



**MORELAND**  
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# NEWSLETTER

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Website: [www.u3amoreland.org.au](http://www.u3amoreland.org.au)  
Email: [info.u3amoreland@gmail.com](mailto:info.u3amoreland@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 0421 318 872

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring time is the season of renewal and I took great heart from the enthusiastic way that over thirty of our members came together to look at ways of developing U3A Moreland, at the recent 'Growing our Membership' workshop and lunch at the Brunswick Town Hall.

Everyone joined in the discussions about how to attract new members and become more inclusive, recruit more volunteers, continue to develop our range of programs and activities to better meet members' needs, and extend our reach into the northern part of Merri-bek.

Many suggestions and ideas were put forward, some we could consider doing immediately, while others will take more research and planning. All the ideas and information are being compiled into a report for consideration by the Committee of Management.

As we approach Term 4 and year's end, we can be justifiably proud of how far we have come this year, after the recovery from COVID and the forced exodus from Siteworks. Let's look forward to a year of growth and renewal in 2024. (See the brief report on the workshop on page 2)

*Richard Brown, President U3A Moreland*

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*Table problem solving - President and Team at work!*



## U3A MORELAND 'GROWING OUR MEMBERSHIP' WORKSHOP

The workshop was developed to seek members' response to the proposal that we need to grow our membership and to gather ideas for attracting more members. We welcomed some thirty members to the event, who enthusiastically contributed ideas and joined in the conversations about growing our membership.

After an introduction by the President, Richard Brown, our Vice President, Gwen Rosengren outlined some of the issues involved in understanding why we need to grow and how we will decline if we don't. Without growth we have less opportunity to gain fresh ideas, and we miss out on what new members bring to U3A Moreland. New members share the volunteer load. In fact, it is an illusion that we remain stable if we do nothing to grow our organisation. We also need to consider the changing face of retirement and how to meet the needs and interests of more recently retired and younger people.

The Assistant Treasurer, Anne Ward, provided carefully prepared statistical information about our membership and the make-up of the local Merri-bek community, to assist with the discussions.

The main part of the workshop was taken up with small group discussions, led by Committee of Management members. The groups addressed the questions: *Do we want*

*to grow? If so, what is realistic? How do we attract more members? What might we do differently (do more or less of)?* And asked for further ideas to accommodate more members.

There was general agreement on the need to grow, and also on the need to increase the ethnic diversity of our membership through strategies such as inviting people from other ethnic communities to come and speak to us. There were many ideas shared: changes to our website, newsletter, postcard etc., to help with promotion; ways to increase awareness of U3A Moreland through other organisations, businesses and premises in Merri-bek; how to grow our membership in the northern suburbs of Merri-bek; capturing more information about interests, skills and knowledge when people join; ideas for programs and activities, especially increasing social events for members. All the ideas will be collated in a report to the Committee of Management, which will make decisions on future actions and implementation of some of the ideas.

Particular thanks to the Working Group for organising this event, to the discussion leaders on the day, including Anne Ward, Peter Hannaford, Jane Williams, Helen Shanahan, the careful note-takers in each group, and to the catering Team, led by Cris Gouletsas, for organising the very welcome lunch.

*The Committee of Management*



*Anne Ward presenting information for the discussions*



*Members at the Workshop*



## FACILITATOR PROFILE

### Gail Grove

Facilitator, French Conversation Group

#### What brought you to U3A Moreland?

*I am a member of Melbourne's French choir, La La La La Chorale Française de Melbourne. Pauline Charleston, who is also a member, approached me and Cecile Felix in 2019 about teaching French at U3A. We started F2F sessions and moved to Zoom when Covid struck. We've been delivering the program on Zoom ever since.*



#### Tell us about your background in the subject you're teaching ...

*I had to take a language freshman year at college (in the US) and I fell in love with French. I received a financial award at the end of my senior year that enabled me to study in Paris for a year, then spent a year teaching beginner French students at my alma mater. Then I had two years of grad school to get my Master's Degree in French.*

#### What do you like the most about your involvement at U3A?

*The connection I and our participants had during COVID with all the Zooming. We all supported each other and would stay online to chat after the class. They helped me get through the Trump years.*

