

Patron
Robert Oakeshott MP

PO Box 1210
Port Macquarie
NSW 2444
www.hvu3a.org.au

President

Dr Des Davis
6583 9105

Vice President

Vacant

Secretary

Robyn Morgan
6584 4868

Secretary@hvu3a.org.au

Treasurer

Stuart Whan
6583 5671

Membership Secretary

Bob Gerdes
6584 0377

Course Coordinator

Ursula Bruce
6583 8030

Members

Beverley Izard
Barry Owens

Webmaster

Nick Ogbourne
6586 1627

Newsletter Publisher

Sue Clifford
6582 0424

**Our next Registration
and Enrolment Day
will be on:**

Tuesday 28th April
1.30 pm - 2.30 pm
Auditorium,
Port Macquarie
Seniors Facility,
Munster Street,
Port Macquarie

Please note: No enrolments will be taken before 1.30pm. Only Committee Members and Course Conveners will be admitted to the auditorium before 1.30 pm.

From the President

Hastings Valley U3A, thanks to Carol Surrey and all who have contributed to its growth since 2004, has reached a position of strength and security. We are approaching a membership base of 300, we are offering a broad range of courses convened and tutored by an impressive group of tutors, we have a healthy bank balance, an efficient organisation and an active committee of management. Perhaps we can say we have completed stage one of our development. What next? The first obvious answer is more of the same — good courses, efficient organisation, a natural growth of numbers. But perhaps there is room for some new developments. Let me point to some.

1. **Expansion beyond Port Macquarie.** This has already begun with courses in term one offered in Wauchope, organised by the ever energetic Carol Surrey. This initiative has been successful and will continue with more courses offered in term two.
2. **Equipment.** Many tutors have requested some equipment aids for their tutoring. We are currently costing and sourcing such and hope to make a data projector available next term, and other aids in due course.
3. **A home.** The committee carefully considered the prospect of leasing Emerald Downs Community Centre but eventually decided that the terms were unsuitable. Issues were the constraints inherent in sharing the property with other tenants, the cost, and the awkwardness for our resources in managing this property, which would still be a Council controlled venue. One useful result from this event was a strengthening of our case with Council and an indication that we may find a home eventually in the new Thrumster development possibly to be available in 2010. Meanwhile the Committee continues the search for a minimum facility — a space to store equipment and records, as a headquarters, and possibly a room for small meetings. Any suggestions would be welcomed.
4. **The Glasshouse.** As a follow-on for our course on the Glasshouse, I have held discussions with the Director about some possible uses by us of this facility when it opens mid-year. There are a number of exciting possibilities so watch this space for further news.
5. A wider **involvement** by the general membership in the activities and decision-making of the U3A. This is a personal ambition of mine and I am still exploring ideas with the Management Committee and anybody whose ear I can reach. We have amongst our membership a massive amount of knowledge, skill and life experience, much of it untapped for the purposes of the organisation, which is the further education and enjoyment of the third age. Furthermore, while our numbers continue to grow we are still a minority of our possible constituency in the district. The future is as exciting as the past.

This is our third age, the best age of all.

Des Davis

President

International folk dancing

by Christine Battison

Music and dance have always drawn me like a magnet from my early childhood days when I danced around our lounge room while watching a “knife and fork” mimicking people dancing on our old black and white TV in England in the early 1950s.

About the same time I had a short stint at ballet, tap and acro (acrobatic) classes but apparently my teacher advised my mother that I had a preference for standing on my hands most of the time rather than executing my ballet steps so that little venture petered out fairly quickly.

Our family subsequently joined the post World War II immigration to Australia and for 7 years from 1957 I discovered the joy of gymnasium (now called callisthenics). One of the compulsory items for the end of year concerts apart from swinging clubs and twisting rods was to perform a folk dance. My club had a leaning towards Russian or Hungarian folk dances and I can remember being attracted to this music and in particular performing a dance to Brahms Hungarian Dance No.1.

After outgrowing the senior class at gym I moved on to ballroom dancing with the Mickey Powell School of Dancing in Melbourne (Arthur Murray’s rival). I enjoyed the Latin American dances, again because of the music.

In the mid 1960s I embarked on a world trip, by sea in those days, and was very fortunate to be able to stay with an American friend and her parents in Greece for 6 weeks. During this time I was introduced to Greek music and dance at the local Greek tavern where smashing plates was the norm after a few Ouzos. Wow, I thought, you don’t need a partner for this type of dancing, just follow the leader.

