

U3A FLINDERS NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2018



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President's Report

by *John Bartlett*



I seem to have a few things to tell you about this time, so here we go:

U3A Flinders and Flinders University

On 18th May, Liz, Max and I met with Darlene Voss, our nominated liaison person from the University, and several matters requiring clarification by the University were discussed.

However, Darlene left the University two days later, and we were informed that the new liaison person would be Erin Ruff. Liz, Max and I met with Erin on 30th August and a similar range of topics we were yet to receive any answers from the University was discussed.

In brief, the main matters discussed concerned finances, office facilities and parking for Office Volunteers.

At the time of issuing this Newsletter, we were still waiting for firm answers to all matters discussed with Erin. To say the least, the Committee is finding the delays and lack of responses somewhat frustrating.

Certificate of Appreciation

The Committee has decided that a Certificate of Appreciation would be awarded to members who have made specific and valuable contributions to U3A Flinders. This Certificate would not replace Life Membership. Any member may propose to the Committee, in writing, a recipient of this award. The Committee shall have the power to award a Certificate once a nomination has been received from either an ordinary member or from a Committee member. Recipients of the Certificate will continue to pay the normal membership subscription. For further information on this matter, contact the Secretary or me.

Proposed Constitution Amendments

As members have been previously notified, the Committee resolved at its May meeting that several changes be made to the Constitution. These changes will reflect new financial year reporting, brought about by the advent of many members paying their subscriptions by Direct Debit (EFT) during the latter part of a previous financial year (January to December).

A Special General Meeting will be held to deal with this matter in conjunction with our next Annual General Meeting on 5th March 2019.

Christmas Lunch

I do hope you will come to our Christmas Lunch on Tuesday, 11th December, starting at Noon. A small group of us are planning what we hope to be a very entertaining and memorable event.

As our programme says, "Please bring a festive plate".

Committee Positions for the year 2019-2020

With another Annual General Meeting coming on 5th March, I ask members to consider coming on our Committee as there will be a few vacancies. As we have a steady flow of new members, there must surely be some members who would like to help keep our excellent organisation vibrant and progressive.

Meeting on Tuesday 2nd October - Sir Henry Ayers by Dr. Jason Shute

During his talk, Dr. Shute referred to his book on Sir Henry Ayers, published in 2010. After the meeting, some members who would like to read the book asked for its title - it is "Henry Ayers, The Man Who Became a Rock".

The tree that keeps on giving



by *Max Gordon*

Those who regularly attend sessions at Active Elders Hall will have noticed that Marleen and Dean Carver often bring along cardboard boxes filled with grapefruit for members to avail themselves of. Over the years, I have been amazed at the quality and quantity of this produce, and have joked with Dean that he must have a small forest of grapefruit trees on a huge block of land. He finally succumbed to my blandishments, and recently e-mailed me some photographs of the source of the fruit which, incredibly, shows a single medium-sized tree in his back yard. What!? This tree must be a champion performer. I have decided to call her “Gladys”, as I feel that I know her so well. All I can say to Dean and Marleen is, please



talk nicely to Gladys - and keep the grapefruit coming. Maybe U3A Flinders should adopt her (Gladys I mean, not Marleen!)? ♦

The Magic of Mushrooms

by *Max Gordon*

On Tuesday 21st of August we were fortunate to receive an enthralling presentation by Pam Catchside, an Honorary Research Associate at SA’s Botanic Gardens & State Herbarium. Pam is also a leading-light in the Adelaide Fungal Studies Group, and she spoke to us on their behalf on the subject of “The Interdependence of Fungi and Forests”. To say that Pam “knew her stuff” would be a complete understatement, and her talk was illustrated with marvellous photographs and diagrams showing the vast eco-system of fungi that exists literally beneath our feet. A particular revelation to me was the extensive support network provided by fungi to trees (and no doubt other plants) by a comprehensive web of very fine thread-like filaments radiating out from the tree roots.