#### Other interests ...

*Music and theatre. I perform regularly in two choirs and a theatre group. I used to do a lot of hiking and camping but not now. I relax by doing jigsaws. I always have at least one on the go.*

#### Earliest memories ...

*Getting my first pair of glasses and being amazed at being able to see the leaves on the trees, not just a lot of green!*

*At high school my last year was quite difficult because we moved from Nebraska to Minnesota and everyone there had already*

*found their place in the pecking order. But I did manage to make space for myself as a singer, clarinet player and actress, as well as doing well academically.*

#### I wish I could / If only I could ...

*Have more frequent interaction with my family in the US.*

#### On my bedside table is ...

*At least one book. I'm currently reading Black Wattle Creek.*

#### What are your daily news or social media habits?

*I usually listen to the ABC news in the morning and often have CNN running in the background. I watch The Project but only a recorded episode. They give really good information on some important topics; however, they often get sidetracked and there's way too much attention paid to singers/actors/celebrities so I can fast forward past them.*

#### Cat or dog?

*Definitely a dog.*

#### Most embarrassing/humiliating moment?

*Coming on stage to sing "Money, money" and having my golden bra with a fringe to below the waist suddenly fall off. Fortunately, this was during the dress rehearsal, so the accompanist added an extra 8 bars so it could have a safety pin added!*

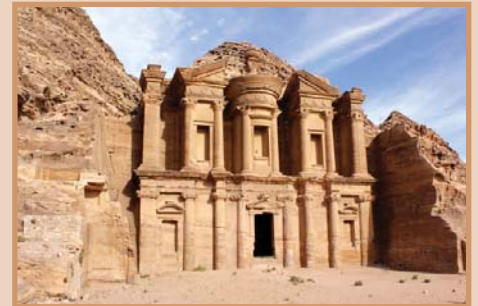
## A NEW GROUP 'SHARED TRAVEL STORIES' with Colin and Jensine Hough



Left: Dead Sea Mud.

Right: Dead Sea Mud - Jensine Hough - supposed to have 'medical' benefits and sold in small pots around the world - a plastic bucket is used at the Dead Sea.

*'Monastery' - the second most impressive structure at Petra. It is a burial monument but was called a monastery because in the Christian era many crosses were carved into it.*



The idea for this introductory program came from our joint love of travel, probably born out of the fact that we met in Botswana through travel many years ago and kept the bug. Also, there is our mutual love of photography meaning we have far too many photos and have found sharing them a great way to relive them.

The idea for this course also came out of our experience of a local monthly 'travel club' in our final hometown during our 40 years in England. Members shared their holiday photos (which could be good and not so good) and experiences. Being an armchair traveller sometimes, or having your interest engaged so that you decide that yes, that is a place we'd like to get to know more for ourselves, was always enjoyable.

Our first session was self-indulgent, as was the second, in that they are our travel stories of Jordan and Arnhem Land. However, following the first session there was a group discussion on a possible format change to make each session open to several members' pictures and what is behind them, perhaps with up to 10 photos each, rather than just one person presenting each time. Therefore, the way forward may be more like a photo sharing group, but with stories attached, whether on the theme of travel or not.

We live in an age when we take many, many, photos which often do not see the light of day. For us, the very act of going through our photos with a purpose provides much pleasure, and to share some even more! Maybe it would be for you too? To continue we need 10 to 15 people in the group so do come and try!



*Pam and Melinda finding balance in retirement*



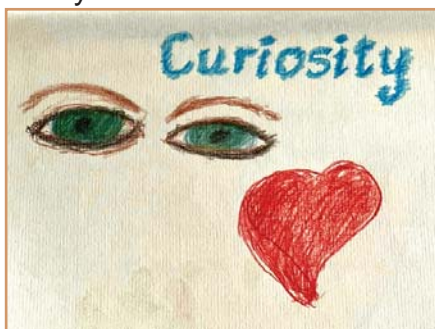
## Curiosity

Did the title of this column make you read on?  
Are you inherently curious?

