



the BULLETIN

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Next Bulletin Deadline

May 22 2026

Class Information

Our Class Coordinator, Miriam Peck, will keep you updated on class offerings via email. Keep an eye on your inbox for the latest updates.



Forthcoming Events May and June and July 2026

Thursday 21 May

Gordon Morrison- Speaker on Icons BNCC Hall 2:30 - 4:00

Thursday 28 May

Ukulele Sing-a-Long -BNCC Hall - 2.30

Tuesday 9th June

Choristers' Concert BNCC Hall 2.30 - 3.30

Thursday 25th June

Combined Chorale/Recorder Concert BNCC Hall 2.30 - 3.30

Thursday 23 July

Celtic Band Concert BNCC Hall, 2.30

Thursday 30 July

Trivia Afternoon BNCC Hall 4 - 6 PM



President's Report

The world continues to be in chaos on the international front, which causes issues within our domestic markets on many levels. However, there is one certainty that remains. U3A Ballarat continues to provide opportunities for our members to connect and learn together.

The fuel price system is a raging virago due to the blockade in the Straits of Hormuz, and we remain subject to the vagaries of the fuel barons "price cycle". (Worth remembering to fill the car when the cycle is low.) There are those amongst us who, when visiting a petrol station, will always fill their tank to its capacity with little thought of the cost, and others who must budget their use of the car. If you are one of the former, then whilst the Strait of Hormuz issue continues to cause high fuel prices, the idea of car pooling to a venue is a conversation that you might like to have in your classes. Adversity can provide opportunity. You may discover a new friendship in the process.



Don Collins

Swap Tables Winter Break

Our very successful Saturday Swap Tables is taking its winter hibernation siesta. It will return once Spring has sprung. It is a delight to see so many members come and enjoy the bounty on offer from the garden and beyond. Many thanks to those who are on the roster who quietly set up and re-set the room, arrange cake to go with the cuppa, and clean up. We shall send you an email shout out when the Swap Tables emerge from the winter sleep.

Attention Tutors: New Photocopier

The new photocopier has been installed in the U3A Ballarat office and there is a process to complete regarding PINs for its use by Tutors. This may take a little while to organise. Please be patient.

We are so lucky to live where we do, without missiles landing in our neighbourhood and armed conflict in our streets. Keep this in mind when you are next annoyed by something that is in truth, minor when compared to challenges faced by the tens of thousands of displaced people who were living their lives as we do, before everything was turned upside down through no fault of their own.

Is 'Keen Genies' U3A Ballarat's Quietest Group?

Most Friday mornings, a small but diligent group of keen genealogists gather at Selkirk Stadium to work on whatever their current project is. Wayne is organising records, Dawn is compiling scrapbooks that record the life of her forebears, Deborah's working towards writing the life story of some of her ancestors and Jan - well she keeps falling down 'rabbit holes'!

We spend the first half hour or so in greetings and catching up on progress (if any) and then we are all 'heads down, tails up' working away on our own thing. When Kath from the café brings in our coffee, she must wonder about the purpose of the group because we are all working away in silence!

But the purpose is paying dividends. It disciplines us all to keep going, trying to at least achieve something each week. There is room for any like-minded genies to join us if you wish.

Miriam Peck (Keen Genies Facilitator)



Notes From the Office

How the Office Phone Works

You may be wondering how the office phone calls are handled, especially when the office is closed. The office phone is taken home by a member of the committee (usually the Office Manager), so it remains monitored outside office hours. As a result, it often isn't in the office during office hours.

We do our best to answer calls as they come in; however, there may be times when we're temporarily unavailable—for example, if we're in a class or attending to other commitments. If your call isn't answered straight away, please be patient. We will return your call as soon as possible.



Lost property - please check out the lost property at BNCC. We have a large number of water bottles among other things.

HAVE YOU JOINED BALLARAT U3A ONLINE RATHER THAN IN PERSON?

If so, you need to call at our office to collect your lanyard and Welcome Pack.

Come and meet our friendly office volunteers.

