

# U3A FLINDERS NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2021



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE Flinders – Inc  
c/o Flinders University, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide SA 5001  
Telephone: 8201 3068  
Email: [u3a@flinders.edu.au](mailto:u3a@flinders.edu.au)  
Website: [www.u3aflinders.org.au](http://www.u3aflinders.org.au)

## Message from our President



Dear everyone,

We are almost at the end of another year and looking forward to signing up for the first Programme of 2022. Now that all of us have had the chance to be vaccinated (and some even awaiting booster jabs), as the borders re-open across Australia and Internationally, we can anticipate life returning to some kind of normality. I know that Max and I are hoping to spend Christmas with our daughter and son-in-law from Sydney after almost 2 years separation due to Covid.

At our Committee Meeting this week we decided that we will re-start our tea/coffee breaks which have been greatly missed by us all, aiming to begin at the first session in February 2022. U3A Committee Members will deal with any health precautions required by SA Health and by the Hall Committee - **all you have to do is remember to bring a mug to each session.** I will once again take the opportunity on your behalf of thanking our hard-working Committee - who assembled, dis-assembled and sanitised the Hall at each meeting over almost two years!

In the last Newsletter I spoke about a meeting with Callista Thillou (signatory on behalf of the Vice Chancellor on our Sponsorship & Facilities Agreements with the University) to discuss the way forward after the initial three-year period from 2019-2022. Unfortunately, Callista informed me that she would be leaving Flinders University in mid-October to take up an appointment at the James Martin Institute of Public Policy in Sydney. Over the last three years Callista endeavoured, with great courtesy and integrity, to underpin and strengthen U3A's 30-year association with the University. Many of you had the pleasure of meeting Callista at last year's Christmas picnic. She will be remembered for generously offering to fund a set of more powerful speakers at the Hall to enhance the enjoyment of those of us with hearing problems at every meeting. She will be missed by us all; Flinders' loss is Sydney's gain! She has handed over our portfolio to Roslyn Clermont (Senior Information Analyst, Strategy and Performance), and I have already arranged a meeting for mid-November to open discussions on the way forward for our Sponsorship & Facilities Agreements.

We have farewelled two of our long-standing members in the last few months: Past President Garry Kneebone, and Brian Kelly. Our thoughts are with their families. Father Time has caught up with two of our other long-time members who have had to go into full-time care. Audrey Greenway was our Programme Coordinator for seven years, before handing over to Max eight years ago, and she continued to assist by contributing a month's worth of excellent speakers for every Programme until the most recent, Number 90, when ill-health finally caught up with her. Also, Tony Van Kalken, a long-time Committee member, presented several talks on historical subjects, and will be remembered as the organiser and Chair of "In the News" sessions which, until recently, featured in every Programme. Many thanks to both of these valued members of U3A Flinders.

Unfortunately, in the last month, Peter Day - our Office Coordinator - has had to resign his position due to family commitments, which means that we have a vacancy once more for this important job.



Acknowledging the generous support of Flinders University

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In the meantime, Raquel Kneebone and our faithful Office Volunteers will keep the Office functioning, but Raquel has requested that anyone who might consider joining the team should contact her through the Office on 8201 3068 - or have a chat with me at the Hall.

At the AGM we award “Certificates of Appreciation” to members who have made a significant contribution to the running of our U3A over many years. Any written suggestions for possible worthy recipients this year can be given to me and I will take them to the next Committee Meeting in mid-January for discussion.

Finally, I am looking forward to meeting up with as many of you as can make it to the Christmas Event in Oaklands Reserve on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 12.00 noon. In the meantime, Seasons’ Greetings to you all, and may we all enjoy a healthy and peaceful 2022.

Warmest regards,  
**Liz Gordon**

## A GRAVE NOT FIT FOR A HEROINE

**Denise Hannaford**



The last thing in the world which I expected to be doing in my retirement, was grave hunting.

However, I have become gripped by the stories of some of our early South Australian heroines. The woman who started my new quest is Miss Adelaide Laetitia Miethke, O.B.E. (1881 - 1962).