When I returned to Melbourne I began to make enquiries where I could do Greek dancing. Of course it wasn’t difficult with Melbourne’s huge Greek community and I eventually found a wonderful Greek teacher who could not believe that an Aussie was interested in learning Greek dance. Needless to say I loved the music and dances and before long I was recruited into a display group which consisted mainly of Greek girls. I remember performing at a Greek festival and afterwards being congratulated in Greek until the realisation that I could not understand what was being said.

Work commitments necessitated relocating to Canberra at the end of 1981 which meant much scouring of The Canberra Times to find Greek dancing. I visited the local Hellenic Club but unfortunately the classes were only for children. Finally I discovered Canberra International Folk Dancing Association in early 1982 where I spent a number of years together with my husband Jim (an Irish dancer) dancing and teaching folk dances from around the world.



Christine Battison (centre) with two students.

In 1989 Jim and I became qualified folk dance teachers having completed a teacher training course based on a similar course in Holland. The graduates from that course formed an association called Folk Dance Australia with Jim and myself being two of the founding members.

Also at this time we set up our own folk dance classes in Canberra where I taught adults and children 4 days per week. Jim was the bread winner while I concentrated on my “labour of love”. Two years later we formed Folk Dance Canberra where we taught classes until we moved to Port Macquarie 15 months ago.

Over the years we have attended many dance workshops and seminars run by visiting overseas dance teachers. We have also travelled to a number of countries visiting villages where traditional folk dances are still danced to traditional music which, combined with the history and culture, is a truly fascinating and enlightening experience.

We have danced at many festivals and have received invitations from a number of Embassies in Canberra to perform on National Days.

Various costume items have been collected during our travels and we have also made costumes from photographs and books.

We are thrilled at the prospect of being able to pass on our knowledge and experience of international folk dancing to the Port Macquarie community and thank the U3A for giving us the opportunity to be able to do this.

An unsolicited tribute sent to the Newsletter:

From personal experience, U3A have a wonderful, well organised, professional and hard working tutor available on Mondays 10–11.30. Christine Battison teaches Folk Dancing from Around the World. Christine has us up and dancing in sequence, rhythm and step in no time at all. Well done, Christine.

Metta (Metta Mata Aranya, Member #04072)

THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY AT HVU3A

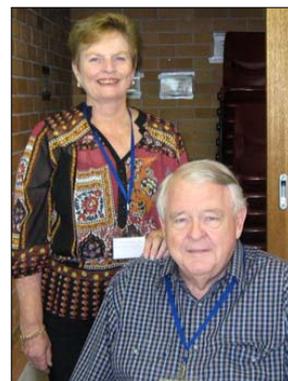
by Helen Crossley

In 2004, while walking from Lighthouse Beach to Lake Cathie with our Probus Club, Lyn Crosscombe mentioned to me that she had heard that there was a U3A Australian History Group starting up and inviting people to come along to the Community Centre under the Emerald Downs Shopping Centre to take part in this new course.

Having recently retired and needing something to keep the brain in action, I went along to hear what it was all about. There I met Eric Graham, our tutor extraordinaire – such enthusiasm for Australian History, or for any history for that matter, I had never encountered before. It was contagious and soon, together with about 6 others, I was hooked.

In the early days, we heard from Eric every facet of Captain James Cook's life – social history is so much more engaging than learning dates by rote as we did at school. We learned that Eric will not believe that Bligh was dragged out from under the bed and that he believes that Mary Reiby was a heroine in her time (although this is fiercely disputed by one member in particular – this makes for a great debate!)

Soon the word began to spread about this amazing course and we moved into the Senior Citizens Centre with a group of about 30 people. The word kept spreading so Eric started yet another group on Monday mornings and in the last term of 2008, his third group began on Friday mornings. I think the numbers taking part in the Australian History Group are now approximately 90.



Eric Graham, Tutor & Helen Crossley, Student

Eric now leads discussions and does the occasional presentation but he has encouraged the members to research and do presentations on their subject of choice.

Thanks, Eric, for the incredible amount of time you have put into this course and for enriching the lives of the members of your various groups and encouraging us to stretch our boundaries. From day one I was hooked and still attending 5 years later.

Our ageing brain and the good news

Contributed by Carol Surrey

“We now know that exercise and mental activity in animals generate and sustain more brain cells, and we have many studies confirming that humans who lead mentally active lives have better brain function. The more education we have, the more socially and physically active we are, and the more we participate in mentally stimulating activities, the less likely we are to get Alzheimers disease or dementia.

