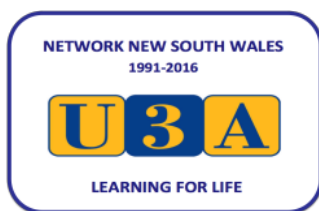


### Be Part of the Wider U3A Community

Newsletter of the U3A Network NSW Inc.

[www.nsw.u3anet.org.au](http://www.nsw.u3anet.org.au)



#### Also in this issue

- ❖ **President's Column**
- ❖ **Standing with U3A in Ukraine**
- ❖ **Launch of "Holy Crap" U3A writers book**
- ❖ **Australia Day Honors**
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- ❖ **Maritime Stories**



**Editor – Ainslie Lamb**  
[u3answ@gmail.com](mailto:u3answ@gmail.com)

### Rebuilding Begins ...

The new year brought the opportunity for both the Network and most individual U3As to return to “normal” – that is, a pre-pandemic existence of educational and social activities. Due to the pandemic, memberships had declined, but several U3As are reporting that memberships are growing again, as publicity and “being seen” in the community has attracted new members.

Unfortunately, the floods in the northern coastal areas of New South Wales in March badly affected communities including U3A members in Ballina, Byron Bay, and Lismore, many of whom have lost their homes. U3A Northern Rivers (Lismore) reported that the Lismore Workers Club, the home of many of the U3A activities, is closed and may not reopen for some time, due to flood damage, but that fortunately U3A records in an upper floor were not destroyed. Ballina/Byron U3A has reported that “*what has been heart warming is the great response from members who want to help others in the U3A family*”. That the area has been hit a second time by floods is heartbreaking. Our thoughts are with our members in those areas.

The major success story however, has been the launch of the book *Holy Crap, What Are They Up To Now*, edited by Laurene Mulcahy and Beth Elliott of Newcastle U3A, and featuring cartoons by Roy Bisson. The book comprises writings from 69 U3A members from 16 different U3As, writing as the U3A NSW Writers Collective, and is dedicated to “*all those members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) past and present who, through their passion and dedication, have ignited the flame of Life-long learning and kept it burning and growing since its inception in Australia.*”



## From The President

This is my first *Newslink* contribution since I have been the President of your Network Association. By way of introduction, I am also the Regional Representative for the South Coast and a Committee member of U3A Shoalhaven.

As NSW U3As emerge from the challenges and confusion of the last couple of years, it is really heartening to see that volunteer enthusiasm is high and U3As are quickly returning to pre-Covid activities, albeit with some reductions in volunteers and member participation. The efforts needed to commence “normal” activities for Term 1 of this year will, I am confident, herald a new beginning and U3As should be able to concentrate again on delivering those activities expected of us.

Since November your Network Committee has been busy with two SGMs being necessary. The first was to seek approval for the 2022 membership fees and the second to complete the Census of Members and Associate Members (non NSW U3As). Despite some difficulties experienced, the finalisation of Public Liability Compliance Certificates was only a couple of days late. Your Committee plans to commence the process earlier in the future to avoid this situation occurring again.

As you probably know, the 2022 Conference planned for Orange in April, has been cancelled. Your Regional Representatives have organised Cluster Regional Meetings in April to substitute for the conference and to allow Member U3As to participate by Zoom in an opportunity to engage with your Network Committee. By now your invitations may have been received. By involving members from other regions in these meetings, the opportunity to network and spread the information net will be enhanced. Your Network Committee trusts that you and we will both benefit from and enjoy the meetings.

The Network AGM, normally held in conjunction with the conference, has been rescheduled for Thursday 16 June. It is now time to think about the nomination of a Regional Representative to serve you on the Network Committee for the upcoming term of office. Regional Representatives will shortly contact U3A Members to arrange meetings to ensure that nominations are completed and submitted to the Returning Officer by the deadline in early May.

I recently read a paper detailing the benefits derived by retirees from their involvement in U3As. Retirees who participate in administration, teaching/presenting, learning for sheer enjoyment and the many physical and socialising activities, derive a multitude of advantages from their involvement in U3A. Our army of Volunteers should be very proud of the contribution they make to the well-being of so many active mature adults during The Third Age. I look forward very much to meeting as many of you as possible by Zoom in April.

