

U3A

Third Thoughts

Castlemaine Inc (Est 1988)

Volume 25 No 7

August 2010

Reg. A0017409G



IN THIS ISSUE ...

- What's On— Interesting Events for your diary
- Class Notes
- 'Confidence Trick'
- Disappointment ... And more

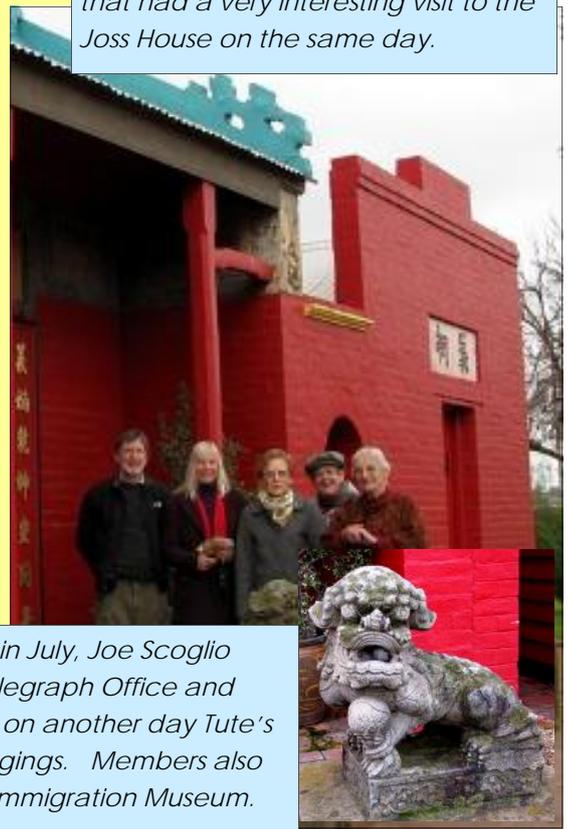
Trevor Wheeler took this imaginative photo (Left) at the Bendigo Art Gallery, which members visited during the Mid Year Holiday Program. The photo has caught the reflection of the statues, which look as though they are floating in air in the garden. Below is Trevor's photo of the group that had a very interesting visit to the Joss House on the same day.



Members enjoying the Forest Creek Diggings.



For the Mid Year Holiday Program in July, Joe Scoglio (left) organised tours of the Old Telegraph Office and Backstage at the Post Office, and on another day Tute's Cottage and the Forest Creek Diggings. Members also visited Parliament House and the Immigration Museum.



U3A CASTLEMAINE'S INFORMATION WEB PAGE: www.u3acastlemaine.com
~ Committee Members ~

President: Tom Comerford
tomchris@mmnet.com.au 5470 6230

Vice President: Marion Taubman
sharval@dodo.com.au 5470 5079

Secretary: Judy Sime
daveju@gmail.com 5472 3756

Treasurer: Sue Turner
turningwild@impulse.net.au 5472 1015

Past President: Sally Kaptein
walmer@castlemaine.net 5470 6340

Course Coordinator: Win Jodell
winj@tpg.com.au 5472 3792

Newsletter Editor: Elizabeth Rider
u3anews@aapt.net.au 5470 5681

Prue Cole
pruecole@gcom.net.au 5472 5054

Eva Haarburger
ehaarburger@vtown.com.au 5472 3391

Joe Scoglio - Acting Office Manager
scoglio@internode.on.net 5472 2396

Hans van Gemert
elouera3@bigpond.com 5472 1082

~ FRIDAY COFFEE MORNING ROSTER ~

6 August Gardening, German, Horticulture, Issues that Concern

3 September La Trobe Uni, Let's Read a Play, Memoir Writing,

The free Coffee Mornings at the Uniting Church Hall are every first Friday of each month, starting at 10 am with a short business meeting, There is usually a guest speaker before tea and coffee. Members' guests and members of other U3As are welcome.