Office hours:

Tuesday 10am-12pm

Wednesday 10am-2pm

Thursday 10am-2pm

Address:

702 Walker St, Ballarat North



Jill Blee *"It's been an interesting life"*

Jill is known to U3A members as the tutor of various History classes presented over the last two decades. Her original qualifications however were not in the Humanities, but as an Industrial Chemist, since she excelled in Maths and Science in Secondary School. Jill then attended the School of Mines Ballarat, one of very few women in that field. As a teenager she felt family and societal pressure to marry and have children, yet once she did there was little support on hand. She and her husband moved to Sydney where she became engrossed with the city's history. Jill had three children and once they started school she enrolled in an Arts Degree at Macquarie University, "because Whitlam had made Uni entry free!", but when her marriage ended Jill had to abandon Uni and began a picture framing business to support her family. She missed studying and returned to Uni once the children were more independent. Jill later worked as a boarding house mistress in a posh boarding school. For six years she was responsible for the overnight care of thirty year-nine girls, the "rampant hormone year." She managed to balance her commitments. "Getting them all up and out the door in the morning wasn't always easy, but then I had the day to myself and was able to return to study."



Jill completed two Masters' Degrees, one in Writing and one in History. Once her children were independent, she returned to Ballarat to complete her PhD, and to support her ageing parents. She intended to stay till she finished her studies but has since built a life here. Jill told a story of her mother who had depended heavily on her father and seemed unable to cope after his death. On one occasion when Jill was unable to take her to the library, her mother reported that with nothing else to read, she had been forced to read one of Jill's books, and conceded that Jill did in fact, write well! Despite her claims of various ailments over the years, her mother was very healthy right up to passing quietly at age 96.

An accomplished author, Jill has published twelve books on a variety of topics, drawing on her fascination with history and evoking vivid characters in varied settings. Her publications have included three adult fiction novels, two children's fiction stories and the rest were histories, usually commissioned by someone. e.g. Ballarat's Catholic History for the Ballarat Diocese and the history of the local Legal firm Cuthberts, which went back to the goldrush period. "It is easier to work on the more distant past since the subjects of the work cannot argue about what they want you to include."

Last year Jill published “Champagne at Three”, a biography of her sister Rebecca. Rebecca lived the first half of her life as Robert, their mother’s beloved golden child, and as the only son, their parents’ favourite. That changed when Rebecca underwent gender reassignment surgery in 1973. She went on to become a mining engineer, but remained estranged from her mother whose religious beliefs led her to reject Rebecca and to refuse to ever speak of her again. Rebecca had a difficult life and became destitute until Jill located her and brought her to Ballarat. She died in 2017, leaving no records of her life or experiences, which was why Jill wanted to piece together a book.

Jill has travelled widely, mostly related to whatever she was writing. Her first novel was set on Norfolk Island which, tracing convict history and experience, generated both a historical novel and a work of fiction, an imaginary retelling of some of the women in her family. Her second novel, Bridget, is set in County Claire Ireland, where her ancestors lived “as poor as church mice.”

“I’m always reading and studying,” says Jill who has a core group who return for her classes each year and with whom she discusses ideas for future classes. When not researching or writing, Jill knits for charities. “Socks in winter, beanies in summer, as the devil makes work for idle hands, as the nuns would warn.” Asked for her philosophy, Jill replied, “Keep your mind open to everything, this lets you accept the good, excuse or avoid the bad, look on the bright side and avoid the ‘wingers’ in the pool.”

Interviewed by Wendy Abraham



Raisin and Nut Biscuits (Cookies)

½ c butter (softened)
½ c white sugar
¼ c packed brown sugar
½ tsp vanilla
1 egg
1 c flour
¾ c oats
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
1 c raisins or sultanas
½ c coarsely chopped nuts (I use walnuts, but pistachios are even better)



In a large bowl with electric beater or in a stand mixer, beat butter, sugar and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Mix in vanilla and egg.

Stir together flour, oats, baking soda and salt. Add to butter mixture and mix until blended. Add raisins and nuts mixing well using a spatula or spoon.

Drop dough by small tablespoon onto parchment lined baking sheet. Bake in a preheated oven 160 degree (fan) oven for approximately 20 minutes, or 175 degree regular oven for about 30 minutes, until golden brown. Cool. Makes 24 biscuits.

Submitted by Elena Tommasi

Back On Your Bike enjoyed a fabulous morning, meeting at Nimmons Bridge, riding through the picturesque countryside along the Rainbow Bird Trail in glorious sunshine, before returning to the bridge for a picnic.



What's Up at BGMAW?

Thank you to Steve Walsh and Blake Gordon for installing a concrete ramp into the Workshop to make it easier for those with heavy trolleys to access the site.

The Gardening Group has been hard at work this week weeding, planting and upgrading behind the shed so we have a beautiful space to take a break.



Some of the amazing work being done by the Leadlighting class.



GARDENING TIP

If you have Celery growing at present, keep it vertical by supporting the plant with plastic bottles. Milk, juice or soft drink bottles, once the bottom and tops are cut away provide a great reusable support. Always remember to cut the openings with a knife or scissors pointed away from your body.