***Denis Simond***

**President**

**U3A Network Inc.**

**Email: [u3answ.pres@gmail.com](mailto:u3answ.pres@gmail.com)**

***The International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AUITA) has passed on news from friends and members located in Ukraine. The AUITA secretariat writes as follows -***

Dear AUITA members and friends  
*Chers membres et amis de l'AUITA*

We have received news from our friends Artur and Alina from Ukraine (see below)  
The situation, as you are informed from media, is still terrible with bombs and millions of refugees inside and outside the country and the admirable courage of the population.  
Next April 7th, I shall propose to the AUITA Governing Board to put the Ukraine U3As situation on our agenda, to take an initiative in favour of our friends Artur, Alina, their family and all Ukrainian U3As and seniors. We shall keep contact with our friends in Ukraine to help and support.

***Francois Vellas, President, AUITA, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022***

*Dear Francois, our dear International AUITA friends and colleagues!*

*Thank you for your letters, messages, telephone calls of support we keep receiving these days.*

*In times when Ukraine is under military attack by enemy troops in numerous directions, including Kyiv and many cities and villages around the country, when it was impossible to imagine East and West, South and North, and Kyiv!!! being bombed - we strongly need your support so much.*

*We all understand that is not war against Ukraine, but the war against Europe and humankind.*

*Now we know about inhuman treatment of the civilian population, children, women, the elderly. Our older people, especially those who is with disabilities, die en masse in war zones, being in basements, being bombed, from hunger, cold and wounds.*

*They haven't got any connection with their relatives...*

*Our hearts are bursting with pain.*

*We have devoted so many years to improving the quality of life of older people, caring for them... Today we are thrown back for decades.*

*But we are absolutely sure that hard trials will only make us stronger. We will restore what the perfidious enemy destroyed and ruthlessly continues to devastate our beautiful land.*

*We all fight for freedom, our values and justice.*

*And we continue to work in UTA Ukraine, trying to work... hearing the sounds of sirens... every night and day...*

***We know - AUITA COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE STANDS WITH UKRAINE***

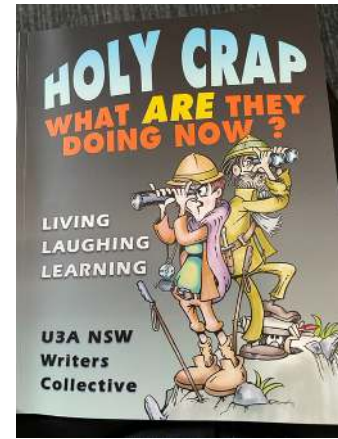
*Sincerely,*

*Artur and Alina, and UA UTA familya*

**Launch of *HOLY CRAP –What Are They doing Now?* At the Newcastle Writers Festival, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022**

***Co-operation, Collaboration and Celebration***

The launch of the U3A NSW Writers Collective Anthology *Holy Crap - What ARE They Doing Now?* was a public acknowledgment of the coming together of both the contributors who wrote the stories in the book and the committees of 16 Regional NSW U3As who wholeheartedly supported us in what seemed at the time, a crazy idea. The spirit of goodwill that has permeated this whole venture right from the beginning has been very special and we want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank each and everyone for helping to make an idea a reality. In coming together today, U3A presented a united front on which to build a more substantial U3A organisation that is recognisable for the contribution it makes to every community it is a part of - while still retaining their autonomy - and that is a very powerful and exciting concept to work towards.



Laurene Mulcahy hosted the event; we officially had 73 people (counted by the NWF volunteer) attend the launch. Among them Greg Piper MP (Member for Lake Macquarie) Gionni Di Gravio (Archivist University of Newcastle) Denis Simond, (President, U3A NSW Network), and the Presidents of Central Coast, Eastlakes, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Port Stephens U3As.

*Photo – Laurene Mulcahy, Greg Piper MP. Dr Anne Wakatama, Giselle Wakatama, Denis Simond*

Not counting Roy Bisson and Beth Elliott, 14 of the U3A NSW Writers Collective were able to attend - they were Patricia Fitzpatrick and Dr John Page (both Newcastle U3A), Jean and David Lewis and Peggy Stransky (Port Stephens U3A), Penny Alexander and Marion Newall (Central Coast U3A), Fran Thomas (Maitland U3A), Phill Howlette and Robyn Dampney (Lake Macquarie U3A). Alan Reid (Wagga Wagga U3A ), Julie Davis (Northern Illawarra U3A), and Sandra Williams (Southlakes U3A). Unfortunately, due to the tyranny of distance and floods, many of our authors could not come, but sent messages of goodwill.

Dr Anne Wakatama who launched our book, gave a warm and humorous address touching on the negativity accorded to we older demographic and highlighting some of the stories in the book ... .and we hope that at some point in the future, we may be attending the launch of Anne's memoirs - which will certainly a book to look forward to.

