



the BULLETIN

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Next Bulletin Deadline

January 26 2026

CLASS INFORMATION

Booklets for our Summer School and 2026 classes are about to hit the printers. Classes will be available for viewing on Member Wizard from mid November. Stay tuned for more details. A very big thank you to our Class Coordinator, Miriam Peck, and our Summer School Coordinator, Nina Netherway, for all of their work.



Forthcoming Events November and December 2025

Monday November 17

2026 classes and Summer School classes can be viewed online

Tuesday November 25

Come Carolling with the Choristers BNCC 2.30-4.00pm, afternoon tea provided

Friday November 28

Recorder Christmas Concert, St John's Church 606 Armstrong St Sth Soldiers Hill, 11am-12pm

Friday November 28

Final day for Term 4 classes (unless previously arranged)

Monday December 1

Enrolments for Summer School and 2026 classes open online

Monday December 1

Enrolments for Summer School and 2026 classes, BNCC Hall, 9.30am-3.00pm

Tuesday December 2

Enrolments for Summer School and 2026 classes, BNCC Hall, 9.30am-3.00pm

Wednesday December 3

Enrolments for Summer School and 2026 classes, BNCC Hall, 9.30am-12.30pm

Saturday December 5

Swap Tables, BNCC 10-11am

The Annual Thank You Luncheon

Each year, the Committee hosts a lunch as a gesture of appreciation and thanks to those who work at the core of our organisation – the Tutors, Class Convenors and Volunteers. It is marvellous that so many could make time to gather together in a moment of celebration of the generosity of members who share their knowledge and wisdom with others. We know in the context of U3A Ballarat that one gets more back than one gives, but it is important to acknowledge the many hours donated in preparation and delivery of class content, or ensuring that the organisation supports members through such services as the U3A Ballarat Office.



Don Collins

Many thanks to the members of the Committee (and former Committee member, Jim Thomson) for the sterling effort of setting up, serving, washing up, cleaning up and re-setting the hall. Elena Tommasi spends considerable time on the logistics as well as the little bits of sparkle that make the tables a happy space, so an extra note of appreciation to Elena.

Service Awards

Thanks to the diligence and investment of many hours by Nina Netherway and Anne Dwyer, the data from MyU3A, Member Wizard and other sources has allowed a new set of data to be collated with regard to the years of service by members as a Tutor, Class Convenor or Volunteer. The luncheon this year provided the opportunity to present 10 year and 20 year service certificates to those in attendance who met the criteria. It is a small acknowledgment of outstanding commitment to U3A Ballarat. My thanks to past presidents from the past 10 years who assisted with the presentation: Anne Ottrey, Blake Gordon, John Olsen, Elena Tommasi and Nina Netherway. Other Service Award recipients will receive their certificates in the coming weeks.

City of Ballarat Seniors Awards

What a delight to have the longstanding commitment of former U3A President John Olsen recognised by these awards, with John receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award for his many and varied levels of volunteerism in the Ballarat Community and beyond. Nominated jointly by U3A Ballarat and the Ballarat North Senior Citizens, John was selected from a field of finalists who all have worked tirelessly to support organisations and people from the Ballarat region. Congratulations John! The Awards Ceremony was a family affair as Corrie Olsen was also a finalist in the Community Service category, so congratulation go to Corrie as well.

Class Booklets

The Class Booklet for 2026 and the Summer School 2026 Booklet are at the printers and will be available soon. The 2026 Class Booklet lists a staggering 148 classes from which to choose. A huge shout out to our Vice President and Class Co-ordinator, Miriam Peck, for her work in co-ordinating all the venues, the Tutors and Class Convenors, and the data for the booklets. This is a massive job. Miriam was assisted in proofing the booklets by Nina Netherway, who will run the Summer School. These two documents require many hours to finalise. Job well done to both of you.

Summer School 2026 ~ Jan 12-23

Speaking of the Summer School, once again, there are a wide range of options on offer which, over a few sessions, will allow people to try out new or different activities over a two week period in January. Over 400 members took part in the Summer School program last year, and I imagine the number may grow in 2026.

Please note, enrolment details for both 2026 classes and the Summer School are shown in the Forthcoming Events shown on page one of this Bulletin.

Whilst I don't usually reference our Vale messages, I wish to note the significant contribution of two Tutors who recently passed away. Details are provided on page eleven of this bulletin.