Email u3acastlemaine@mmnet.com.au

Computer courses: octopus@mmnet.com.au

Office phone 5472 2249

POSTAL ADDRESS

PO Box 792, Castlemaine, Vic 3450

OFFICE ADDRESS

*Uniting Church Parish Centre
 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine*

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays 1.30-3.30 pm

Tuesdays 1.30-3.30 pm

Wednesdays 10 am-12 noon.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S EMAIL

u3anews@aapt.net.au

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$40.00 plus \$10 if postage of newsletter is required. \$20 if you join after June. Payment can be made by cheque or money order payable to

U3A Castlemaine Inc. and posted to:

The Secretary, PO Box 792, Castlemaine, 3450. OR paid in U3A office hours at the Office, 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine. (Note: cheque or money order only).

The Deadline for the September newsletter is Monday, 23 August AT 3 p.m.

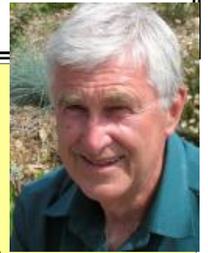
Please email your contributions, including photos to:

u3anews@aapt.net.au

If this is difficult, leave articles at the office.

The Committee usually meets every second Tuesday each month. Members are welcome to talk to a Committee member or write to the Secretary with items they would like included on the agenda.

~ PRESIDENT'S JOTTINGS ~



- It is pleasing to know that Win Jodell is well on the way to recovery after her horrific accident. We know that she will need to take things a little more easily for the next month or so and so any assistance that you can give would be much appreciated.
- Thank you to those of you who attended the mid-year holiday program. Thank you too, to Joe Scoglio and his team for their preparation of an exciting and challenging program. The Committee at its last meeting considered this program and the general feeling was that the patronage did not justify the effort involved. Therefore the preparations for a September holiday program have been put on hold. The issue of holiday programs is one of the points of discussion planned for Fresh Ideas Day. Do let us know your thoughts.
- FRESH IDEAS DAY will be held in conjunction with our September coffee morning (**starting earlier than usual, 9.30am– 1.30pm**). Please put the whole morning aside and stay for a light lunch. It is important that your ideas are heard and that our planning for the future represents the will of the membership. This is the one time when we really need and rely on the support of all our members.
- The AGM is fast approaching. Do give consideration to standing for Office. If you are interested in sharing in the immediate management of our organisation do make your interest known to Sally Kaptein or Prue Cole. They are organising a most enjoyable event which we hope will act as a precursor to our Committee elections. (See opposite on this page.)
- A working breakfast will be held on Saturday 7 August to acknowledge the contribution of our class leaders and also to gather their input to Fresh Ideas Day. We are much, much indebted to our class leaders who give much more time than that of the class to ensuring a pleasurable learning experience for us. For those of us who are casual in our attendance at classes, I wonder do we really appreciate the effort that goes into the preparation of a class session? It is of course very much appreciated by class leaders when class members apologise for their inability to attend a class.
- I recently spend some time on office duty as a substitute. I could not credit how many people actually visit the Office. I'd thought I'd get a lot of photocopying done and then enjoy a cup of coffee – not to be, which shows how really important it is to have a recognized place of contact. Fraternally, *Tom Comerford*

The committee of Castlemaine U3A invites you to

A Very Very Happy Hour (or two)

When: *Friday 20 August, 5 - 7pm*

Where: *Prue Cole, 6 Treasure Street, Castlemaine*

Why: *To bring yourself and ideas – and if you have a favourite cocktail, or mocktail (non alcoholic drink), that you would like to share, please email us your recipe and WE WILL HAVE IT ON TAP FOR ALL TO TRY. (A prize to be given for each category of drink chosen by all our expert tasters on the night!)*

With a drink in your hand we would like to ask for your ideas on some of the issues that our U3A needs to address as the New Year beckons.

RSVP by 13 August *to Narelle Stocks 5472 5329 or Prue Cole 5472 5054.*

Email recipes to Sally: walmer@castlemaine.net

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Jill Evans,

Alan Harris, Pamela Harris,

Claire Melgaard and Phil Melgaard

~ FROM THE COURSE COORDINATOR ~

Term III has begun in what has become one of our coldest and wettest winters for some years. I do encourage you to keep up with your class commitments in appreciation of the immense amount of work your class leaders put into preparation of those sessions.