Watching the Drum (ABC) I am fascinated with the author and illustrator, Georgia Angus of *Birds with Personality: A Guide to 50 of the World's Most Beguiling Birds* as she explains why she created this book. For her it is all about curiosity: her own, wanting to encourage curiosity in others, for them to return to their childhood curiosity. These are my words as I contemplated how to write my column. A moment of, I am not sure what, made me suggest I write a column on Curiosity.

My fascination with curiosity was strengthened during one of those difficult times we all inevitably face. I wanted to explore my own curiosity - I tried to draw and write. I thought about what curiosity meant in my life: my love of learning, joy in discovering new places, ideas and engaging with children as they explore and make sense of their world, themselves. Back to *Birds with Personality*. I will buy a copy for my eight year old granddaughter because she is curious, and one day when visiting she drew the most amazing bird.

Curiosity: I write the word by shading each letter in blue and draw two eyes wide open in the colour closest I can get to the blue green of my eyes and finish with a red heart. Does this show curiosity?



Drawing: Curiosity

Will research fill my curiosity to learn more about curiosity? I search and find *A meta-analytical investigation of the impact of curiosity-enhancing interventions* and I discover to my

delight ... *Curiosity is associated with a number of beneficial outcomes, such as greater life satisfaction, more work engagement and better academic performance.*

This led the researchers to examine if it is possible to increase curiosity and then I am lost in detail on randomised controlled trials. My curiosity moves me to the next section on further beneficial outcomes. ... *individuals higher in trait curiosity tend to show more growth orientated behaviours, have a greater sense of meaning in life, and have high life satisfaction.* Are you curious about the outcomes of this research?

I look for a simpler way to explore curiosity - Definition Oxford Languages - *Curiosity noun - a strong desire to know or learn something.* "filled with curiosity, she peered through the window". Similar: *inquisitiveness, interest, spirit of inquiry, nosiness.* How do you describe your curiosity?

My mind wanders to U3A Moreland and the curiosity in the conversations I participate in: ideas shared, connecting, learning, playfulness. Are you as curious as you were as a child?



Uppermill, England

## OUR HISTORY, OUR PHOTOS, OURSELVES - part 3

by Christine Filiamundi



*In my office, 1994*

So now, after our 1st and 2nd chats, we've got a whole lot of our precious photos scanned, and the digital copies are organised in photos in our computer system where we can find them. Information about each photo is recorded in documents that we can find and retrieve when we want to.

That's a whole lot of work, and it's going to be important not just to you but to the family members that follow you, because they represent your history, and your family's history. What a shame it would be to lose it all.

The digitisation of all your photos and associated information is a miracle that allows you to hold all your pictures and your stories just in one laptop or your phone or on tiny thumb drives. It's a miracle. And it's fragile. Everything on your phone can be obliterated in a moment of horror: your phone drops into your washing machine or perhaps it falls out of your pocket straight down the storm water

drain. The photos in your laptop are only a little more secure, the dreaded blue screen of death can show up at any time, and everything on it can be difficult or impossible to ever find again. Even your desktop computer is one electrical storm away from obliteration, all your precious family history gone in a moment.

There is a solution proffered by mega-corporations only too keen to get their hands on your digital information: this is the "cloud". But the cloud is not cloudy. Don't imagine that the precious pictures you've put into the cloud are floating like angels up in the air somewhere. The cloud is situated in huge earthly data centres and hidden in places like deserts and outlying industrial areas. These data centres are some of the world's largest consumers of electricity whose energy footprint matches or exceeds that of the aviation industry. Their usage of water and other finite resources is catastrophic, and mostly kept secret. (See, for example, 'Atlas of AI' by Kate Crawford).

And that's not all that's unlikeable about the cloud. The companies that are encouraging you to store your digital information in their "clouds" (Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, Google, Dropbox, to name a few) regard your pictures as their datasets, to use as they wish. It's hard to take this in, but your pictures are used by these companies to train Artificial Intelligence so AI can do things like targeting advertisements, making 'art', and discouraging dissent.

What to do?

The answer is to backup your files – that is, to copy all your digital files onto hard drives and thumb drives. Backup frequently, regularly, and to a schedule. Give a backup drive to a friend who doesn't live with you, and organise to regularly update it. I regularly renew the data on a small thumb drive that I keep with my will, in case I should drop dead! You can get good quality drives at any tech shop. They're a little expensive, but worth it. Sometimes they break and need replacing. Just keep backing up!