“Not all activities are equal in this regard. Those that involve genuine concentration – studying a new topic, learning a musical instrument, playing board games, reading and dancing – are associated with a lower risk of dementia. Dancing, which requires learning new moves, is both mentally and physically challenging and requires much concentration. Less intense activities, such as bowling, baby sitting and golfing are NOT associated with a reduced incidence of Alzheimers.”

From: “The Brain That Changes Itself”
by Norman Doidge M.D.

Trivia

By raising your legs slowly and laying on your back, you cannot sink into quicksand.

GOOD FACT TO REMEMBER???

Charlie Chaplin once won third prize in a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest.

Wauchope news

by Carol Surrey

Last term we got off to a good start at Wauchope and this term we are offering five courses of varying lengths.

We really do appreciate the help and support shown to us by Brendan and his staff at the Library.

We now have a sparkling new white board and new jug. Unfortunately, we do not have a sink so that means we all have to take our own cups or mugs in a plastic bag. This is probably a good thing as it prevents the spread of germs during the cold winter months.

Bonzer! on-line magazine for seniors

Bonzer! (www.bonzer.org.au) is a monthly e-zine, with a special focus on wise elders. Contributors come from a variety of backgrounds. Though based in Australia, members live around the world – in Australia, USA, Canada, UK, South Africa, Poland, Denmark and others.

If you have a computer and enjoy being informed, entertained, reminiscing about the past, looking forward to the future, it's well worth a look. There are **no joining fees** and **no advertisements**.

Bonzer! also encourages contributions from aspiring older writers. New members are always welcome.

For more information, contact Nick Ogbourne our U3A Webmaster, who is also the webmaster of **Bonzer!** and a committed participant.

Dates to mark in your diaries:

Term 2 2009 **Convenors Conference – Sea Acres**
Date: 29 April **Time:** 9.30am-2.30pm

Term 3 2009 **Enrolment** Tuesday July 28
Start 3 August **End** 25 September

BYRNES & COX

L A W Y E R S

Tony Cox

Suites 11-13, 1st Floor Galleria Building
Port Macquarie NSW 2444

Phone 02 6584 6866 • Fax 02 6584 6868

Email: tony.cox@byrnes-cox.com.au

A Reputation Built on Results

Name Badges

New members please collect your name badges from the Reference Desk at Port Macquarie Library. If you have not received your badge, please contact the Membership Secretary, Bob Gerdes, on **6584-0377**.

Replacement Name Badge lanyards and pouches may be purchased from Bob on Enrolment Day at the beginning of each term.

Members are requested to wear your badges when attending any U3A activity.

Please write your contact number on the back of your badge in case of emergency.

Letters to the Editor

We encourage our members to write to us with suggestions for improving both this newsletter and, of course, our U3A. Longer contributions relating to the activities of our U3A are also welcome.

If undelivered return to:

Hastings Valley U3A Inc
PO Box 1210
Port Macquarie
NSW 2444

**SURFACE
MAIL**

Enrolments

Enrolments will not be accepted for new courses prior to the official enrolment day.

We do not have the ability to process postal enrolments. You may ask someone else to enrol for you. In general, committee members are not able to undertake this role.

Late enrolments are welcome in many courses. You ***MUST*** contact the Course Convenor to ascertain if he/she is accepting additional members. ***Enrolments will not be accepted later than 3 weeks after the start of the course.*** For late enrolment, you pay only for the rest of the term. Please post your remittance to the Treasurer with a covering note and initial the attendance form to show you have paid. If you owe less than \$5, postage stamps will be accepted as payment. Names cannot be entered on the Attendance Sheet unless accommodation fees have been paid. Money cannot be paid to the Course Convenor during the term.

Change of address

Please let the Secretary or Membership Secretary know if you move house and especially if you change your email address.

Newsletter contributions

If your group is doing something interesting, something different or going on an excursion, please let us know. A short report accompanied by some photographs would be wonderful. We will publish your contributions for everyone to enjoy.

Photographs and Privacy

If you have an objection to having your photograph in the on-line gallery (or in our Newsletter), please write to the Secretary and make this fact known. We will always respect your privacy but we must first be aware of your need.

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed here or in HVU3A activities are not necessarily those of HVU3A or its officers. HVU3A accepts no responsibility for statements or opinions expressed. HVU3A offers courses that provide general information for its members. HVU3A does not warrant that such information is true and correct.

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