The Death Cap

My own experience of wild mushrooms (or “Toadstools” as we used to call them), was influenced by the knowledge of how exceedingly dangerous some of them are. When we lived in Hampshire in England, I was always on the lookout when we visited the Oak woodlands of the New Forest because of the high probability of encountering *Amanita Phalloides* (The Death Cap), or its equally



The Destroying Angel

toxic cousin *Amanita Virosa* (The Destroying Angel – so called because it looks so pure and elegant, but is actually deadly). Both of these are commonly mistaken for edible mushrooms, and are so toxic that most people who eat any part of them do not survive the experience. One problem is that the signs of poisoning may not become apparent for up to 36 hours, by which time significant organ damage has already taken place – to the extent that survival depends on having an immediate liver transplant accompanied by other aggressive medical treatments. I am informed that examples of these mushrooms have now been found here, in South Australia – so, please, **a serious warning to all U3A members: don’t go out into the woods foraging for mushrooms for your Big Brekkies!** It’s simply not worth the risk. Just buy some from Woolies. You know it makes sense. ♦

Parkinson’s SA

Parkinson’s Disease is a progressive neurological condition, characterized by symptoms involving involuntary movement and other well-known indicators. The condition is named after Dr James Parkinson who first described the symptoms of a “shaking palsy” in a medical essay in 1817. Remarkably, even today, there is no definitive medical test or radiological procedure to confirm the diagnosis. Parkinson’s is a global phenomenon, recognized in all cultures, and is estimated to affect

by *Max Gordon*

approx. 6.3 million people. To put this in context, more than 30 people are diagnosed every day in Australia. The average age of diagnosis is 60 years, but there are cases of “young onset” and even “juvenile” Parkinson’s patients. Arguably, the most famous people to be diagnosed with the disease were the late Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) and Pope John Paul II.

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On Tuesday 18th September, we were privileged to have the CEO of Parkinson's SA, Olivia Nassaris, with us. Olivia is a first-rate presenter who laid bare the shocking facts about Parkinson's Disease: the symptoms; the progression; various tactics and methods of lessening the impact (there is no cure); and details of assistance available to patients, their carers, families and friends. Olivia was accompanied by Beth, a Parkinson's sufferer, who had been a nurse for many years until forced to give up her job because of the progressive nature of the disease. Being unused to public speaking, Beth showed great courage in vividly explaining her situation, and describing how much help and support

she had received from the people at Parkinson's SA. This was a truly excellent session, being wonderfully informative and, despite the serious subject, dealt with in a compassionate and up-beat way.



Olivia Nassaris

Detailed information about this incurable and debilitating condition is presented in easily accessible form on the Parkinson's SA website - www.parkinsonssa.org.au - or you can call them on 1800 644 189. ♦

Test your knowledge of Scottish Words (answers at foot of page 4)

by *Max Gordon*

A. Shinty 1. A complicated pattern of lacing used to tie patent dancing shoes. 2. A leather leg-guard worn by farm workers in the fields when using heuks to cut turnips in frosty weather. 3. A game played by teams of young men in the Central Highlands, similar to hockey but much more violent, and with fewer rules.

B. Scunner. 1. A kitchen maid of the very lowest status. 2. A domestic workplace for washing dishes in a large country mansion. 3. A mental state of extreme disgusted irritation (normal throughout Scotland).

C. Tattybogle. 1. Mashed potatoes with the addition of yellow turnips, crowdy cheese, small pieces of meat, scanlons, garnished with wild parsley. 2. A life-like scarecrow. 3. A fearsome mystical creature invoked by Guisers at Halloween to frighten children.

D. Up-Helly-Aa. 1. Boisterous, joyful singing at services of the Free Presbyterian Church. 2. A traditional celebration of Viking origin, involving considerable fire and alcohol. 3. The Gaelic word for "Helicopter".

N.B. Hard luck, Bruce. There are no prizes. I am Scottish, after all!

Visit to the RFDS's new Central Operations HQ in Adelaide

by *Max Gordon*



On Friday 6th June, a group of 19 members visited the shiny brand-new Central Ops HQ of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, located at the south west corner of Adelaide Airport, just behind the Harbour Town shopping complex. This superb visit was a one-off special event organised for us by personal invitation via Sheila Dickinson (U3A Flinders' Treasurer) and her husband Ian – who are both well-regarded volunteers with RFDS. We had the privilege of

having a close encounter with an equally brand-new Swiss-made Pilatus PC12 flying ambulance, which was being thoroughly prepared and tested prior to being commissioned into operational use with the rest of the fleet. I was surprised at how cramped the interior of the craft was, noting that it was necessary for the on-board paramedic to wear knee-guards whilst attending to the patient. If you examine the photograph carefully, you will see that the new aircraft is fitted with a high-tech 5-blade propeller (instead of the standard 4-blade model). We were told, however, that the 4-bladed prop is the preferred option, because the newer model is more susceptible to damage during landings and take-offs on hot, dry, stony outback airstrips. In January 2019, the RFDS will take delivery of a Pilatus PC-24 twin-engine jet, offering a smoother flying experience, greater range and greater speed. Our U3A group was very fortunate to have been given such a Rolls-Royce tour of this wonderful new facility, for which we sincerely thank Sheila and Ian Dickinson. ♦

