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**Looking forward to an exciting year ahead.**

Welcome to the last newsletter for this year. In this edition we get a glimpse of some of the passions and interests of our members: from bird watching to teaching and playing the ukulele, researching and publishing a book and learning to ride a bike at 65 ... and much more.

And it's a good opportunity for me to reflect on this past year and to look forward to next.

**Highlights of 2021**

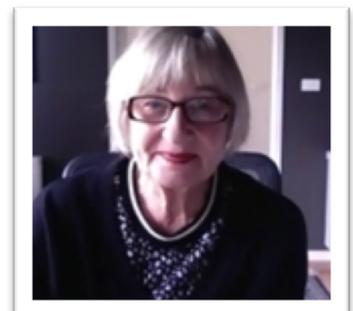
- I'm proud that we continued with so many activities during an unsettling year with continuous lockdowns, masks on, masks off, social distancing, home schooling, visitors at home, no visitors. Our Zoom activities were a lifeline to many of our members who were isolated in their homes.
- We were one of the few U3As that increased our membership during this time.
- We included new ongoing activities like ukulele and Spanish which attracted new members – and shorter events like the History Walks and Being a Novice Diplomat in India.
- We upgraded the technology at the Cottage which is now a more clean, comfortable space with better communication capabilities and is more conducive to participating in the various activities that take place there.

**Looking forward to 2022**

- I'm excited about the depth and variety of our course offerings for next year – we have over 50 activities and doubtless will include more as the year progresses. Some popular courses like bird watching are already full.
- Our enrolment process both online and face-to-face have worked very well and membership numbers are looking very healthy.
- I believe we are in a very good position to achieve our aim of 200 members this year.

The committee and I wish you and yours a safe and happy Christmas, some who will be catching up for the first time in a long while. It does take a pandemic to understand your priorities.

**Joan Thompson - President**



## Thirty-one convenors continue to next year

Our club is only as strong and vibrant as its members, especially those who take on the role of Convenor. I thank them all for the wonderful work they do.



Very generously, thirty-one convenors from this year have volunteered to continue running their activities next year. Some have even volunteered to run additional courses in 2022. Their example has inspired another nine members to become convenors in 2022, enabling us to offer duplicates of the popular courses with waiting lists (Book Club, Films and Walking) and introduce new activities – Book Publishing, Camping, Dining, Italian Conversation, Poetry Reading and Appreciation, Public Speaking and Social Ukulele.

Sadly, two convenors have not been able to complete the year with us. Helene Richards (Writing) and Ed Marshall (Drawing and Sketching) provided their members with many happy and challenging hours and are greatly missed. We wish them all the best. Special thanks to Clara Brack and Ian Barclay who took over running the Writing and Drawing classes, respectively, at short notice.

Two additional members are planning new activities, so watch out for them to be advertised in 2022 when details are finalised. If any other members have ideas for activities they would like to see added to our program I am always available to discuss possibilities of how to make it happen.

### Save the date:

**Convenors' Information Session – for convenors and anyone interested in becoming a Convenor.**

**When: 10.00 am, 1<sup>st</sup> February**

**Followed by lunch.**

**... more info to come later**

It's been a great pleasure acting as Course Coordinator this year – now it's time for a well-earned break. I wish you all a merry Christmas and look forward to a vibrant 2022.

**Ruth Patching**  
Course Coordinator

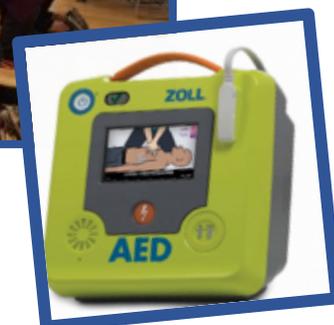
## Membership and 2022 Enrolments

Our U3A has been able to grow membership over the last three years despite COVID. We have achieved a balance of having a sustainable club and great social interaction.

We had a tremendous response to 2022 reenrolment. In the first day we had over 70 enrolments and by lunch time several classes were full, including our new activity Fine Dining. In one week, we have had 16 new people join the club. Please remind your classmates to reenrol and encourage your friends to join our vibrant club. Everyone is welcome.