I am sorry to report that the **New Zealand** course with John Neil from Bendigo will not go ahead. The enrolment numbers were insufficient for him to start. However he has agreed to offer the course in February. It will appear in the 2011 Prospectus.

Of the new courses starting this term I have the following news:

Stem Cells was well attended and enjoyed by all participants. We can collectively wonder if Christobel has something in mind for 2011. It was good to have a short, well-presented science subject offered this year. Are there any others out there with a passion for science and a willingness to share it with us?

Both **American History** and **Popes of the Renaissance** have started well. New members are still welcome to these sessions. Check timetable for details of course content, date, time and venue.

French for Beginners I with Ros Coffey will commence at **9 am on Tuesday, 3 August** in the Uniting church complex. It would be marvelous if a few more joined this class to make it more viable. At the start of the year there were many requests. Where are you all?

Croquet for Beginners. This popular course is being offered again, see details under Class Notes on Page 6 in this newsletter.

People working in the office have been able to put members' email addresses into smaller groups now enabling us to send emails to you from time to time. We promise not to clog up your mailbox. Please read U3A mail and the newsletter carefully, and also our webpage,

so you can to take full advantage of the marvels on offer!

Finally please take extra care on the roads on cold mornings and be sure not to use the water spray until your windscreen heating is fully functioning. I would like to express my gratitude to the committee and many U3A members for all the care and concern shown to me since my recent accident. I am mighty fortunate to be living in marvellous Castlemaine. I feel very loved and supported. Thank you to you all.

For Class Leaders:

A reminder that a **Breakfast for Class Leaders** is to be held in the **Garden Room at Buda at 8.30 am on Saturday 7th August**. Please let Tom or me know if you are able to attend.

Uniting Church Hall **Store Room** issues have been resolved. Black boards are now being left out.

A new **White Board** has been purchased with the help of a grant. This will be assembled and available in the Uniting Church venue by the time you read this!

Room Usage Reminder : It is imperative that you fill in the form when you use a room in the Uniting Church Complex! We are charged \$9 per hour for these rooms. While this may not be excessive, it all adds up. Besides it is only \$2.50 for Leicesterville! So I beg you to notify Sue Turner or me if you skip a class or move to another venue. It is important.

~ *Win Jodell*, Course Coordinator

Reminder! Please let the office know of any change in your e-mail, postal or other contact details.



~ CLASS NOTES ~

ABORIGINAL HISTORY - OUR SHARED HISTORY

Felicity Say 5472 1841

Tuesday, 3 August:

In preparation for attending the preview of *Pecan Summer* in October, this session will be an audio presentation of a live show which dramatizes the early life of Deborah Cheetham, the composer of *Pecan Summer*.



Deborah Cheetham composer and opera singer.

On 17th August, we'll view the fourth programme in the *Women of the Sun* series. This episode is set in 1981 and examines the inner turmoil and insecurity of an 18 year old girl when her adoptive parents tell her she is not of French Polynesian descent, but is the daughter of an Aboriginal woman.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Geoff Walker 5470 6652

In July we enjoyed several readings from Steele Rudd's *On Our Selection* series. These were originally published in *The Bulletin* and were popular reading for several decades at the end of the 19th and into the 20th centuries. Alan Robinson and Geoff Walker and other members of the group had a turn at reading a story,

This month the sessions will be on Monday 9 and 23 August at 2 pm at Alan and Barbara Robinson's home. On 9 August Alan will give us the story of *The Floating Brothel*, the story of Mary Wade, transported on the *Lady Juliana*, the floating brothel in the Second Fleet, which was sent to bring women of marriageable age to the colony of New South Wales. She was only eleven years of age and died at the age of 87, leaving five generations and 300 descendants.

On 23 August, Shirley Curnow will present to us the story of Banjo Paterson who delighted all Australians with his verse, *Clancy of the Overflow*. Paterson's writings first appeared in *The Bulletin*, but have had wide exposure since, including the production of several films.

AMERICAN HISTORY

Tom Comerford 5470 6230

Two new members joined this section of the Dabbling in History class - American History takes place each third Wednesday in the month. Our first session investigated the colonial settlement of the North American continent. Our August session will concentrate on the long-term, short-term and immediate causes/results of the two American Wars of Independence and on the dispossession of the First Americans. The September session will focus on slavery and the Civil War.