***Beth Elliott, Laurene Mulcahy, Roy Bisson and Gary Burrett***

## AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS, 2022

**Monica Perry** of Central Coast U3A was recognised in the Australia Day Honours list and awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia for service to youth and to the community, in a wide range of services for over 70 years, including a U3A class for the past 6 years. Monica is an inspiring example of a lifetime of volunteer service.

**Heather Tredinnick** of Southern Highlands U3A, was also awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours list for service to music through choirs over a lifetime, including the U3A Southern Highlands choir since 2012. Under Heather's leadership, the choir has grown to between 70 to 80 members over the years. Heather spends hours in preparation and choosing music, tailoring to the talents of the particular choir members, and is widely considered a "gift" to U3A Southern Highlands.

Northern Rivers (Lismore) U3A was awarded Group Winner of the Services in Community awards by Lismore City Council among its 2022 Australia Day awards.

Congratulations to them all.

### Mudgee District U3A finds a home

After over twenty years of operation, Mudgee District U3A finally has a home at *Kildallon*, the newly opened community education and arts centre located at the former TAFE site in Court St, Mudgee.



The original building on that site was the family residence of the successful merchant William Kellett, a prominent figure in Mudgee's early history. He was born in Kildallon, County Cavan in Ireland and that is the name he gave to the grand house he had built in the late 1880's. Kildallon was occupied by the Kellett family until the 1940's when the Mudgee branch of CWA acquired the residence converting it to a girls' hostel. In 1983 TAFE took over the site, adding yet more buildings behind the original building. TAFE operated there until 2018. After years of lobbying by community groups, in 2021 TAFE sold the Court St site to Mid-Western Regional Council on the proviso that it be used by the community.

Unfortunately, during the period of vacancy a great deal of damage was done to the buildings by vandals and this had to be remedied by Council before the facility could open. Late in January the keys were handed over and various community groups, including Mudgee District U3A moved in.

"We are delighted to have a home," said Heather Rushton, current President of Mudgee U3A. "Instead of being scattered at venues across town, most classes now operate from Kildallon. Some members have commented that it gives the sense of being a 'real' university seeing different classes operating simultaneously in rooms along the same corridor. "

## ***U3A Omnia Vincit – U3A Conquers All***

*Newslink* has received several stories of the effects the Covid pandemic has had on U3A operations over the past 2 years. Closures, attendances limited by venue capacity limits, social activities (even morning tea) curtailed, fundraising events unable to be held, community events cancelled ... the list goes on. Some larger U3As, with their own premises, were effectively closed down for several months, without income while still meeting ongoing expenses. U3As, small, medium sized or large, were all affected.

The spirit of U3A prevailed, as committee members, tutors and others did their utmost to maintain contact with their members and to provide courses, newsletters and other methods to keep their membership connected and provided with mental stimulation.

*Tony Dawson* of **Port Macquarie Hastings U3A** sent *Newslink* a lengthy report, which exemplified the situation, but also acknowledged the effort made by tutors, committee members, administrators and others to maintain the spirit of U3A both during the shutdown periods and in the rebuilding phase. He writes: “Nevertheless, throughout all this the spirit of U3A shone through. Our dedicated and resilient administration team, IT group and tutors did everything they could to keep members informed and engage them in whatever activities we could mount. And the effort was rewarded in the short gap between Delta and Omicron when members flocked to our Christmas Concert and, a week later, our Christmas Party.”

In December 2021 the Port Macquarie Hastings U3A presented its 2021 Christmas Concert at the Tenison Woods Centre, to a very appreciative audience. The program was emceed by local ABC radio presenter Cameron Marshall.

Featured artists were the U3A International Dancers, who performed traditional dances from France, Poland and Israel, an up-tempo, roaring twenties number “Crazy Daisy”.



The Sublime Chimes Bell Ringers ensemble gave an unforgettable performance of Christmas carols and the Guitarists Dave Smith and Carol Baker sang a medley of very enjoyable easy-listening numbers from the 60's, displaying beautiful harmonies.

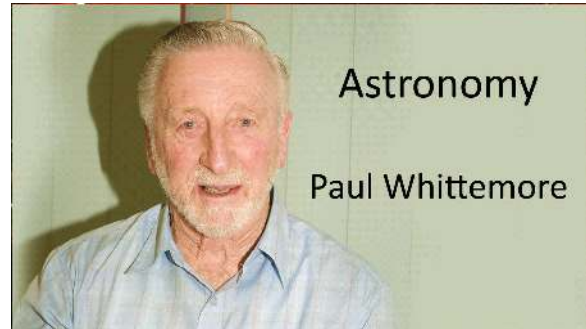
Pianist extraordinaire Rosanna Vanderley enchanted everyone with a variety of musical themes from the movies, the London stage and Broadway, and invited audience members to sing along with the popular songs.