### Grants

We have had a successful year of grants which has allowed the club to upgrade facilities and provide training and support for convenors. Our latest grant is from the Bendigo Altona Community Bank for a defibrillator which is used to treat Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Without defibrillation and CPR, fewer than 5% survive heart attacks.



**A very big thank you to Hobsons Bay Council and Bendigo Altona Community Bank**

### Membership and Course Management Online System (UMAS)

As a small club relying on volunteers, we have been able to take advantage of the online system to manage our memberships and courses. Now in the second year of using UMAS we have been able to implement a range of online services for members and convenors. We have also been able to manage the COVID requirements.

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## Venues

We have been able to offer more activities with an additional venue coming on stream mid-year: the Williamstown Senior Citizens. For most of 2022 this venue will be available and Wifi is being connected. The 'Senior Cits' will then be demolished for a new community centre planned to be ready by 2024.

## Network

Thank you to Network for supporting U3A Hobsons Bay/Williamstown in a multitude of ways and particularly in relation to UMAS, the website and running forums and masterclass.

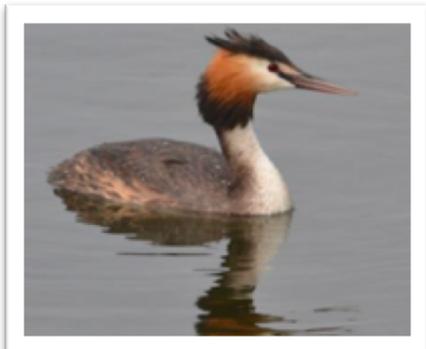


**Sue Dawkins – Secretary**

## Birdwatching with Sue Myers:



**A brief report on the November outing:** The Jawbone Conservation Reserve, was the venue for our November outing. Fourteen members arrived to view the local waterbirds. As soon as we walked to the lake's edge, we had



*Great Crested Grebe*

excellent views of a *Great Crested Grebe*, the largest of the three grebes that are found in these lakes. It has a unique look with a long neck and head with a distinctive black double crest and black and chestnut frills on the cheeks.

*Eurasian Coots, Blue-billed Ducks and Dusky Moorhens* were also present.



*Blue-billed Duck*

Local birder and member of Friends of the Wetlands, Andrew Thornton, arrived to take us into the conservation area. From here we sighted *Sooty Oystercatchers, Masked Lapwings, Crested and Whiskered Terns* and *Little Pied, Little Black and Pied Cormorants*.

As we walked around the lakes, we recognised *Black Swans* with cygnets, *Black-winged Stilts, Superb Fairy Wrens* and *Little Ravens*. On the Paisley-Challis wetlands we could see a group of *Greenshanks*. Heading back to the cars as the rain started some of us caught a glimpse of a *White-browed Scrubwren*.



*Black-winged Stilts*

That was enough birding with the weather deteriorating. It was time for a coffee and chat. A successful morning with 35 species identified.

**Sue Myers**

## The Willie Warblers ukulele group rock the Christmas party.

One of the highlights of the 2021 Christmas lunch was a performance by the *Willie Warblers*, the ukulele group which was only formed in October this year. Their remarkable progress is due in no small part to their convenor and tutor **Michael Collins**.

Michael agreed to answer a few questions about himself and the group:

### How did you start playing the ukulele?

I started learning to play guitar when I was 12 years old. But I gave up the guitar

several years ago because of issues getting my shoulder around the instrument, and took up the ukulele. I have been teaching ukulele for several years with community groups and now, of course, with U3A Williamstown.

### What is your association with U3A

I've been interested in U3A for some time, as I enjoy working with people in my own age group. I find that music is an excellent way to increase positive mental health, as well as a great way to enjoy a new skill that involves both playing and singing.

### Tell us about the U3A Hobsons Bay/Williamstown ukulele group

Some of the U3A Hobsons Bay/Williamstown players had backgrounds with other forms of music, but all were new to a stringed instrument like the ukulele. All had to purchase a ukulele, and it took some time for everyone to have their own instrument as most were bought online and delivery was slower than usual. But all members have their own instruments now.

The group created their own name, *Willie Warblers*, and their own theme song. We started with online lessons via Zoom, which is a very difficult way to teach music, but they persevered! So far we have had nine face to face sessions, and the group has a current repertoire of some 45 songs. We play in the scale of "C" as that provides an easier format to start and the group has progressed very quickly. The Christmas Party was an example of their hard work.

