

U3A

Third Thoughts

Castlemaine Inc (Est 1988)

Volume 24 No 11

December 2009

Reg. A0017409G



The photography group having lunch at the Cascades near Metcalfe on their November trip. They also visited Turpin's Falls and were delighted with all the water coming over the falls. The wonderful rock formations at the Cascades inspired plenty of interesting pictures.

You can pick up the new Prospectus for 2010 and Subscription Renewal forms immediately after the Coffee Morning on 4 December. The office will post it to existing members who are unable to come to the December Coffee Morning/Christmas Break Up Lunch.

Enrolment Days for classes in 2010 and new members to enrol will be on 19 and 20 January.

Renewal payments must be accompanied by a 2010 Subscription Renewal form. You will find this at the back of the 2010 Prospectus. Please remember to bring this with you on enrolment day. Payments cannot be accepted without the accompanying form.

New members can obtain a 2010 Application for New Membership form from the office, Secretary or Treasurer.

FROM THE COURSE COORDINATOR

The response to the invitation to offer courses in 2010 has been very encouraging. It has been marvellous for me to communicate with you all and I look forward to meeting with more of you in person during the coming year.

The usual enthusiasm will no doubt meet the 2010 Prospectus when it is launched in December. We hope it will also encourage new membership. Castlemaine is a rich source of generous people, willing to share experiences and interests and this translates into an abundance of opportunities for us all.

Thank you to those who have returned

Attendance Sheets for 2009. It is essential these are filled in at every session for insurance purposes. Also it is gratifying to see, from the Attendance Sheets, so much interest in Music and Languages over the past year. The Octopus has had almost 700 attendances. I am pleased to advise that the computer courses to be offered at the Octopus will be expanded in 2010.

My best wishes and many thanks to all who have been helping me with Prospectus preparation during the past weeks.

~ Win Jodell



CONTACT DETAILS

~ Committee Members ~

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**The Committee usually meets on the
second Tuesday each month.**

DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY 2010

NEWSLETTER IS

MONDAY 25 JANUARY, 3 p.m.

**There will be no newsletter
in January.**

COFFEE MORNING ROSTER

**4 December: (END OF YEAR BREAK UP,
light lunch and entertainment)**

**Tai Chi, Photography, Opera,
Singing Together, Solo Group.**

5 February 2010:

Aboriginal History,

Art and Drawing,

Australian History,

Ballet Appreciation.



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OFFICE HOURS

Mondays 1.30 - 3.30 pm

Tuesdays 1.30 - 3.30 pm

Wednesdays 10 am - 12 noon.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S EMAIL

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The Secretary, PO Box 792, Castlemaine,
3450. OR paid in U3A office hours at the U3A
Office,

12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine.

(Note: cheque or money order only).

**The U3A Office will be closed for
the Christmas break from
Wednesday 9 December until the
third week in January.**

FROM THE EDITOR

This will be the 11th newsletter since Narelle Stocks handed her baby on to me last year. I hope it has continued to fulfil its major function, which is to keep members informed and up to date on the classes and other activities of the organisation, and to act as a communication conduit between the Committee and members. I've enjoyed getting to know many of you and feedback and suggestions from members are always welcome.

Print run: Between 200 and 220 copies are printed each month in time to go out early in the last week of each month. We have continued to use the Castlemaine Copy Centre, which gives us a very competitive rate, and I have developed a good working relationship with the Copy Centre staff.

Distribution: About 90 newsletters are posted out each month to members and various other U3A branches. The rest are distributed at monthly Coffee Mornings, 12-15 per month through the Citizens Information Centre, 15 through the Tourist Information Centre, and two to the library for the public to read.

A change during the year has been that members who previously received the newsletter by email are now advised each month by email, as soon as each newsletter is available on the webpage for downloading. They can save it to their own computer and print the parts they wish to have on paper.

Thank you! I'd like to thank:

- Val Anderson and the wonderful office staff for the support they have given me in keeping the distribution database in good order, and producing the labelled envelopes each month. As a newcomer to U3A, I have valued the practical information on how things work, advice and moral support that Val has given me.