Miss Miethke was an Educationist, Feminist, Social Activist, Peace Activist, Educator, Teacher, School Inspector, Women’s Rights Activist, Women’s Rights

Organiser, Unionist and the Founder of the Alice Springs School of the Air.

One thing which helped consume her life was trying to gain equal rights for women teachers (which she did see before she died), and equal pay for them as well (her salary as a female School Inspector was 40% of the males for equal work). However, she died before this became a factor which helped end Sir Thomas Playford’s record time as SA Premier.

After she retired, she visited her friend John Flynn in Alice Springs. There she noticed how the outback children were very shy and many did not know how to socialise with other children. The idea of “bridging the lonely distance” for these children seized her mind and suggested her “most constructive work”.

She devised, and single-mindedly set up as a branch of the RFDS, the world’s first School of the Air, using individual pedal-wireless sets on remote homesteads to link the children. Its official opening date was her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1951. The school would grow to cover an area of about 1.3 million sq. km across central Australia.

However, I was appalled when I visited her grave in the Cheltenham Cemetery. I’d found out that it’s classed as an ‘Honoured Grave’, which means it does not have an expiry date and the State takes care of it—so I didn’t expect to see it so derelict. I have since been promised it will be fixed up by her 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary next February.

I have given them *some* names of other such South Australian women who have similar graves. (They don’t know just how many women I have in mind.) I will be doing my utmost to make sure all our inspiring notable women are resting in graves that honour their achievements.



### **In Memorium**

We are sad to announce the death of the following members since our last Newsletter

**Past President, Professor Garry Kneebone**

and

**Brian Kelly**

Our thoughts are with their families

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## ADELAIDE CITY BUILDINGS - RESTORATION, RESCUE AND FACADISM

John Bartlett

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, I participated in a U3A Wednesday Walking Group tour of city buildings led by Judy Milford. This turned out to be an extremely interesting excursion for all and with my architectural background, I was able to add further comments on some of the buildings.

Further to the walk, which viewed buildings from the outside only, Judy asked me to write an article for this Newsletter on restoration of our city buildings. As there are several aspects of this subject, I decided to discuss a few examples of three of these aspects – Restoration, Rescue and Facadism. Please note that some of the buildings I have mentioned below were not seen on the walk.

**RESTORATION** - With so many fine, old and not so old, buildings in Adelaide, we can be thankful for the efforts taken to restore them to their original condition. Some examples are as follows:

**Adelaide Magistrates Court** – SE corner Victoria Square - Restoration of the lower stonework on the outside this classical Greek style building, still very noticeable, was necessary because of rising damp. The new section behind the original building is in my opinion rather disturbing to the eye.

**Adelaide Arcade** – Rundle Mall to Grenfell Street - Regularly restored to its original excellent Victorian Age condition.

**Treasury Building (now Adina Hotel)** – NE corner Victoria Square - Kept in original state externally, and sympathetic conversion to a hotel inside.

**RESCUE** - There are three examples that come to mind:

### 199 – 203 Victoria Square

Prior to SGIC Building (Now GHD Building) being built, a Victorian era building was put on steel rails and moved Northwards to be clear of the new building. Original appearance and interior are retained.

### Edmund Wright House – 59 King William Street

An elaborate finely built Italianate style building built as a bank. Development threatened its demolition in 1971, but a public outcry and eventual Heritage Listing has saved it.

It has been empty for a few years, and was bought by a Sydney developer a couple of years ago.

**Supreme Court** – Victoria Square - Originally Moore's Department Store. Burnt out 1948, closed in 1960s. Then converted to Courts.



**The Walking Group in Victoria Square at the start of the City Buildings Walk**

**FACADISM** - Facadism means the retention of the facade of an old historic building, and building a new one behind it. There are several completed examples in Adelaide, namely:

**Former Caledonian Society** - King William Street South; **Former Post Office** - Grenfell Street, South side; **Former Salvation Army Citadel** - Pirie Street, South side and **Her Majesty's Theatre** – Grote Street.

Two significant examples under construction are:

**Former Southern Cross Arcade and old Sands and McDougall's building** - 52 King William Street, East side; and **Former G. & R. Wills & Co. building**, North Terrace, South side.