### ***Port Stephens U3A celebrates 25 years - from Jean Lewis***

In December 2021 PSU3A was finally able to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. The event was meant to take place in September 2020 but due to Covid it had been delayed so when we finally were able to hold a party in celebration, people were delighted to be able to get together again. Out of a membership of just over 250, 100 members signed up for a high tea and celebrated in style at the local bowling club.

### **Port Stephens celebrates Paul Whittemore**

As we celebrate 25 years of Port Stephens U3A we remember that on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1995 when we started, it was Paul Whittemore who gave the first lecture in Astronomy, called "Our Amazing Universe". He has been teaching astronomy as well as other subjects ever since.



Over the last now twenty six years, Paul has continued to fascinate and delight the Port Stephens U3A members with his passion for not only Astronomy but also Art, History and Literature. His rich knowledge of these subjects has shone through every lecture he gives. Today at the age of 88, he still continues to give special one-off lectures on the latest in Astronomy.

**34 Years in U3A** - Older U3A members will be interested to learn that **Cecily Butcher**, whose membership at Orange U3A spanned 34 years in various committee and other roles ( and also many years on the committee of the U3A Network NSW including President 1995-97) , has moved to live in Deception Bay Queensland. Nothing daunted, Cecily writes, " *I have met several 'old' U3Aers here, that we are thinking it might be a good idea to set up a group, but I am not rushing into that yet*". Now that is the spirit of U3A!

### **From beginners to performers: Ballina U3A's ukulele success**

In what now seems a lifetime ago during the early days of the COVID pandemic, a few brave individuals living in and around Ballina put their names down on a class list to learn the ukulele. Due to its small size and sweet sounds, not to mention the fact that it is relatively inexpensive and easy to learn, the ukulele has been a popular choice with people taking up their first musical instrument late in life.

What started as a single beginners class quickly expanded to sixty individuals, many of whom are now playing some 18 months later in the recently named "Paradise Pluckers". Having mastered the art of reading sheet music and co-ordinating the left and right hands doing different tasks, the sometimes-mellow and sometimes-boisterous sounds of some 30 to 40 ukulele-strummers and singing voices can be heard each week at Ballina's U3A class venue. Indeed, people are often surprised at what a range of music you can play on a ukulele and how much fun ukulele-players seem to have!

Feeling like it was time to show the world how far they have come, the Valentine's Concert 2022 was staged and the group performed, along with a few other ukulele-playing soloists and groups, in a gala 2.5-hour outdoor concert. The audience was entertained, amazed and in some cases inspired to take up the instrument themselves.



**U3A Northern Illawarra** held its 4<sup>th</sup> annual debate against the students of Bulli High School, during Seniors' week. The topic was *That Zoos Should be Abolished*. The U3A took the affirmative side, but lost on points to the students. The debate was adjudicated by The Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Cr. Gordon Bradbury.



*Both teams and the adjudicator after the debate.*

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## Studies shed light on need for fourth COVID shot

*Jan Fisher , February 24, 2022 Your Life Choices*

Most of us have been dutifully getting our COVID vaccines and booster shots as promptly as possible, but a new study in the US shows that after the third, we may not need another one for months or even years.

A joint study by the Rockefeller University and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute found that the Omicron variant can dodge antibodies produced after two doses of a COVID vaccine. But a third shot of the mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna prompts the body to make a much wider variety of antibodies, which would be difficult for any variant of the virus to evade, the researchers found. Dr Peter Marks, who heads the division of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that regulates vaccines, said he hoped that a third shot would be enough of a shield against COVID and that only a yearly booster would be needed. But he cautioned that it was impossible to make any firm prediction without more data. University of Pennsylvania immunology institute director John Wherry said there was increasing evidence of diminishing returns on the number of booster shots. Although he added that people aged over 65 or at high risk of illness may benefit from a fourth dose.

Other studies have found that parts of the immune system can remember and destroy the virus over many months, if not years. Immune cells called T cells produced after immunisation by four brands of vaccine – Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and Novavax – are about 80 per cent as powerful against Omicron as other variants, the research found. Research indicates that T cells – also called memory cells – in people exposed to the 2003 SARS coronavirus outbreak lasted more than 17 years and there is evidence that there may be a similar response for COVID.

The Australian government recommends a fourth dose, three months after the third, for anyone aged over 16 who is severely immuno-compromised. It also recommends people who have been infected with COVID defer their next booster to four months after their recovery. The previous recommendation was six months.