- Barbara Bunton, who bravely took on producing the May issue while I was away
- Alan Robinson, who up to last month has been our webmaster, for putting the newsletter up on our webpage promptly each month
- Bruce Carruthers, the new webmaster, who will continue this task
- fellow Committee members who have contributed to the newsletter
- the Class Leaders and members who send in their informative Class notes each month
- members who write or send in entertaining contributions.
- the careful proof readers, including my partner, Anne, Sue Turner, Sally Kaptein and Narelle Stocks.



As membership of U3A Castlemaine continues to grow, the communication role of the newsletter will be increasingly important to allow the democratic process for the Committee to keep in touch with Class Leaders and members. The timetable will only be printed once for each term.

It has been suggested that about three times a year, we should expand the newsletter from 12 to 16 pages to accommodate more creative contributions from our members.

From next year, I'll be supported by a Communications Subcommittee, which will contribute feedback and ideas to make *Third Thoughts* more useful and entertaining. The Subcommittee will probably meet for a brainstorm two or three times a year. We'll keep in touch informally, and when necessary, over the year. I will appreciate the contribution of anyone who can come on to this Subcommittee.

~ Elizabeth Rider, Editor, *Third Thoughts*.

Please send in reports and photos of U3A gatherings, the January holiday program, and creative writing for the February 2010 newsletter, which will be 16-pages.



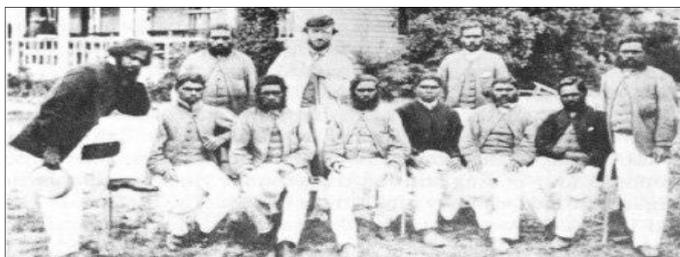
~ CLASS NOTES ~

ABORIGINAL HISTORY - OUR SHARED HISTORY

Felicity Say 5472 1841

Cricket lovers have warmly cherished the long tradition of Australian touring teams playing the English on the hallowed Lords ground. It is a tradition, most have accepted, that goes back to 1878. So it may come as a surprise to some to know that, in fact the very first Australian team to appear at Lords, was an Australian Aboriginal team coming from the Western District of Victoria. Their tour took place almost 10 years before the all white

team played at Lords. This remarkable story will be seen at our final session for 2009 on 1 December. The class will then go on to the home of Prue Cole for a breakup lunch.



The Aboriginal cricket team at the MCG in 1867

ADVENTURES IN ENGLISH

Diana Collier 5443 0137

Over the year we have studied the exciting changes and great flexibility of Early English (CE 500–1100) as the foundation of our current English language(s). Discussion has tended to centre on the Middle English period (1100 – 1500) with its tremendous variation of dialects, growth and movement towards a standard and “grammatical correctness”. This flows into Early Modern English (1500 – 1800) and the spread of English overseas.

Melvyn Bragg’s DVD on American English

gives us an awareness of the developments of this use of language. The influences on language, such as environment, social conditions, ethnicity and custom, labour, status, ‘snob value’ and prestige are all reinforced.

Little, if any, research, has been done on Australian English, but one session in November will be given to this, using comments by Kate Burridge (Monash Univ. Linguistics) as a basis. One session will be participants’ choice, such as Rhythm in speech, or Why do words change?

APPLE MAC COMPUTERS AND IT

Michael Smith 5470 6638

The name of the class has changed from *Introduction to Apple Mac* to *Apple Mac Computers and IT* (IT, Information Technology). It was felt that the original title was appropriate at the commencement of the course but now should be changed to update it to its current status. The new name was chosen in conjunction with Bruce Carruthers, our instructor, and this was his preferred listing.

The class is held in the U3A office on Mondays at 10 am.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Geoff Walker 5470 6652

We have had a very enjoyable year with the programme of biographical studies of prominent Australians. Our numbers have increased compared with the previous couple of years.

Our thanks and appreciation must go to all who have prepared the studies and to the folk who have welcomed us to their homes.

Our last session for the year will be at 5.00 pm on Monday 14 December, at Caesar Gordon's home, 93 Hargraves Street. We will discuss the programme for 2010, and will involve a bit of feasting activity.