### Will the group carry on next year?

One of our members has volunteered to be Co-convenor, and will organise some social playing with the group while I am away.

Anyone interested, and who can already play, should contact the group once listed, and is welcome to join.

I will be in Tasmania with my



*The Willie Warblers at the Christmas lunch*

grandchildren for Term 1, but anticipate being back for Term 2 to facilitate a new group and assist the current one. I will be supplying material to the group from Tasmania, and be in contact online from time to time to make sure all is well.

### Anything else?

It has been my pleasure to work with the group. They are all very motivated, and keen to learn more. It is a great experience to see members enjoy their playing so much, and work towards enhancing a new skill. Some have never had a musical experience like this before, and it is a thrill to see them mature in their learning and look towards greater goals in their playing.



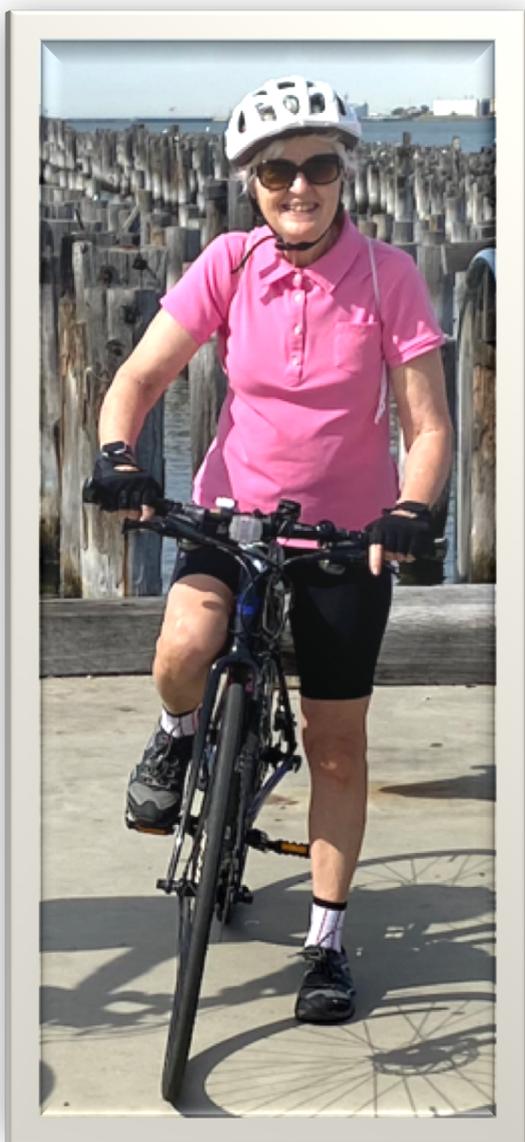
To see photos from our Christmas lunch check out:

<https://u3ahwilli.org.au/latest-news/>

## Ann Rutledge: learning to ride a bike at 65

I got my first bike and began learning to ride just before my 65th birthday.

Growing up in a farming district in northern New South Wales none of the local children had bikes and when I went to high school in town I was envious of those who did. As an adult in Sydney and Canberra, raising my three children and working, I didn't even think about getting a bike. None of my friends had one but we did buy bikes for our children and they have continued to ride since childhood.



*Ann on a recent U3A HBW bike ride*

I thought about getting a bike when we moved to Altona and saw all the local bike paths but I lacked the confidence to learn on my own. I finally made the decision to learn

when Bayfit gym started a bike riding group in 2014, around the same time as Cycling Australia advertised cycling lessons. The bike group members were the same age as me so I could see there was no reason why I couldn't ride a bike too. I try to keep fit and saw cycling as an additional way to supplement the gym and regular walking.

I enrolled in group cycling lessons in October 2014, conducted by Wheel Women, but first had to buy a bike. The family weren't at all keen on me learning to ride but when they saw I was determined my older son decided he would choose the bike - his main criteria were it had to be reasonably lightweight and have disc brakes. I ended up buying a flat handlebar road bike that I still enjoy riding seven years later.

In addition to basic cycling skills, the eight weekly lessons also included home bike maintenance, bike trail etiquette, riding in groups and negotiating roundabouts.

In my early days of riding I stayed on the bike paths but as it became more automatic I started to go on the road when the bike paths became busy.