Nearly three weeks of classes remain in the 2025 year and there are performances advertised in this edition of the Bulletin. Please come along and support our members at events if you can. Whilst there will be a few email updates, this is the last Bulletin for the year, so I take the opportunity to wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy festive season. May Santa be kind to you.

Don

Dr Don Moss, U3A Ballarat Member

Teaching is in Don's blood, even though he has worked as a doctor all his life. His parents were both teachers, his father in Secondary Geography and Science and his mother in the Primary sector. Don was born in Sale, but the family moved around depending on their postings till both parents ended up School Principals in Colac. The family talk would inevitably involve discussion of teaching and learning. Don spent much of his career teaching surgeons, and he reflected on how much he owes to those early conversations over the dinner table.



Don landed in medicine almost by accident, "If you did well in school in those days you were told your choices were either medicine or law. I knew nothing about either but I'm glad I didn't choose law." He did well at Uni and then at the Royal Melbourne Hospital working in Surgery. Don didn't feel as if these steps were part of a deliberate plan, just one inevitably leading to the next. He came to Ballarat on rotation from Royal Melbourne and here met Dr. Ken Meerhut who talked him into focusing on Urology. It was a good time to enter the field, with lots of development in the technology and techniques underway. Don got experience in all ages and conditions in Ballarat which wouldn't have been available at the Royal Melbourne. "Surgeons learn on the job: it's more like an apprenticeship."

Don won a Fellowship in America for a year where there were new instruments and new skills that he could bring home and apply. When he returned, he went into practice with Dr Meerhut. "Ken showed me that our skills could be used to assist everyone from new-born babies to the elderly." His experience in the USA had allowed him to develop valuable contacts with leaders in his field. "I talked to people at the Mayo clinic, for example, which is in a town about the same size as Ballarat, which helped me realise that you didn't have to work in a capital city. Ballarat has been very good to me," he said.

Don served as Senior Examiner and Chair of the Board of Urology, an opportunity to improve urology training and assessment and assisting surgeons to become educators in their turn. Because of his sub-specialisations, he has associated with the top specialists from around the world, including speaking at a European conference to an audience of 3,000.

Don knows the value of hooking the class's attention. Once, when delivering a men's health talk in front of a room full of surgical trainees, he started by emptying a jug of water on the front of his white pants to introduce the topic of incontinence! The audience was hooked of course, and he made an important point about the impact of a condition which can damage a person's confidence and ability to live a fulfilling life. Don focused not only on the medical needs of patients, but on the fundamentals of making eye contact, speaking clearly and considering problems such as hearing loss or mobility concerns. When he is asked to speak about men's health people assume he will focus on prostate cancer, but he explained, "There are actually a lot more issues that impact on men's health and wellbeing, including smoking, work related risks, alcohol, trauma, and the risk of suicide."

Before retirement, Don talked to older patients about how they spent their time and several spoke enthusiastically about U3A. Until that point, Don's reading was entirely focused on his specialisation. "Specialists know more and more about less and less", he remarked. He has since taken classes in Australian History and Local History. He took French for several years and gained enough competence to manage in France, where he has operated as well. He has taken part in classes including Bush Walking then took up Philosophy with, "the extraordinary Anne Bouts who has such a rich experience and considered opinions". Don presented a session to the class on Hippocrates which was very well received and generated lots of discussion.

Don considers himself to have been very fortunate to work in a field he loved and to be able to make a real contribution to his community. "It would be awful to work in a job you didn't enjoy."

Interviewed by Wendy Abraham

BLAKE GORDON MANUAL ARTS WORKSHOP - DUST EXTRACTOR (CARBATECH INTERNAL DUCTING SYSTEM) INSTALLATION

The team of Steve Walsh, Warren Coutts, Steve Waddington and Merv Quinn made a significant addition to the BGMAW over the September school holidays by building a shed at the southeast corner of the workshop to house the dust extraction system - a significant safety addition to the workshop. The much-appreciated donation of the fittings kit by Jackie Pyke, a long time member of the Jewellery class, will connect the individual dust-producing machines to the external dust extractor. A big vote of thanks go to the team for making this addition, which will significantly reduce dust in our magnificent workshop. Well done, team!