The best effect of fine persons is felt after we have left their presence.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson, writer and philosopher (1803-1882)

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Denise Jepson 5473 4470

Over a period of five years our tutor, Denise, is aiming to bring us to major novels written mainly in the last two centuries. So far the class has spent some time delving into some fascinating novels of the 19th century, including the great classic writers such as Dickens, Thackeray, Thomas Hardy, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte, Trollope, Tolstoy, Flaubert and Henry James.

Next year we will focus on significant 20th century writing starting with D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), which was taken to court for being obscene. Then on to Mary Webb's interesting *Precious Bain* (1913) a look back at regional English life.



Then we have Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, the French writer, Collette's *Cheri* and *The Last of Cheri*, featuring the ageing mistress of a younger lover. We'll also read and analyse Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984*, and America writer, Mary McCarthy's *The Group*, written in the late 1950s about a group of women who have known each other throughout their lives since school.

We'll study Doris Lessing's *Golden Notebook*, Simone de Beauvoir's *Memories of a Catholic Girl*, and the Caribbean author, Richard Wright's compelling novel *Native Son*.

~ *Elizabeth Rider*



Doris Lessing, Persian-born, Rhodesian-raised, now living in London, a novelist whose deeply autobiographical writing reflects her engagement with the social and political issues of her time, won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2007, aged 87.

An Excerpt from Doris Lessing's speech for the 2007 Nobel Prize for Literature

'Very recently, anyone even mildly educated would respect learning, education, and our great store of literature. Of course, we all know that when this happy state was with us, people would pretend to read, would pretend respect for learning. But it is on record that working men and women longed for books, and this is evidenced by the founding of working men's libraries and institutes, the colleges of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Reading, books, used to be part of a general education.

Older people, talking to young ones, must understand just how much of an education reading was, because the young ones know so much less. And if children cannot read, it is because they have not read.

We all know this sad story. But we do not know the end of it.

We think of the old adage, "Reading maketh a full man" - and forgetting about jokes to do with over-eating - reading makes a woman and a man full of information, of history, of all kinds of knowledge. But we in the West are not the only people in the world. Not long ago a friend who had been in Zimbabwe told me about a village where people had not eaten for three days, but they were still talking about books and how to get them, about education...'

Calling Historians After more than 20 years of operation in the Mount Alexander area, the Castlemaine Steiner School is keen to compile a history of the school in time to celebrate an important milestone.

The school is seeking the help of an historian or writer from outside the school to gather together the rich fund of stories about the establishment and growth into a fitting memento of those early years. There are many individuals to contact, photos and hard copy records as information sources. We aim to publish in May 2010. There is a small financial allowance available, otherwise a voluntary contribution. Anyone interested contact Deborah Wardle, the School Facilitator on 5470 6235 or admin@castlemainesteinerschool.com.au

ISSUES THAT CONCERN

Carol Dorman 54724429

Attendance has been low at times recently but it still takes two hours to discuss all that concerns us. There was disbelief that the National Solar Schools scheme was closed - it proved to be too popular, thus expensive, was the general opinion. Hopes for a good result from the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December are low because of participating countries thinking parochially and not globally.

Rare Earth Elements have been discussed often because demand is outstripping supply. REE's are a group of special metals that are used in rechargeable batteries, mobile phones, plasma and LCD screens etc. They also make the strongest permanent magnets used in electric motors to produce greater power. China has dominated global supply for the last 10 years but uses most of it domestically and is increasing

export taxes. New supplies of REE's are desperately needed. There are quite a few Australian mining companies that are exploring but only one that is close to production. More information can be had at www.australianrareearths.com

Gunn's in Tasmania are clearing native forest in the Tamar Valley in preparation for their pulp mill even though they still do not have a financial backer. On the other hand Norsk Hydro (Norwegian) has pulled out of the proposed bauxite mine in the Mitchell Plateau area in the north Kimberley and have relinquished the exploration licence. The Wilderness Society believe a conservation and compatible development plan for the Kimberley should be done and they managed to convince Norsk Hydro of this.

An Issues member recommends seeing Michael Moore's new film *Capitalism - A Love Story*.

ITALIAN CONVERSATION

Vivienne Robertson 5470 6499

In the last few months we have had some interesting accounts of various experiences, of course all *in italiano*. At this stage of the year we are all aware that we have come a long way in the course and realise that the only way to improve our spoken language is by *la pratica*.

