Clarke. Now SBS on demand. This three part series is a collision of pop culture, the history of flight and the great shifts in Australian life that flying enabled.

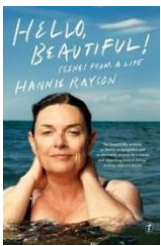
The history of flight is filled with danger and glamour, social injustice and opportunity. Just as it brought people together, air travel also revealed the cracks in Australia’s society. Over three weeks, *Australia Come Fly With Me* will celebrate the turbulent history of Australians in the air. 2020 marks 100 years of civil aviation in this country at a time when the industry is facing its biggest challenge due to COVID-19.



Hosted by actor **Justine Clarke**, the series brings together pop culture and the history of flight, and explores how flight enabled changes in Australian life. The opportunities and tensions created by air travel are the context for struggles between sexes, sexualities and cultures that reflect and foreshadow changes that would follow on the ground.

SBS director of television and online content, **Marshall Heald**, said: “*Australia Come Fly With Me* is a landmark television moment, celebrating the centenary of civil aviation.”

U3A Book of the month



Read Caroline Baum's Review -

You can tell from the title that this is a Happy Book. *Hello, Beautiful!* is a very modern hybrid: a memoir of life lived to its fullest, and a collection of essays on the absurdities and dilemmas of contemporary urban life. Living in inner city Melbourne gives Rayson, one of life's natural observers and eavesdroppers, the opportunity to observe her gentrified boho neighbourhood and community like a social anthropologist - with

affection and wry amusement.

Her own family also supply her with abundant material with which to exploit her comic skills in deadpan delivery and timing (her only child Jack providing some of the book's pithiest comments). As you would expect from a life of any depth, not all the material is as sunny as Rayson's own nature: a piece about a miscarriage is heart-twistingly sad and her reminiscences about her father, who liked a drink and could not hold on to money, simmers with slow cooked frustration.

You'd have to have a hard and humourless heart not to be cheered by *Hello, Beautiful!*. But there is a spiritual dimension to Hannie Rayson's down-to-earth existence: gratitude for small things: family, friendship, a sense of belonging and purpose. She knows she is lucky in love and life and her enthusiasm and appreciation spills onto these pages infectiously. Recognising your own good fortune and spreading it around must surely be a kind of grace.

About the Author

Hannie Rayson is a playwright and screenwriter. Her works-including *Hotel Sorrento*, *Inheritance* and *Life After George*-have been performed around Australia and internationally. She has been awarded two Australian Writers' Guild Awards, four Helpmann Awards, two NSW Premier's Literary Awards and a Victorian Premier's Literary Award. Her play *Life After George* was the first play to be nominated for the Miles Franklin Literary Award. Hannie lives in Melbourne.

Individual stories – happy bedtime reading one or two. Available as usual through Central Highlands Library Ararat.

E&OE. MB