Terry Dixon, Steve Waddington and Steve Walsh



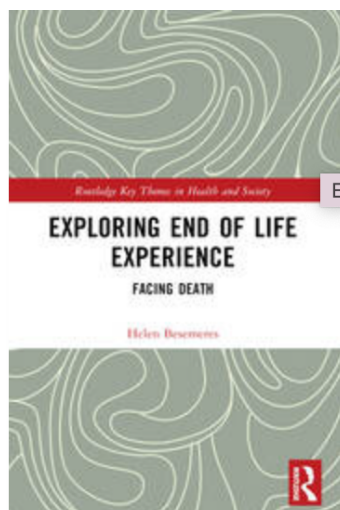
LITERARY TALENTS AT U3A BALLARAT

Earlier this year, Jill Blee published a biography 'Champagne at Three' of one of the first people to undergo transgender affirmation in Victoria. Her name was Rebecca Norton who many of the members of U3A who studied Latin would remember, and she was Jill's sister. The book is available from Collins on Lydiard, the Known World and on Amazon.

Champagne at Three
JILL BLEE



The Story of a Trans Mining Engineer



In 2024, Dr Helen Besemeres published 'Exploring End of Life Experience: Facing Death'. The work draws on the experiences recorded by five people who are facing death. This work is an important contribution to the literature on death and dying. (Published by Routledge)

U3A BALLARAT HAPPY SNAPS

Genealogy and Family History

Louise Salmond came to class with 200 year old parchments of wonderfully detailed family trees. The hand writing was so small and neat it had to be seen to be believed. (Miriam Peck, Tutor)



Marie Wilson's Sewing Skills

The skills of Sit and Stitch class member, Marie Wilson, allowed her to create fabulous garments for the Ballarat Jazz Club Celebrations.



Jazzercise, Halloween Style

Yes folks, this is Ann and Elaine.



Lifetime Achievement Award

Congratulations, John. We cannot think of a more deserving recipient for this prestigious award.



Seniors Expo

Many thanks to all who participated in our October Seniors Expo (and thanks to Elena Tommasi for coordinating the event.)



Meet Our Office and Catering Volunteers

Over the coming months, we will commence profiling our Office and Catering volunteers.

Fran Hanrahan

I quickly joined the catering committee as soon as I heard about it as I need to be allowed to help those who are helping me. Also, attending the functions we cater for, I get to meet so many U3A members, including people I have known from years earlier. But, unlike my co-workers, I do not prepare slices as I lack the skills. Instead, I wash the tea towels! The first eight years of my education were at Bungaree. Then the next three at a secondary school in Ballarat before completing my Primary Teachers' Certificate. I began my teaching career with 60 Preps and Grade 1 students at St. James's Sebastopol. Part-time study and teaching at Ballarat University followed, and I retired from teaching 45 years later. In between teaching appointments, for about 15 years, I was lucky to have two and three-year placements as a volunteer, teaching in developing countries including Fiji, Namibia and Malawi in Africa, with seven years in PNG and a short time in East Timor. In retirement, I promptly joined U3A, but I still had the travel bug, and spent winters avoiding Ballarat. For many years, I did this by helping children in the outback with their distance education. I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity, as I do all the opportunities I have had in the 17 years as a member of U3A Ballarat.



Miriam Peck



I was a teacher for most of my working life which equipped me well for helping out in the office. While sophisticated office skills are not needed, it certainly helps to be computer literate and to be a friendly face at the desk.

I became an Office Volunteer about two years ago. I look forward to office days. They are so varied and usually involve lively conversation with my co-volunteer or with someone who visits the office. It's a great way to stay in touch with U3A happenings and to put faces to familiar names.

Are you interested in finding out more about what is involved in being an Office, Events or Catering volunteer? If so, please contact:

Anne Ottrey 0422 963 985 amottrey@gmail.com for the Catering Crew

Bec Black 0488 661 317 bec.u3a@gmail.com for the Office Staff

Elena Tommasi 0421 520 414 elena.u3a@gmail.com for Events

SAVE THE DATE



**COME
CAROLLING
WITH THE
CHORISTERS**

**2:30pm Tuesday
25th November**

Ballarat North Community Centre

Please join us for a cuppa after the singing

U3A BALLARAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



Swap Tables

Saturday December 6

BNCC Blue Room

10-11am

SAVE THE DATE



BONEGILLA

THE MIGRANTS JOURNEY



If you are interested, Bonegilla The Migrants Journey, will be performed at the Wendouree Centre for the Performing Arts (WCPA) on **Sunday November 9 at 2.00pm**. Here is a link to the WCPA website: <https://bgram.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/153177>

Chocolate Fudge Squares

Ingredients

250g butter
3 tbs cocoa powder
2 cups brown sugar
2 eggs
1 cup coconut
2 cups self-raising flour
1 cup icing sugar



Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan and stir in cocoa and brown sugar.
3. Combine the eggs, coconut and flour.
4. Stir in butter, sugar and cocoa and beat well.
5. Line flat tin with baking paper and pour in liquid.
6. Place in oven set at 180 degrees and cook for 20 minutes.
7. Ice while warm with icing sugar, 1 tbs warm water and 1 extra tbs cocoa powder.
8. When cold, cut into squares.