# How I saved money and the environment at the same time, or

## Bill saver - a tale of two suburbs

by Chris Moss



Seven years ago we moved into Brunswick to be near our children and grandchildren. No more early morning cross town dashes, avoiding the inevitable traffic snarls. Google Maps was getting more inventive and complicated in guiding us across the river.

We bought a single story triple fronted brick veneer bungalow a few doors up from one family, with another round the corner. Sick children got delivered to our door, or we could walk over and drop in for a while. Some 'happenstance' walks when the grandchildren 'happened' to be playing in the front yard, or a park, just as we walked past was useful in COVID - 1 or 2 metres distance preserved.

Early on we wanted a renovation and decided that the gas ducted heating had to go, for environmental and practical reasons. Methane is a serious climate warming gas, much more damaging to the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. It's also been recently linked to increased levels of asthma. Practically, the boiler needed a service every year and the pilot light would blow out in the wind, as well as being costly to run even a few years ago. Getting rid of gas completely meant we avoided the service fee of around \$500 per year.

We had a pretty old air conditioner. It was time to upgrade. We bought a super-efficient 'split' system with humidity and air pollution control. It's cheap to run as a heater, because it gets its heat by compressing a gas. It then draws

heat from the outside when it expands. It's the same principle as a fridge. Many older air conditioners have a heating function and will always be more efficient than gas, or normal electric heaters. These are known as Reverse Cycle Air Conditioners.

We could also seal up the wall air vents and ceiling vents, making the house easier to heat. The wall vents are needed for the old kerosene and unflued gas systems. The ceiling vents are part of the gas ducted heating system. For cooling, we need the air conditioner only a few times a year, for hot and humid days, as we installed ceiling fans which work well most of the time. We also have metal shutters and heavy curtains on the windows, and roof insulation.

In cold weather we set the air conditioner for a higher temperature than we want because it's situated in a corner. It has a pocket of warm air around it while we freeze below! We run it on a high fan for a while, then drop it as the temperature gets higher. It has a feature which allows it to avoid blowing air on people.

Usage is around three to six kilowatts a day, costing 1 or 2 dollars a day in winter. Our winter bills are around \$120 in July and under \$90 for June and August. We are all-electric, with heat-pump hot water and induction cooking.

And the kids did move away but not very far.

Comment from Val Kay:

*'This year I converted from electric space heating to Reverse Cycle Air Conditioner (heat pump system), taking advantage of the supplement through the Victorian Government. My electricity usage this winter went down by 55% and my costs went down by 30% (not as much because unit prices went up and also there is a fixed service charge). So it was really good value for me.'*



# Keeping cool in the heat

by Val Kay

Australia's average temperatures over land have already increased by almost 1.5C due to climate change (Bureau of Meteorology, State of the Climate 2022)

This increases the risk of heatwaves. It's also likely we will have an El Niño this summer which further increases risk.

Seniors are more vulnerable to heat. As we age our ability to control body temperature (through perspiration) decreases and we can become less sensitive to temperature. Therefore it's important to monitor the temperature in your home and watch out for heat warnings from Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and health services.

The Victorian Government Better Health Channel and local governments provide advice on coping with heatwaves and extreme heat, available on their websites:

Better Health Channel *How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat*

City of Merri-bek *Extreme heat and heat health* (or check your local Council website)



*External sunblinds protect windows from the heat*

Some ideas on keeping your home cool:

- Efficient air conditioners can be quite cheap to run. (See Chris Moss's article in this newsletter on efficient split system air-conditioning.)
- If you have solar panels you can run the air conditioner during the day without producing emissions or costing you money. Check your eligibility for government rebates - see the *Victorian Government Solar Homes Program*.
- Keep windows and doors closed during the heat of the day, with blinds and curtains drawn. Use external blinds or shades if you have them, they are effective in keeping out radiant heat.
- If safe to do so and the temperature outside has gone down (check the weather for your area from BoM to make sure) you can open windows late at night to get an air flow, or else open them in the early morning when you first wake (again check BoM to make sure it's actually cooler outside).
- Trees, gardens and all 'green spaces' do a lot to reduce heat in cities. See information from the City of Merri-bek on their website.
- City of Melbourne's *Green Infrastructure Strategy* has some good ideas and may be of particular interest for those in apartments and dense urban areas.
- If your home gets too hot for comfort (usual recommendation is a maximum of about 27C), think about staying with friends or relatives if you can. Remember our health is more important than our pride in being self-sufficient.