BALLET APPRECIATION *Joe Scoglio 5472 2396*

In July we finished off the Romantic era, looking at how the best choreographers left Western Europe for opportunities in Russia. It is interesting that in music, the Romantic era of Schubert and Mendelssohn followed the Classical era of Haydn and Mozart. In ballet the Romantic era of Taglioni and Perrot preceded the Classical era of Petipa. The soft, rounded romantic style was replaced by the linear, harder classical style, to which the blocked point shoe contributed. In Russia ballet dancers were part of the czar's imperial establishment and as such had a secure and esteemed status.

APPLE MAC COMPUTERS

Mike Smith 5470 6638



~ Sent in by Mike Smith

CROQUET

Nigel Harland 54748246

From 'kids playing backyard croquet,' U3A members have progressed. We now have, in our midst, a member who came home the winner on his first away social day. John Brennan and three other learners went to Bendigo for a social day out.

We had a very enjoyable day, thanks to Ian Campbell, president of Castlemaine Croquet Club, and members from Bendigo and surrounding areas. We were made very welcome. If there is anyone interested in coming along to play croquet it is very casual and we have a lot of laughs. We meet on Thursdays. Come for fun! For more information, ring Nigel Harland on 54748246 or Ian Campbell on 54723048.

~ Lyn Hall



ENGLISH LITERATURE

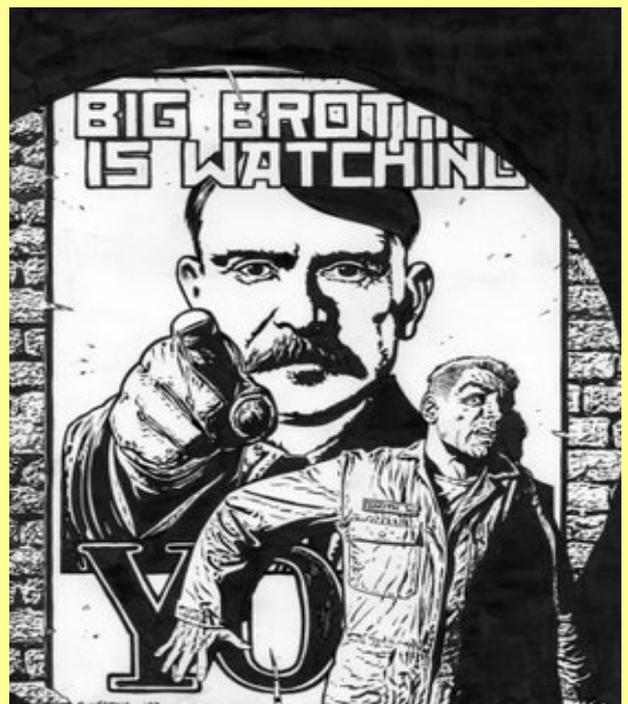
Denise Jepson 5473 4470

In July we entered Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, first published in 1932. Probably the most horrifying aspect of the novel is that so many of the conditions of that world are familiar in our world today —being trapped in a rampant consumerist economy, which includes the necessity of staying at war, loss of individuality, escapism through drugs, shallow entertainment, cloning, cheap and meaningless sex and entertainment. The book certainly led to a very interesting analysis and discussion.

In August we navigate the sterile, dehumanised world of *1984*, in which George Orwell's creative imagination takes us into the terrifying society where, even in the privacy of your home, Big Brother constantly watches you. Life, thought, and even language, have been engineered to serve Big Brother. *Newspeak* is a reductionist language that turns people into uncritical automatons. (Texting language has similarities!) If you disagree with the Party, you are sent to a labour camp, known as 'Joycamp', History is constantly rewritten to suit the Party. Ugh!

In August Denise is cruising away on a well-earned holiday and has asked Elizabeth Rider to facilitate the discussion this month.

In September there will be a change of mood when the novel is *The Group* by Mary McCarthy.



Any parallels between 1984 and 2010 ?

GARDENING AT U3A*Cath Polinelli 5476 2402*

My thanks to all who sent cards, made phone calls and sent good wishes for my recovery. To my good gardening companions, many thanks for the good work you have done in my absence.