Although I usually ride by myself and like to get out on the bike at least weekly, I enjoy the group rides as an opportunity to ride with others and to go further away from home than I would dare go by myself.

I sometimes rode to the gym before the most recent COVID lockdown and will resume this when I get back there early next year. On a nice day it can be more relaxing riding there than driving the car and I'd much rather be riding outdoors in the fresh air than using a spin bike in a gym.

***Ann is an active member of the U3A HBW bike group.***

## Thank you to the health workers



We are a group of women from the *Explore Writing Group* who have talked about the challenging work confronting health workers in this time of the COVID Pandemic. We found it a tough subject to even write about effectively, so we tossed around ideas about how to show our recognition of the stress that health workers

are experiencing, and the dedication that all are demonstrating in working to save people's lives, and to support those whose lives cannot be saved.

We decided that we would make "thank you" banners to show we cared and valued all on the frontline. Over a few zoom sessions, due to lockdown, we shared ideas and then set about sharing fabric with drop offs. Thus began the task we had set ourselves, even at one house using a 50 year old sewing machine.

During the sewing process we made contact with various health settings. Some were concerned regarding COVID and foreign items being brought into hospitals but we were not deterred and continued to look for areas where they may be used.

We were able to send two banners to Ambulance Victoria, one banner to Royal Melbourne Hospital and four banners to Western Health for distribution to areas they would decide, including hospitals.

It has been a great activity and shows that even in lockdown much can still be achieved.



The banner displayed at Footscray Hospital which is receiving lots of positive comments from staff and visitors.

**Christine Crofton, Annette Signorini,  
Keran Howe**

### Braving the waves to see the Archie 100

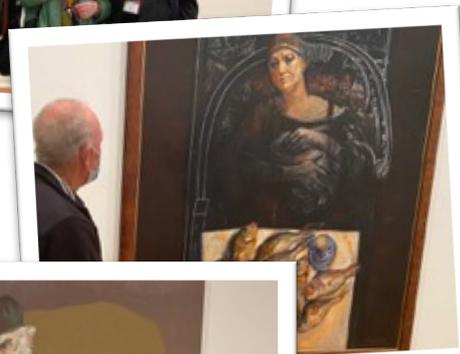
Ten U3A HBW members caught the Port Philip Ferry from Docklands to Geelong to see the Archie 100 exhibition being held at the Geelong Gallery.

The bay was particularly rough that day and there were a few green faces by the time we arrived and met up with the rest of the party who had come by train and car.

The Archie 100, a celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Archibald prize, explored the history of Australia's most prestigious portrait award.

*"...The exhibition presents a diverse selection of Archibald portraits from the last century—the triumphant and the thwarted—and honours the artists who have made the prize the most sought-after accolade in Australian art today."*

The first fifty year subjects were predominantly white middle aged-men but it was fascinating to see how the portraits changed over time to represent more indigenous and women subjects.



★ The exhibition was wonderful, but only four returned by ferry – the rest opting to go home on the train!!

**Ann Banham**

## Writing my story ... and don't know how or where to begin. Ideas from Ann Goodwin

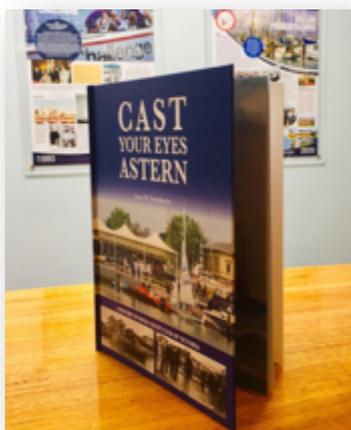
**Step One:** Do you take a shopping list with you to the supermarket? The items on that list could be put into a recipe for a delicious meal. The recipe may conjure up memories of meals from your younger days – perhaps a story about the cook who was your grandmother. I made my daughter a booklet of her grandma's recipes as a wedding gift.

**Step Two for an idea:** Choose a family photo and talk about it. There is a story in every photo. I had one photo of my grandmother and her twin sister taken in 1872, to work with when I began to search for my family connection to the Victorian goldfields.

**Step Three for another idea:** Think about your hobbies and interests; what fills you with a passion. I have a collection of cat ornaments gathered during my travels. There is a story with every ornament, such as the 'Lucky Cat' a Japanese figurine, I bought while waiting for my flight home from the Narita airport in Tokyo.