Giovanni has entertained us with tales of his trip *in Turchia*, where he found fascinating scenery, delicious food *a buon mercato*, and excellent *trasporto pubblico*. Norma too has been *in giro* but closer to home on the Ghan and other amazing excursions in the *Territorio del Nord*. Liza has not yet returned to class from her study tour *in Italia* but we are expecting great things of her. Giorgio has described his experience of downsizing and moving *la casa*, Laura has challenged us with her feelings about double negatives, as well as her many *viaggi* and Giulia has recounted her amazing *avventure* on bikes, yachts, and even a tai-chi demonstration.

Anna and Maria have contributed *informazioni* on films, *il giardino* and *la cucina* and all of us



have struggled bravely with pronoun objects, relative pronouns, and a dramatisation of *Peter Pan e il Capitan Uncino!*.

Both Italian classes are finishing the year together with *un pranzo italiano* and *un bicchiere di vino* in the last week of the month and we wish everyone *Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo*.

We will resume classes in the New Year and look forward to hearing *in italiano* what everyone has done over the Christmas Break.

~ CLASS NOTES ~

LATIN WITH DAVID AND LATIN REVISION

Class Leader: David Kennedy

Contact: Susan Mayfair 5470-5872

All past and present class members are cordially invited to the Latin class annual Christmas get together at

Cluainmhor
3 Saint Street
Castlemaine

2.00 pm Thursday, 10 December 2009

RSVP 5470 6230

Why do we wear kings' paper crowns on special occasions like Christmas Day? This tradition goes back to the Roman Saturnalia celebrations, celebrated around 25 December, when participants wore hats.



The idea of wearing a paper crown may have come from Twelfth Night celebrations, when a 'King' or 'Queen' was appointed to oversee the proceedings.

LET'S READ A PLAY

Trish and Barry King 5470 5514

Our group has had another wonderful year of reading a variety of plays from dramatic to farce, some prompting much in depth discussion and others just hearty laughs.

Play reading will begin again on the fourth Monday in February – so if you think you would like to join in look for details in the 2010 program.

A happy and safe Christmas to all.

MEMOIR WRITING

Elizabeth Rider 5470 5681

The Memoir Writing short course which ran for four Thursday afternoons in November, was just too short! The course will start again, running over the first term of 2010.

Many people of U3A age would like to record

various aspects of their experience of life, often so that their descendants will know more about them, but also to consolidate what their own life has been about.

The course began with the establishment of some ground rules for the group. We avoid becoming a 'counselling group' but it is inevitable that some recollections will arise that can be very private and emotional. Members have to be able to respect and trust the confidentiality of the group. This has proved to be the case. It has been interesting to consider the subtle differences between fact and fiction – after all, what is "fact"? We can only write what we remember, and it may not be always fact. It is also necessary to establish which voice to use; the first person subject of the life-story, or the third person omniscient narrator – or a host of other techniques. We considered the different effects of these different voices.

At each session we choose a topic on which to write for ten to 15 minutes. Then we read these aloud and invite comment. We also swop manuscripts to take home so members can take time to give more detailed comment.

It has been fascinating to note how different were people's responses to what was usually a common human experience, and also to hear how differently people remembered such events. And listening to other people's lives, has made us perhaps re-evaluate our own.

The course was extremely helpful from a literary point of view for those already writing memoirs, but I suspect, also cathartic for those who have dark clouds looming somewhere in the past. On a lighter note, we met people we had not known before and heard points of view different from our own.

It will be interesting to see what comes out of this fascinating exercise and we thank Elizabeth for the time and thought she had put into preparing these sessions.

~ Vivienne Robertson

~ CLASS NOTES ~

REQUIEM AND THEN ?

Vic Say 5472 1841

To finish the year Ann van Gemert will lead us in an appreciation of the second part of Handel's *Messiah*, share some comparisons of different performances of the *Messiah* and explore influences on this work.



George Frederik Handel, whose most famous creation is Messiah, one of the best loved and most respected works in Western choral literature. It includes the famous Hallelujah.