In July we met at Victoria Park to prune the roses. We did one bed – my thanks to those of you who came. I hope you are feeling better by now, Beth. Thanks to those who rang to say they could not attend.

Our next meeting, which Dennis is arranging, will be on Friday, 20 August. We will visit a potting nursery. We meet at the Uniting Church car park at 10 am. Bring your lunch, or buy something, as we will be away from here.

Peggy Munro 54 722 086

Members of our group all contribute to the sessions. In July, when David said 'weeding', we all groaned. It's always on the list, and this year because we've had such lovely rain, there has been more than ever to do.

We went to visit *Meanderings*. Thank you to Barbara and Lorraine who showed us the design elements of this great garden. Some of our group did a garden profile to indicate the strengths of this garden. We had seen some early photographs so we learnt much about the design and process.

In 20 August we will meet at my place in Burnett Road (22-24) at 1.30 pm to propagate things! Sow seed, divide things, take cuttings, make *new* plants by grafting and layering. Everyone will have a go.

We will have drinks and nibbles afterwards as reward for all this work.

I am looking forward to this session so hope to see all our usual crew and anyone else who would like to join us will be most welcome.

ISSUES OF CONCERN*Carol Dorman 5472 4429*

While I was away Frank and Eva ran the Issues sessions. My thanks to you both.

When visiting my cousin in the south-west I saw little evidence of the financial troubles of Europe but in Paris I was accosted by women begging for money, one with a child. All of them were immigrants, evidence of the financial and refugee crisis, I believe.

A wide range of subjects has, as usual, been discussed. Three damning reports on the Green Loans Scheme have been released by the Department of Climate Change. It was found that contract splitting took place to avoid the competitive tender process. Because of this 96% of contracts did not go to competitive tender, 75% going to one company. The reports can be found on the Department of Climate Change website.

The abysmal funding of mental health continues to cause concern. With one in five Australians

suffering from some mental disorder it was felt to be a matter of urgency that funding be increased.

China is continuing to buy assets around the world - Ireland, Greece (the port of Piraeus), shipping lanes, railways in Nepal. In Indonesia Mandarin is to be taught in schools.

We had an interesting discussion on food labelling with Sally Kaptein. Some conclusions were that nutritional panels on food packaging should be regarded as a guide only and anything with hydrogenated oils is best avoided. Denmark has banned the use of palm oil in food production. Orange juice drinks labelled "Made in Australia" can be made of imported juice concentrate with water added in Australia. Complaints regarding inaccurate or misleading food labelling can be directed to the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Julia Gillard's Peoples Congress on climate change solution was thought to be unnecessary. Action on climate change is needed NOW - not more talking!

OPERA - AN OCCASIONAL EVENING SERIES

Vic Say 5472 1841

6 August: *Manon Lescaut* by Puccini

We will hear the same story as we heard last month when we listened to *Manon* by Massenet, but in Italian and with different aspects of the story included in the libretto; this, along with the usual artistic license shifting the emphases of the drama, changes the experience completely. And that is before you contrast the French and Italian musical traditions which the composers bring to the task.

Both composers' libretti were derived from Prevost's story, as have many ballets, plays, films and other sung versions over many years. In each case, Massenet's in 1884 at the Opera-Comique and Puccini's in 1893 at the Teatro Regino, this opera was a determining composition in establishing these composers as unqualified successes.

Massenet's *Manon* swiftly achieved a popularity among the French equalled only by one or two other operas. It received its 100th performance at the Comique in 1891, its 500th in 1905, its 1,000th in 1952 and its 2,000th in 1992, an average of about 30 performances a year for 68 years!

For Puccini, it is said to be the first work of his career to show him at full maturity.

ITALIAN FILM DISAPPOINTMENT

Norma Rantall treated us to a wonderful Italian film program over the school holidays. I, for one, enjoyed the movies enormously. But I say 'one' with great sadness. Norma went to a great deal of trouble to organise this bonanza for us, with a warm fire, and comfortable chairs with lots of cushions, but only a small fraction of the people who put their names on her list actually showed up. One did ring to cancel but that's all. Considering that she could only cater for a limited number, these people reserved the seats others could have had. This thoughtlessness not only took up Norma's time, but prevented others from coming. It is disheartening and will no doubt discourage Norma from volunteering her time and home again.