“The fudge squares are supposed to last for two weeks, but it never has a chance. It’s eaten before then.”
Anne McKee.

A U3A member said, “If you like coconut rough, then this is the slice for you!”

We are keen to include economical, nutritious, seasonal recipes in the Bulletin. Do you have recipes ideas you would be happy to share? If so, send your recipe and a photo to bulletin@u3aballarat.org.au. We will try and include one recipe in each Bulletin edition.

U3A Office Hours Term 4 2025

Tuesday 10am-12pm
Wednesday 10am-2pm
Thursday 10am-2pm

Ballarat North Community Centre
702 Walker St Ballarat North
Ph: 0415 407 163 (new number)

GARDENING TIP



Coral Hiscock and Robert Hammond, Gardening Interest Group (Source: Creative Gardening, Green Prophet)

QUIZ CORNER

ROSES

1. Are rose petals edible?
2. Are roses 'possibly' one of the oldest flowers?
3. How old is the oldest living rose?
4. What is the National Flower of England?
5. From where does the scent from the rose exude?



Many thanks to Coral Hiscock for this month's quiz. Information was taken from website by sophieallport.com, 10 interesting facts about roses.

Quiz answers can be found on page 12.

Tutors and members, would you like to provide five questions and answers for future Bulletin editions? We are seeking one multiple choice question, one true or false question, and three questions types of your choice. Please send your questions and answers to bulletin@u3aballarat.org.au

VALE

Brenda Beck

Brenda Beck was born in Michigan USA . Her parents taught her the love of the land and she became a good hunter. Living outdoors, she happened to come upon fossils, which led her into geology and the classification of different rocks and their families. Brenda trained as a teacher of science and music, gaining a degree in both. She taught both disciplines in America and became very interested in geology and collecting rocks from different areas. Every time Brenda went back to the USA, she would come back to Australia with a case full of rocks for her U3A classes!

Brenda went to teach in Thailand, met Anne, and they have had 55 years together. They adopted two Thai girls who have given them much joy. They all came to Australia and Brenda taught music at Blackburn High School, which is now known for its music program. They then moved to Ballarat where Brenda taught music at Ballarat High School. Her influence on her students was immense. She also was the Ballarat Memorial Concert Band musical director and, through her directorship, brought the band to a B grade level.

On retirement, Brenda joined U3A and began offering a science class. She loved teaching the science class - she could create her own curriculum, there were no exams or corrections, so was in her element with students who were keen and receptive. Brenda encouraged her 'students' to look widely at nature. She was a wonderful, inspiring teacher and had a wide collection of rocks and other items for every class. Brenda loved the countryside around the Western District, and took the class on many very well planned expeditions - some day trips and some overnight trips to areas such as the Naracoorte Caves, Hamilton, Grampians and out on Port Phillip Bay. These excursions were organised brilliantly and were described as 'absolute perfection'. Doug Rutherford and Greta Christie are foundation class members who still attend the science classes. Brenda was cheerful, enthusiastic and fearless.

One of her ex-class members said *"My memories of Brenda include her generosity, enthusiasm and the way she made every event so special and full of fun. Looking back, they were some of the most interesting and enjoyable times of our third age."*



Lys Curtis



Lys Curtis passed away peacefully at Gandarra on 29 October 2025. Lys was a teacher for all of her working life. She predominately worked overseas teaching English in the United Arab Emirates, Japan and many underprivileged countries. She was a U3A member for many years and was the Canasta Tutor for the past several years. She was also an enthusiastic member of the Mahjong class and used to joke that she never won but had fun anyway. She was also a valued member of Ballarat Evening View Club. We will miss her loud laugh, wit and big personality.

Quiz Answers

- 1: All varieties of roses are edible.
- 2: There are rare flower fossils that date back 35 million years.
- 3: The oldest living rose is 1,000 years old and lives on the wall of the Cathedral of Hildesheim in Germany.
- 4: The Tudor Rose.
- 5: Rose petals have microscopic perfume glands on their lower petals and responsible for their scent.

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