Thanks to Don for the idea.



Test Your Knowledge of Ballarat (answers on last page)

1. Who was the first white settler to camp by the lake and what did he bring with him?
 2. What did he call the lake and why?
 3. Once gold was discovered what did the miners call the lake?
 4. How did it get the name Wendouree?
 5. Where did the stone come from to build many shops and public buildings in Ballarat?
 6. What sort of tram started carrying passengers around the lake in Dec 1887?
 7. Where was 'Lemonade paddock' and why did it have that name?
-

Do You Have An Image to Share?

Madonna Quixley (pos.practices.pos.people@gmail.com)
and Robert Hammond (rh3439@gmail.com)
maintain our Facebook site.

If you have images to share, please email Madonna and/or Robert.
(Many thanks to Robert who attends many U3A events to take happy snaps.)



BALLARAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

VISION STATEMENT

To develop a sense of belonging and enjoyment of life, through sustained and supportive connections with the U3A community, and as part of the broader Ballarat community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Through the provision of low-cost learning opportunities, our members learn, teach and share ideas and wisdom in a friendly, respectful, inclusive and supportive environment.

What's On

U3A BALLARAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

GORDON MORRISON
RETIRED DIRECTOR OF THE ART GALLERY OF BALLARAT

Gordon has long had an interest in the art of the Byzantine World. In 2014 he curated an exhibition of icons at Ballarat, the first such in an Australian public gallery. Since then he has been involved with major exhibitions on the same theme at Auckland and MONA in Hobart. This year he is assisting the Hermitage Museum with its major exhibition Divine Thresholds which will open in late August. Gordon will present an introduction to this show, and will also discuss rarely seen images from Serbia, Bulgaria and North Macedonia which he visited in 2025.



Thursday 21 May 2026 2:30 p.m.
Ballarat North Community Centre
702 Walker Street

Followed by afternoon tea

U3A Ukulele Minstrels
Musicals Sing-A-Long

Thursday 28 May
2:30 pm
Ballarat North Community Centre
702 Walker Street

Musicals Include:

- Porgy and Bess
- My Fair Lady
- Oliver
- Grease
- Mamma Mia

Come and sing with the Ukulele Minstrels, (words supplied), or just listen and tap your feet.

Afternoon Tea to Follow

U3A BALLARAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Have You Been to the Gallery Yet?

If you haven't been to the Print Exhibition at the Gallery yet you are missing an amazing show. The talent of our members always astounds me.

There is one more Open Day on 13 May from 4 - 6 PM.

Or stop by anytime there isn't a class in the Hall.



U3A Choristers

With Songs in Our Hearts

Tuesday 9 June, 2:30pm
Ballarat North Community Centre
702 Walker Street

Afternoon Tea to Follow



U3A RECORDER ENSEMBLE AND CHORALE

SING WE AND PLAY IT

Thursday 25 June
2:30 pm

Join us for an enchanting concert
including Renaissance music and familiar
melodies

Ballarat North Community Centre
702 Walker Street

Afternoon Tea to follow



Prefer a Printed Copy of U3A Bulletins?

If so, please let Barbara Burnett know.

Ph: 0477 035 507

apollobay3377@gmail.com



**Ballarat
Ageing Well
Expo 2026**
FREE EVENT

Tuesday 26 May | 10am-2pm
Mercure Ballarat Hotel & Convention Centre

**Over 60 stalls of support, services and
information for older people**

Stay independent at home
Meet local health, aged care and social service providers and advocacy groups
Talks on Changes to Aged Care, Legal Planning, Staying Safe Online and Preparing
for Emergencies
Visit the Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre stand and ask us how you can get a
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For more information
Scan the QR code, or visit ballarat.vic.gov.au
Questions? Contact Ageing Well Services on 5320 5500
or email ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au

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& CLOSE TO PUBLIC
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**CITY OF
BALLARAT
Ageing Well**

Answers to Ballarat Quiz

1. William Cross Yuille cane from Geelong in 1838 with his sheep
 2. Black Swamp' because it was so gloomy with lots of reeds and little water.
 3. Once gold was discovered the miners called it another name, Yuille Swamp
 4. Legend has it that William Yuille asked an aboriginal women the name of the swap and she politely told him to clear out, He thought she was referring to its name!
 5. A large stone quarry was opened at View Point in 1862 and another on the site of St Patricks boat shed.
 6. A double decker horse tram
 7. E. Rowlands started making lemonade, soda water and ginger beer in what is now the gardens of Nazareth House.
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U3A BULLETIN
BALLARAT
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