We started November by listening to parts of three early Requiem: Ockeghem's from the 1400's, Salas' from 1775 and Lobo's from 1621. We then listened to Cardoso's Requiem of 1625. It is a short work of less than 30 minutes, so after discussion the group decided to listen to the complete Ockeghem requiem again.

In our second program for November we listened to a modern requiem by John Rutter composed in 1985.

We are beginning to plan next year when we will have three further "new" Requiem to start the year: Palestrina's of 1591, Morales' of 1544 and Victoria's of 1605. We will also listen to a variety of other choral works suggested by members. Music selected will be related to, or inspired by, the liturgy in some way, Puccini's mass for instance. During the year we will intersperse older styles with later and modern musical styles.

We will continue to look for new requiem to share and opportunities to revisit favourites. Before the performance of Britten's *War Requiem* in Melbourne in May next year we will listen to that work again.

We'll meet on Friday 4 December at 1-30 if our break up lunch is over by 1 pm. If the lunch goes later than 1 pm, we will start at 2 pm.



SINGING TOGETHER

Rae Hawkins 5472 3446

A big thank you to all the members of the choir for their hard work and support over the year. Thank you too, to John for taking over while I was in hospital recently, and earlier in the year. Thanks to choir members who took on extra jobs while I was away. Thanks to Bronwen and Heather for letting us practice at her house during school exams. My apologies for any lapses in communication.

We shall be finishing for the year early in December, and starting up again the Tuesday after the February coffee morning.

I have so much enjoyed working with everyone and count myself as extremely fortunate to have such lovely people in the choir. Best wishes to everyone for Christmas and the New Year.



TRANSPORT - PASSENGER AND FREIGHT

John Leavesley 5472 3182

Thanks to all those friends who participated this semester. Up to seven of us have met twice a month to discuss and review the technology and economics of passenger and later freight transport. It has proved to be both interesting and informative. Looking at freight was a natural progression, and finally at logistics and supply chain management.

A planned four week program has now run for eight weeks, and we are finding new issues that we wish to know about. I was not planning to continue to offer the program in 2010, coming to the final year of my own studies. However, if (as the shipping industry says), "if inducement offers, we will go there". So maybe we should see if others are interested in pursuing a similar set of issues and continue to enjoy a two hour session twice a month.

Happy Christmas to All!



MUSIC APPRECIATION

Bruce Baud 5472 4574

Our enjoyable November program was all about Beethoven once again. In 1791 he wrote a delightful *Piano Trio No 38*, for piano, violin and cello. We heard this three movement work recorded by the Stuttgart Trio. Then came an excellent Sonata for horn and piano, *Opus 17* composed in 1800 which seems to be the only work written for this instrument combination. I have previously mentioned that fine pianist Jenö Jando, who records for the Naxos label among others.

His recording of the *Eroica Variations* is quite a good one. This is also called *Variations and Fugue on a theme from Prometheus*. Beethoven used this same theme in the *Eroica Symphony* and also in the Ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*. The first half of our morning concluded with *The Prisoners Chorus* from his only opera *Fidelio*. In the opera the prisoners are allowed a brief walk in the open air when the singing of the Chorus occurs.

We then heard the famous *Romance for Violin and Orchestra in F Opus 50*, composed in 1798. Following this came the *Seven Variations on Duet* by Mozart from the opera *Magic Flute*, written for cello and piano, composed in 1801. We ended with the piano sonata, *The Tempest* played by the legendary Alfred Brendel, composed in 1802, a fitting ending to the session.
~ Brian Willis

U3A CALENDAR FOR 2010

You'll be able to get a Proposed 2010 U3A Calendar at the December Break Up Morning and Lunch on 4 December. It includes the Term dates, as well as our traditional events. The newsletter will also keep you up to date.

A huge thank you to all the office volunteers over the past year. You were reliable and efficient which made my job much easier. A special thank you to Beverley Stokes who has done all the data input on the database this year and given my eyes a much needed rest. I look forward to seeing you all again in 2010. Please contact me if you wish to be taken off the list.

~ Val Anderson, Office Coordinator

IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Someone asked the other day, 'What was your favourite fast food when you were growing up?' 'We didn't have fast food when I was growing up. All the food was slow,' I answered. 'C'mon, seriously. Where did you eat?'

'It was a place called 'at home," I explained. 'Mum cooked every day and when Dad got home from work, we sat down together at the dining room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate I was allowed to sit there until I did like it.' I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table.