## OUR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Siteworks used to be the site of many and varied activities of U3A Moreland over seven years. We had our office there and various groups and social functions and computer classes. This is what it looks like now – in a state of transition to a creative arts centre and public market, with some areas available for community use.

### PAST

### PRESENT

We have now moved on to Brunswick Town Hall, after much searching and Merri-bek Council help. It has many advantages, including a good sized office and storage space, and a free extra, comfortable room is available and used by many of our groups. With a two year lease we can rest easy until we need to make decisions come end of 2024.

Will we ever get to return to the new development at the old Siteworks site? Only time will tell.



## EXPANDING OUR DIGITAL SKILLS

Digital mentoring is a federally funded program through The Good Things Foundation that provides one on one mentoring to support people who would like support in navigating digital technology or online opportunities. Unlike computer courses and group training, an individual can bring their own areas of interest to a session. They will be supported to navigate in steps, and provided with a summary they can return to later.

Some examples of how people have used this program include:

- Researching & booking flights
- Online shopping
- Setting up smart watches
- Understanding phone apps/icons
- Using Instagram & Facebook
- Buying & selling on eBay
- Accessing online entertainment
- Downloading/sending files

No topic is too small or large as long as it involves a device!

This program is offered at Sussex Neighbourhood House, 7 Prospect Street Pascoe Vale, for free to anyone over 50 years. To book call Sussex and speak with Rachel, 9354 2210.



### Need support getting around online?

#### Sussex can help

Free, one-on-one digital mentoring for over 50's



If you have a tech issue or want help navigating your device, support is available



Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 4pm.



Book a time with us!

**03 9354 2210**

Sussex Neighbourhood House | 7 Prospect Street, Pascoe Vale 3044



[www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au](http://www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au)

## DON'T FORGET THE SENIORS' EXERCISE PARK



Cheap, cheery and keeping you healthy. Go along to the Seniors Exercise Park and improve your strength, balance, flexibility and function. It's next to the Coburg Senior Citizens Centre at 21 Harding Street Coburg. Take a friend or two.

The Seniors Exercise Park is an innovative design in outdoor exercise equipment, integrating multiple stations specifically designed for older people. It provides free outdoor space for our physical exercise, and regular use is beneficial in so many ways.

Many Councils now have their own seniors exercise parks: Eltham, Knoxfield, Hoppers Crossing, Seymour, Coburg, Spotswood, Kilmore, Ivanhoe, St Helena, Ballarat, Lara, Hampton, Kew, Frankston.

## Victorian Seniors Card e-News August edition

In August news: The seniors Festival returns this October with thousands of free and low cost events across Victoria.

**Public Transport will be free for Seniors Card holders from 1-8 October.**

Other items include news about impersonation scams, early morning rowing, ferry rides to Geelong, movies, books, and a road rules update: From 26 April 2023 there were new road rules introduced for **when drivers pass a bicycle rider** – they must leave at least a **1 metre space** between their vehicle and the rider on roads with speed limits up to 60km/hour.

Seniors Card or Seniors Business Discount Card holders can access and subscribe to The Victorian Seniors Card Newsletter at:

<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/news>



SENIORS CARD  
welcome here

U3A Moreland acknowledges the bodies whose grants allow us to flourish in 2023.



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing



Jobs,  
Precincts  
and Regions



*Please circulate the newsletter to others who may be interested in what U3A Moreland offers. If you have ideas for our newsletter, email the Newsletter Team (Christine Filiamundi, Gwen Rosengren, Cathy Beesey, Richard Brown):*

[info.u3amoreland@gmail.com](mailto:info.u3amoreland@gmail.com)

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