~ Narelle Stocks



SINGING TOGETHER

Rae Hawkins 5472 3446

At the beginning of August we shall be welcoming John back from his month-long trip to South America.

On 26 August we shall be performing two groups of songs at the CWA Fun Day, and I shall be doing a solo item.

This year we won't have to travel as far as we have before as the Fun Day is being held at Harcourt Leisure Centre. I was told we should have a good audience, as outside groups are being invited and there is nothing quite like a CWA afternoon tea to round off an afternoon of entertainment.

In September we shall be tackling some new songs, polishing up some more old favourites and getting started on our Christmas program.

SOLO GROUP

Betty Henchman 5472 2139

Our meeting at 1 pm on Saturday 21 August, will be at Penny Garnett's home, 345 Barker Street, on the corner of Myring Street.

PHOTOGRAPHY (DIGITAL)

Trevor Wheeler 5476 2286

We have had several interesting sessions initiated by members of the group. Barb showed us Photoshop techniques using our pictures from the Botanical gardens/Railway yards excursion. Pam brought a light box for us to practise taking backlit pictures and John B gave us some guidance on resizing images for printing. Lyn showed us how to select an appropriate mount colour for our pictures using Picasa.

Our members chose events from the holiday program for their photography excursion last month. Also in July we cut mounts and learned Photoshop techniques.

On 5 August John E will give us some tips on when to use our camera on manual settings.

On 12 August we will have our usual Photography Excursion.



Acclaimed Australian poet, Les Murray

READING AUSTRALIAN POETRY

Eileen Park 5472 5213

Our class will recommence on Tuesday, 14 August at 1.30 pm at 13 Saint St.

For this session we will be reading the poems of Les Murray, and the next session is a work in progress. If members have a preference for a poet, then we will look at making up the rest of the program. Any members interested in joining us, please contact Eileen.

RENAISSANCE POPES

Tom Comerford 54706230

This month's session will centre on the three, or is it four, Medici popes with particular emphasis on Popes Leo X and Clement V11 and those who lived and worked under their patronage. A video of the Medici popes and their special relationship to Michelangelo will be shown. This may call for a change of venue so I would ask all members who are not contactable by email to ring 5470 6230 to ensure they know the exact location of our meeting. The September session will focus on the times of Clement V11 and Gregory X111. The Borgia's feature in October.

members of the group search out works new to us and which inspire. The Prioris seemed to some of us, a sublime recording in an amazing acoustic and with perfect voices. Wonder full!

These early works are to be contrasted with 20th and 21st century works in the coming weeks.

On Friday 6 August, after the coffee morning we will listen to the Andrew Lloyd Webber *Requiem* of the 1980's, inspired by the death of his father, and a story from Cambodia about a boy who was faced with killing his mutilated sister or being killed himself, a story which further inspired Lloyd Webber to score the work for a boy, a girl and a man.

On Friday 20 August we'll have Bach's B Minor mass. We will have a cuppa and nibble between CD's and finish about 3-45 or 4.00 pm. We learn from Graham Abbott of the ABC that the text of three radio programs about this work are available currently on the 'Keys to Music' blog, <http://blogs.abc.net.au/keystomusic/> or contact Vic who will send them to you.

REQUIEM AND THEN ?

Vic Say 5472 1841

Recent works new to the group have been requiem by Morales, a Spanish composer (1500 – 1553) and Prioris, of uncertain origin and with uncertain birth and death dates (about 1460 - 1514), whose requiem is the second earliest requiem to have survived. It is wonderful when



New Members Profile

Pam and Alan Harris

We were both born in Sydney and grew up in Lane Cove in the 1950s. After our marriage and birth of our two sons, we relocated to Canberra during the Whitlam years. Pam worked in a variety of federal government departments while Alan taught in ACT secondary colleges.

In the mid 1980s Pam established her own consultancy business which soon outstripped the dining room table. We watched the company grow to over 30 full and part time staff. In 1988 Alan, who had completed his Accountancy studies, left the Australian Audit Office and joined the company primarily to take over the financial coordination.