\*\*Bring along pen and paper, a photo or an ornament to the first writing session where we can exchange ideas and make a start on creating a story to share with others.

Let's begin on Monday mornings from 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 10.00am (before the room gets too hot) in the Senior Citizens Centre , 109 Ferguson street, Williamstown.



Ann Goodwin recently launched *Cast Your Eyes Astern*, a history of the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria which she authored.

## Congratulations Keran Howe OAM



Keran Howe was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours this year with an Order of Australia medal for service to people with a disability.

On Wednesday, 1 December Keran attended Government House where she was presented with her Medal by the Victorian Governor, The Honourable Linda Dessau AC.

Congratulations Keran: we are very proud of you.

## Thanks to Network Victoria

We now have a nice new name board on the Cottage – made possible by a grant from Network Victoria.



## Meet Terri and Keith Seddon

We have quite a few couples in U3A Hobsons Bay/Williamstown, one of them being Keith and Terri Seddon. They kindly answered some questions about their involvement in the club, which they joined in 2021, their previous careers and other pastimes.



### U3A

**Terri:** I enrolled in the Monday book group and the Life Writing course that Clara Brack runs. I've enjoyed both courses, but the weekly meet-up with Clara means our little group has become particularly close.

**Keith:** I played cards and did birdwatching with Sue Myers, which has been a wonderful learning experience.

We have started on a program of monthly U3A day walks this year (with the first three walks in place on the program). These are not urban walks being located a bit out of Melbourne but are meant to be quite gentle. We are also trialling a weekend base camp in February. It will be possible to come on this and just sit back and feel the serenity.

We have approached U3A in the way we have approached our lives together. We do our own thing, choose our own courses, follow our own interest. But in the evenings, we sit down together over a bottle of good red and talk about the day, share our experiences, puzzles, dramas and laughs. It's a model that has worked for us.

### Where did you grow up?

**Terri:** In England. Coming to Australia was never migration. It was an adventure – and I've lived in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne.

**Keith:** I grew up in country Victoria, before moving to the (then) outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

### Professional life?

**Terri:** I taught science in ACT and NSW and since 1980 I've worked in universities – teaching and researching education, using sociology

and history to understand changes in education policy and the work that teachers do in secondary and tertiary settings.

**Keith:** I am a civil engineer with a speciality in geotechnical engineering. For most of my career I have worked for consulting engineering firms, mostly in mining related work (tailings dams). This has resulted in the need to travel to places all over Australia and the rest of the world. Work travel is not the same as tourist travel: you often end up in places that you would never go to for a holiday.

### What hobbies/activities/passions

**Terri:** I've hiked and camped all my life. It was how Keith and I met in England, where we were involved in rock climbing through the university Mountaineering Society. We climbed together in the Northern Indian Himalaya, then I trekked in Nepal, on my way to Australia in 1975. Keith taught me to cross-country ski and kayak in Australia.

Through my working life, I discovered the pleasure of writing – and have produced papers and some books. As I began to wind down, I enrolled in the Associate Degree in Professional Writing and Editing at RMIT and now I'm writing short stories, some creative nonfiction and, perhaps, a novel.

This year, I've started bay swimming with the Williamstown Jellies, which is exhilarating, and a little un-nerving when it entails encounters with real jellies.

**Keith:** Like Terri, walking is a major activity. We do lots of shorter walks, but get most from walks of weekends to weeks duration. We have done long walks in Tasmania, WA (part of the Bibbulmun trail), NT (Larapinta and Jatbula), New Zealand and treks in the Himalayas. Last year we finally invested in a 4WD with the aim of better access to the start of some of our walks, but also doing some car touring.

### What plans do you have (hopefully) post COVID?

**Terri:** In 2022, I have some academic writing commitments, but I hope to do more creative writing. In particular, I'd like to write more of my (imagined) novel, about a new grandmother and climate change. Keith and I are planning some long walks, maybe the northern Heysen trail or Australian Alps Walking Track. And I hope to keep up my regular swimming at Willi beach.

**Keith:** Over the next few years I aim to finally finish up on my remaining work commitments, and get back to a more regular routine of golf, and get on top of the garden. And there is a longish list of places to visit and walk.