Both these developments feature high rise office and residential accommodation.

So, what do we in U3A think about restoration, rescue and retaining original facades of buildings in our beautiful city called Adelaide? I'm sure everyone will agree that restoration and rescue are important in retaining as much of our heritage as we can.

We cannot hold back growth and development, and facadism at least reminds us of some of what was built before our time in Adelaide.

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## IS IT POSSIBLE TO SLOW ASPECTS OF AGEING AND FUNCTIONAL DECLINE? Max Gordon

On Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July, we had an excellent presentation from Professor Susan Gordon (no relation) on the findings of a comprehensive study of 600 people from Adelaide aged between 40 and 75 years of age. The aim was to investigate and evaluate how individuals progress from being classified as “healthy”, to “pre-frail” and subsequently to “frail”, and hopefully come up with some ways to retard the inevitable decline as we transition into old age.

Several U3A members contacted me after Sue’s presentation, to ask if I could try to distil the key points of this major, detailed, report into a more digestible and directly useful list which might be valuable to us all.

The most critical finding, in my view, was the clear message that it is **never too late** to take some steps, however small, to improve our personal well-being and physical proficiency. I therefore summarise below the most important suggestions revealed within Sue’s comprehensive report.

**Keep mobile.** Do not become a couch potato. Get up from your chair regularly, stretch your legs and move yourself around – even if only within your living room. A gentle walk around the block, within your capabilities, is even more valuable. Walking is generally considered to be the cheapest and best exercise.

**Maintain your balance.** Falling over is a key indicator of progression to frailty. Be aware that one fall often leads to more falls – so it is vitally important to get some advice on simple exercises to improve general balance, flexibility and steadiness on your feet.

**Look after your feet.** Wear “sensible” shoes which are not only comfortable but provide support and grip. House slippers tend to be worn for many hours each day, and should not be flimsy and/or ill-fitting. Attend a qualified Podiatrist regularly.

**A good night’s sleep.** Do not indulge in watching TV or other “screens” before going to bed. This includes your computer, iPad, or iPhone. Try to wind down – not up! The bright moving colours plus huge variety of interesting topics provides the brain with excessive stimulus, making sleep difficult to achieve. Definitely do not sit up in bed scrolling through the images on your iPad!!

**Healthy diet.** Eat small, regular meals, with a wide variety of foods – particularly vegetables.

**Social interaction.** All studies seem to agree on the importance of maintaining social contacts e.g., by joining U3A Flinders, Probus, various special interest groups, etc.

**Core strength.** You should try to achieve sufficient physical fitness and strength to enable you to carry out routine everyday tasks, such as operating kitchen and other equipment, opening packets and jars, lifting and carrying pots and pans, etc. Make use of inexpensive fitness equipment, such as a hand-strengthening device (available at sports shops), and get some advice from a Physiotherapist on how to exercise safely within your capabilities.

## WEDNESDAY SCRIBBLERS WRITING GROUP

**Alison McDonald**

Members are each asked to write 100 words (no more, no less) to encourage succinct writing with impact. This is Alison’s submission:

### **MUD, MUD, GLORIOUS MUD ...**

“Which one do you want?” I asked.

“Neither,” she replied firmly as she went inside to fetch a bundle of newspapers which I spread generously across the backseat of the car. Then, holding the open door, I gestured.

“In! – whichever one of you belongs to me.” The two, so mud-caked as to be indistinguishable (but both, obviously, gloriously happy); they’d spent the afternoon charging up the hill behind the house; rolling and sliding down ...

“A good hosing’s in order, I reckon,” said my friend.

A yell from the back seat. “It’s winter. And freezing. Please, Mum! Nooo!!” wailed my daughter.

Our thanks to those who have contributed to this newsletter.

Please submit your contributions to the U3A Newsletter, both text and photos, to  
Judy Milford at [milfords4@bigpond.com](mailto:milfords4@bigpond.com) and Nola Byass at [littleroo@optusnet.com.au](mailto:littleroo@optusnet.com.au)  
by the end of February 2022.