In the early 90s with our sons leaving home, and Alan looking for a change in direction, we left the business and headed for the Northern Territory. Alan had been appointed by the Gurindji elders as CEO of Daguragu Community Government Council at Kalkaringi, some 460 km south west of Katherine, NT, a position he held for three years. During this time, Pam continued with her consultancy work including investigating staff grievances Australia-wide on behalf of ATSIC.

While at Kalkaringi we were privileged to learn more about their Walk-off from Wave Hill Station and their traditional Aboriginal culture. Where appropriate, we were invited to attend century old ceremonies including the early stages of initiation rites for young men, taken on bush tucker expeditions and visits to dreaming sites in the nearby hills.

In 1995 Alan was appointed CEO of the Nguui Community Council on the Tiwi Islands: a large town (pop. 1400) located some 60 kms north of



Pam (left) and Alan Harris (right) enjoyed the walk to the Red White and Blue Mine in the Muckleford forest. Eight members went on the walk, which was organised by Dot Henshall (centre) as part of the Mid Year Holiday Program.

As very new members of Castlemaine U3A, Elizabeth Rider asked us to put together a brief outline of our lives. Given our lives, like many couples, have been closely intertwined; we find it easier to jointly write this brief outline.

Darwin. There Alan had a similar but far larger role as he was also responsible for the local health centre and its medical staff. While we enjoyed our four years there, it is the time spent with the Gurindji that we most remember.

Our final three years in the Territory up to 2002 included work with the NT Government for Pam and consultancy work for Alan throughout the Territory often at the request of the NT Government and ATSIC.

As Darwin's climate is very enervating we decided that as we weren't working full-time we would head back south. Thus we decided to settle in Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains so that Pam could be closer to her family in Sydney. However as our US based son and family were expected to be returning to Canberra we re-located there but this was not to be as earlier this year they informed us that they would not be returning to Oz.

With one granddaughter in Melbourne and another on the way a move closer to Melbourne was in order. As we had visited Castlemaine several times during our travels south and really enjoyed each visit we decided to relocate here. We are looking forward to many happy years at Castlemaine.

Confidence Trick ~ A memoir by Robin Rebbechi

white background. On my feet were white flatties in thick

When I was around fifteen, my mother hatched a cunning plan to enhance my confidence and poise. I would enter the Miss Launceston Regatta contest. The cunning plan did not work. This was not surprising, for it was deeply flawed. First of all, for something to be enhanced, it needs to exist. Given that confidence and poise were both conspicuously absent from my repertoire, the prospect of enhancing either was not good.

The second problem, and it was not an inconsiderable one, was that the Miss Launceston Regatta quest was a beauty contest, and I was not beautiful. I was not even pretty. Funny? Yes. Intelligent? Certainly. Good natured? Definitely. But beautiful? No. Not even on a good day, not even in the most flattering light.

I was short and pear shaped. I had a nice bust and a neat little waist, but I had hippo hips and thunder thighs no doubt inherited from some unfortunate female forebear who possibly disliked them as much as I did. My hair was mouse brown, dead straight and baby fine. It could be set and styled, but stayed that way only if drenched with copious quantities of industrial strength hairspray, and kept out of the slightest breeze.

The first time I entered the quest was not so bad, since I had no idea what entering a beauty competition entailed. I happily lined up with the other entrants, only gradually realising that I was the wrong height and shape and wearing the wrong clothes. I was mildly humiliated, and keen to escape at the earliest opportunity, but overall I came away relatively unscathed.

The second time was infinitely worse. By that time I was sixteen, I knew what was involved, I knew some of the other entrants, and I knew that my outfit was breathtakingly ugly. I tried to persuade Mum not to make me go, but it was a lost cause. If the nagging didn't wear me down, the threat of being grounded or of having my pocket money stopped did. I still don't know why she wanted me to go – whether it was a case of “love is blind” or whether, perhaps, she was hoping for a miracle – but I believe she thought the experience would be good for me. I did not. I hoped that the bus might break down, or that the ground might swallow me up. Neither happened.