## MARITIME STORIES

### The Story of The *James Craig*

By Peter Cane , Central Coast U3A

*James Craig* is a restored 19th century 3 masted barque, one of the Sydney Heritage Fleet vessels.



She was launched in Sunderland, England in 1874 named *Clan Macleod*. Her working life spanned about 50 years, and she rounded Cape Horn 23 times. She started life as general cargo vessel.

When she was sold to the Craig family in New Zealand they renamed her *James Craig* in 1905. She traded across the Tasman before ending up in Tasmania's Recherche Bay as coal hulk. Her working life ended in the early 1930s. *James Craig* lay there for 40 years until the Sydney Heritage Fleet found her in 1972.

She was in a very poor state, rusted out in many places and stripped of her masts and deck. A hole had been blown in the stern to sink her as she was being a nuisance by breaking fishermen's nets. A team went down many times to clean her out and patch her up until she floated. She was taken to Hobart for 9 years before being towed to Sydney after a Sydney Hobart race by a tug which was an official boat for the race. She arrived there in 1981 and put on a floating dock and all her plates were removed with 424 old ones put back on.

During the restoration 2 x 400 hp engines were donated and fitted. Her recommissioning was in 2001. All work was carried out at the Fleet's Rozelle shipyard by volunteers who are there most days of week. Imagine the countless hours and dollars spent to bring the vessel to full sailing condition again. It took about 30 years and \$25 million – and the cost is ongoing. She has been restored as faithfully as possible to her original condition.

Minimum changes have been made to allow the vessel to be in full survey to take paying passengers to sea. Such things as a full galley, safety equipment, toilets, navigational equipment and engines. It was originally thought she might have been a static display - but common sense prevailed and now she is a fully working ship. One inclusion is the 'tween deck which allows for functions such as weddings, sleep-overs for schools and scouts etc.

Being a 3 masted barque her 2 forward masts are rigged with square sails, while the mizzen has a fore and aft rig. The fore and main masts for the lower half and the first yard are all made of steel. The yard was to be used as a crane for cargo and so made of steel for strength. *James Craig* has 21 sails when fully rigged. Originally it had a crew of 17 but is now registered to carry 125 - 80 passengers and 45 crew. The Sydney Heritage Fleet has a number of heritage and significant vessels at our shipyard at Rozelle. *James Craig* can be viewed at Wharf 7 Darling Harbour for a small fee. I guide on *James Craig* some Saturdays (not at present however) and also do the commentary on one or two of the number of tours the fleet runs around the harbour. I hope you can take the opportunity to visit one of the heritage vessels and maybe even take a day sail on the *James Craig*.

## The Endurance and Frank Hurley

By Penny Alexander, Central Coast U3A

Imagine being in lockdown for 9 months on the frozen wastes of the Antarctic with no communications, dwindling supplies (certainly no toilet paper!) and with your ship slowly being crushed by ice. This is what was the plight of Shackleton's ill-fated expedition in 1915 -1916.



Photo by Frank Hurley – Endurance crushed in pack ice, in the Weddell Sea, Antarctica 1915

When the *Endurance* finally sank, Shackleton and two of his crew set out to find help, rowing and sailing a small boat 1,200 km across icy seas to South Georgia. Their epic adventure concluded with the successful rescue of all his crew. The amazing photographs of that expedition were taken by Frank Hurley.

Hurley was born in Glebe and later moved to Collaroy Plateau. He was a self-taught photographer and filmmaker who talked his way into joining Mawson's Antarctic Expedition in 1914 as the official photographer. The next year he was back in the Antarctic with Shackleton's expedition. You might think he had had quite enough excitement for a while, but when he finally returned to Sydney after the rescue, he signed up to go to the trenches in Flanders as an official World War I photographer! Later he became involved with ABC radio and you might remember him as a frequent story-teller on *The Argonauts*. That generation was definitely made of sterner stuff!



Recently, the remarkable discovery was made of the *Endurance* which has lain undisturbed on the bottom of the Weddell Sea 3 Km below the ice for over one hundred years.

### Balance and Bones DVD

An easy-to-use and useful addition to U3A class offerings, or for individual members who want to keep up their exercises during term breaks. The exercise program was devised and is presented by Beth Denny, an experienced and qualified fitness instructor especially for older people. Copies of the DVD are available for sale at \$25 each, inclusive of postage, to be made by direct deposit to the U3A Network account. To obtain a copy contact

[ainslie2518@gmail.com](mailto:ainslie2518@gmail.com)