Some other things I could have told are: Some parents NEVER owned their own house, wore Levis, set foot on a golf course, travelled out of the country or had a credit card.

My parents never drove me to school. I had a bicycle that weighed probably 50 pounds (about 23 kg), and only had one speed, slow. We didn't have a television in our house until I was 19. It was black and white and the station went off the air at midnight, after playing the national anthem and a poem about God. It came back on air at about 6 AM and there was usually a locally produced news and farm show on, featuring local people.

I never had a telephone in my room. The only phone was on a party line and before you dialled, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using the line.

Pizzas were not delivered to our home. Milk was. All newspapers were delivered by boys and all boys delivered newspapers.



Movie stars kissed with their mouths shut. At least, they did in the movies. There were no movie ratings because all movies were produced for everyone to enjoy viewing, without profanity or violence or anything offensive.

Growing up isn't what it used to be, is it?

~ Anonymous, Internet, sent in by Sue McKeown.

UNDERSTANDING OPERA

Peter Morris 5470 6593

Over the last two months the opera class has enjoyed operas on the screen at the Theatre Royal from La Scala opera house in Milan. In October we saw *La Traviata* with Angela Gheorghiu and Ramon Vargas, and in November we saw *Aida* with Roberto Alagna (Angela Gheorghiu's husband) as Radames in a Franco Zeffirelli production. There is a possibility of more operas on screen from La Scala next year.

Our last meeting for the year will be on the 14 December at 2.00 PM, back at 34 Bowden Street for our usual Christmas break-up, where we will enjoy recorded excerpts, a not difficult quiz and a shared afternoon tea to follow.

For those of you not able to be at our Christmas break-up I wish you the compliments of the season and look forward to seeing you in 2010.

GARDENING AT U3A

Cath Polinelli 5476 2402

In November we had a lovely hour learning how to do simple flower arrangements. One of the first lessons is to have fresh flowers. All flowers should be hardened before being used as a flower uses the same pores to give off moisture as it does to breathe. One of the main causes of wilting is air bubbles that prevent the flow of water from the stem end to the bloom. To remedy this re-cut the stem a little higher up before replacing it immediately in the water. For hollow stems, re-cut below the water. Splitting the stem upward or cutting at a long slant is effective for most flowers.

Some of the principles to remember are the importance of colour, balance, the right vase, choice of modern or traditional arrangement. We can use aids to hold the stems. Today the price of flowers has risen, and due to controlled heating in our homes, fewer flowers are being used in smaller arrangements.

Our Christmas dinner is on 11 December at 12 noon at the Guildford Hotel..

Special Events for your diary

JANUARY HOLIDAY PROGRAM PROMISES INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

The Holiday Program will be available at the December Coffee Morning, or you can pick one up at the Market Building in Mostyn Street or the Citizens Information Centre.

It will begin with a breakfast and end with a Grand Finale. In between there are many activities — busy, quiet, excursions, films, picnic, and a trip to the Bendigo Planetarium. It's a chance to meet U3A members you don't yet know and so something a bit different. Visitors are most welcome to come with you.

The program is supported by a budget so most activities are free. and many members are opening their homes to us.

For more information

phone Peggy Munro—5472 2086.

POMPEII 2010

After careful consideration we have decided a tour of Pompeii next year by U3A poses too many challenges. However, instead we could offer a course that explores life in Pompeii and surrounding region in the first part of the U3A 2010 calendar.

Part of the course would deal with how to maximise a real visit to Pompeii, discuss an itinerary and suggest travel experts who could organise the fine details.

For armchair travellers the proposed course would provide an opportunity for some 'virtual travel' and to consider life in Ancient Rome, Pompeii and its surrounding region. We hope that members will endorse our decision.

~ Sally Kaptein, Special Events Coordinator.



RUMINATIONS OF AN INSOMNIAC 2; ROAD SIGNS

I am usually the passenger and so have time to analyse road signs. I was taught to not just look at things, but to look for a subtext. And that is what I do. Some road signs are straightforward. If, for example, the sign says “Gravel Surface” you can be almost certain that it means this particular road has a gravel surface. But not all signs are as clear as this, especially those in pictorial form, or pictorial form with an additional text.