And so I found myself lined up with the other girls. Tall, beautiful girls. Girls in pretty dresses, with high heeled shoes. Girls with sleek hair and immaculate makeup. I was wearing an unflattering dress with a gathered skirt (hips, hips, hooray!) with a red, yellow and green floral print on a

punched leather, with kiddie style straps over the instep. This Fashion Victim statement was completed by a pair of white gloves, and a spectacularly hideous white cotton hat (like a cricket hat) which Mum had decorated by sewing red, yellow and green buttons all over it. I know that many worse things happen to teenage girls, but I still clearly remember the abject misery of that day.

I did not enter the Miss Launceston Regatta quest the following year, or in fact in any other year after that. Perhaps my favourite cousin, eleven years older than me, intervened on my behalf, or perhaps I was too busy with my Matriculation year studies to go to the Launceston Regatta. Either way, I did not cry too many tears over missing the Launceston Regatta, or the Miss Launceston Regatta Competition.

© Robin Rebbechi June 2010

English as she is spoke...?

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,
 But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.
 One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,
 Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.
 You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
 Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.
 If the plural of man is always called men,
 Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
 If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,
 And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
 If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
 Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?
 Then one may be that, and three would be those,
 Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,
 And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.
 We speak of a brother and also of brethren,
 But though we say mother, we never say methren.
 Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,
 But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!
 Let's face it - English is a crazy language.
 There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;
 neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
 English muffins weren't invented in England .
 We take English for granted, but if we explore its
 paradoxes,
 we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are
 square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a
 pig.
 And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing,
 grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?
 Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not
 one amend.
 If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
 If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian
 eat?

~ Sent in by Narelle Stocks

SPRING TRIP TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY FOR THE EUROPEAN MASTERS

U3A has arranged a magnificent outing to the NGV to see the, not to be repeated, European Masters exhibition.

The coach will pick us up outside the Castlemaine Market Building at 9 am on Wednesday, 29 September and deliver us to the gallery door. From there we will have our usual lecture on the exhibition before moving into the display area. The coach will pick us up again at the door, and deliver us back to the Market building at approximately 5pm. What luxury!

To keep costs to a minimum, we will share the trip with members of the Castlemaine Gallery. Bookings for this event will only be secured with the payment of \$40 which includes everything.

BOOKINGS MUST BE MADE at the local Castlemaine Art Gallery and as this is open every day we expect this to be the easiest option. There will be a lot of competition for this trip so get in early as there are only 57 seats. There will be no refunds.

PECAN SUMMER: AUSTRALIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS OPERA

Friday, 8 October at Riverlinks, Maroopna near Shepparton. *We will attend the Preview to be held at 1 pm. The world premiere at night is completely booked out!*

The opera was written and composed by aboriginal soprano and composer Deborah Cheetham, who says, "the work is an opera for the 21st century, a contemporary opera for indigenous Australians and a story for ALL Australians."

Already the work has had rave reviews and, as members of our Aboriginal History group will tell you, the story is both remarkable and moving.

Special Events for your diary

We already have 20 bookings from the

Aboriginal History group. More seats are available.

Cost: \$35 per person. PAY by cash or cheque, made out to Castlemaine U3A, at the AUGUST COFFEE MORNING.

OR leave a cheque at the office with your name and details on the envelope. Remember we cannot take cash in the office. **NB: All payments must be received by 10 August.**

We plan to share cars and drive to Maroopna in time to share a picnic lunch (that we bring) before the Opera.

We'll meet at the Uniting Church car park at 9.15 am. We have identified drivers and cars to share! Ring Sally Kaptein to book - 54370 6349 - ASAP as the theatre is filling fast.

AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY!

Reflect on bygone days and meet the authors presenting their recollections of earlier times.

Where: Castlemaine Public Library

When: During the SENIORS FESTIVAL:

Tuesday 5 October

Thursday 7 October

Time: 2-3pm (followed by a cup of tea).

Cost: Gold coin donation for library and to cover afternoon tea costs.

To register interest as a reader please leave your name in the office or ring Sally on 54706340



"THIS COMPUTER IS EQUIPPED WITH AN AIRBAG IN CASE YOU FALL ASLEEP!"

~ Sent in by Tony Morton