Mary Schumacher's second trip to Iceland

In September, Mary gave us a memorable presentation on her recent visit to Iceland. Although she had visited the country once before, she was so captivated by the place and the people that she felt compelled to make a return trip. Located in the North Atlantic around 800 km northwest of Scotland, Iceland is geologically a very young country still in the process of formation. The island sits on a major geological fault-



Harpa Concert Hall

line (the Mid-Atlantic Rift), which makes it one of the most volcanically active countries in the world. Thermal springs, pools and geysers are found in various locations, and almost all electricity and much heating is generated from hydro and geothermal power. More than half of Iceland's population of 285,000 live in the capital, Reykjavik. The economy relies on the export of fish and other marine products, mostly to Britain and Germany, and from smelting aluminium – making good use of the plentiful supply of cheaply generated electricity. Tourism is also becoming an important element in the economy. ♦



A leisured age that is no more

by *Max Gordon*

After the Reformation, the Church of England lost much of its importance and relevance. However, Men of the Cloth still commanded respect from their communities, as many of them had been very well educated in prestigious Universities, had impeccable manners, private “old” money, lots of free time, and fully lived up to their status within their local communities. This very leisurely, privileged life – complete with at least one live-in domestic servant – left plenty of opportunities for self-indulgent, eccentric behaviour. Here are a few examples taken from a recently published book by a young C of E Curate, the Revd Fergus Butler-Gallie.

- The Revd Francis Hugh Maycock (1903-1980), Principal of Pusey House in Oxford, regularly slept for 18 hours each day. He is quoted as saying: “When I wake up in my pyjamas, I know it’s time for Mass; when I wake up in my trousers, I know it’s time for tea.”
- Revd Dr Edward Drax Free (1764-1843), Rector of All Saints, Sutton, spent most of his time wandering around his Rectory in a dressing gown, cataloguing his extensive collection of French pornography.
- Revd Frederick Densham (1870-1953), Vicar of Warleggan on Bodmin Moor, wrote in his Parish Attendance Register: “Sunday – no wind, no rain, no fog, no congregation.” This comment was not really surprising, as his hobby was devising and making complicated locking mechanisms which he applied to the church door to keep the congregation out!
- Revd Robert Hawker (1803-1875), Vicar of Morwenstow, Cornwall, was obsessed with stories of mermaids. He made himself a wig out of seaweed and, naked apart from a piece of oilskin wrapped round his legs, rowed across the bay to an outcrop of rock in Bude harbour, sat on it and began to sing to passing fishing boats. ♦

Supposedly a true story from Mt Isa, Queensland

contributed by *Margaret White*

A Police Patrol Car parked outside a local neighbourhood pub late in the evening. The Officer noticed a man leaving the bar so intoxicated that he could barely walk. The man stumbled around the car park for a few minutes, with the Officer quietly observing. After what seemed like an eternity, and trying his keys in the locks of five vehicles, the man managed to find his car, which he fell into. He lay there for several minutes as a number of patrons left the bar and drove off. Finally, he managed to start his car, switched the wipers on, then off again, tooted the horn and then switched on the lights. He moved the vehicle forward a few meters, reversed a little and then remained stationary for a few more minutes

as some more vehicles left. At last, he pulled out of the car park and started to drive slowly down the road.

The Police Officer, having patiently waited all this time, now started up the patrol car, put on the flashing lights, pulled the man over and carried out a breathalyzer test. To his amazement, the test indicated no evidence of the man's intoxication. The Officer said: “I'll have to ask you to accompany me to the Police Station, sir. This breathalyzer equipment is obviously broken.” The man answered: “I doubt it, Officer. This is my designated night for decoy duty.” ♦

Answers to Scottish Words Quiz. A = 3; B = 3; C = 2; D = 2

Finally, your Managing Committee wishes all Members a happy Festive Season, and a healthy and peaceful New Year.