Some of the pictures on road signs actually contribute to the information given in writing. Take for example, the sign which warns us that the road is slippery when wet or icy. This illustration is one of my favourites. It shows a car which is so out of control that the tracks of its back (or front) tyres actually cross! Just to look at the sign makes one feel dizzy, even a little car sick. It is hard to guess from the picture where the car will end up, but certainly the driver has lost control, and it is difficult to imagine him regaining it.

Another favourite full of drama and action, warns us that stones may shatter our windscreen. We see the afflicted car from the back and a medium sized boulder has flown up and broken the windscreen, leaving a huge, star-shaped hole in it. It is alarming enough to cause one to slow down to a snail’s pace until the boulders have all been passed.

Almost equally alarming is the sign to warn people against hurtling round a bend. A huge truck tilts about 45% against the law of gravity. The artist has obviously caught the truck just in the instant before it crashes onto its side on the road. When I see this sign I cannot suppress a gasp of horror, even though I know the same truck has been tilting thus for several years.



Pedestrians might be represented by a smart (but a tad short) pair of black trousers, such as might have been worn by Michael Jackson. The socks (if he is wearing any) are not black so that David Letterman also comes to mind. Notice that the legs are always in trousers, never a skirt, and the shoes are always sensibly flat. Of course they

are! Bare legs and high heeled shoes (even on a woman) could be distracting to a lot of motorists.

Sometimes the pedestrians on the sign are an older couple. The gentleman is a little stooped, and protectively helps the lady, who wears a surprisingly short skirt and seems quite able to make the crossing unaided. They walk with purpose and determination, but I notice that neither of them wears shoes. They don’t have any feet!



Children crossing seem rather more light-hearted about it than the aged couple. The older one, a girl, seems almost playful and pulls by the hand a smaller child, a boy considerably younger. Both small pedestrians have feet and shoes, which is perhaps why they look so much more energetic than the old couple. These are the same two children often to be seen on a sign at bus-stops. Again, the girl pulls the little boy by the hand as they go to board the bus, and it is good to see the motherly instinct developing so early.



Sometimes, usually on country roads, the pedestrians are animals, most often a cow and a sheep. They walk patiently in single file and in an orderly fashion across the road.

There are two signs for koalas, one is the koala *couchant*, in which the furry creature looks cuddly and charming. The other sign is the koala *rampant*, in which the creature looks belligerent and threatening, its paws raised as though about to attack, or even worse, piddle.

The only sign relating to kangaroos uses the same image that was on the penny coin and it has a satisfying symmetry and balance about it, rather like the map of Australia. This sign is popular with overseas visitors and we once had to stop for 15 minutes for a group of visiting Italians all of whom wished to be photographed individually with the sign in the background.



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Editor’s Note: If you’d like some more penetrating analyses of road signs, let me know. Vivienne has more ...!



Technology Bits & Bytes

We ask everyone to put their wishing caps on and have a good think about what possible new Technology / Computer topics they might like to see incorporated into the 2010 computer programme. We have a couple of good ideas from the Digital Photography Group, but as always, "more's betterer"! Contact Shane Doyle (contact details below) if you come up with anything new.

Many thanks,

Shane, Betty and David and Tutors

*Happy Xmas to all
U3A members
from
The Computer Group*



The Computer page in *Third Thoughts* is now maintained by Shane Doyle, if you have any contributions for this page, please email to shanefromcastlemaine@gmail.com, or phone him on 5472 4017

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

- There is no class timetable with the December *Third Thoughts*. The fourth term ends on Friday, 11 December.
- Classes officially take a break from then until the beginning of February, though some activities continue, for example, bridge.
- The Holiday Program is launched on Friday, 8 January (See page 10)
- Registration and enrolment days are on Tuesday and Wednesday, 19 and 20 February at the Uniting Church Hall.
- First Term 2010 Classes start on Monday 1 February and first Coffee Morning of 2010 is on Friday, 5 February.

• Please let the office know of any change in your e-mail, postal address or other contact details. If you have changed your email address and not let us know, unfortunately we'll have to take you off our email list. This may mean that you miss out on information we email to members occasionally.

• Have you had a look at our own webpage? Bruce Carruthers, our new webmaster invites Class Leaders to contact him to include material and notes for class participants.

bruce@keepingitsimple.com.au