



Adelaide Hills Autumn Newsletter 2026



From the Editor

Welcome back to another year of U3A Adelaide Hills. The year began well, with a good attendance at our Presenters' Information Session at the end of January (photo below), followed next day by our annual lunch in the newly refurbished outdoor area of the Bridgewater Hotel (photos page 3).

I'm sure that like me, you eagerly awaited the arrival back in December of the new programme, to see what exciting offerings were available. Please remember to offer an apology if unable to attend a chosen session, and especially if you will be away for some time. This is easily done via the website—just be patient and follow the instructions.

On a nautical theme, 2 sessions of Sailing Adventures and Misadventures, one by Michiel Lucier, and one by Dave Fenwick. Not to mention Misadventure by Anaesthesia in Pearl Harbour, an experimental endeavour that led to innovations in anaesthetics. Continuing the medical theme, Dr Remlyn Liu will explore Medicine Safety in Our Lifetime. Tony from RAA will "examine" our knowledge of Road Safety and road rules, while Les Laub will take us to the moon. Mike Sussex will explore the subject of Digital ID—an Inverse Prison. On a calmer note, Susan Fereday's course on Quiet Crafting, Play Reading with Penni and Heather, and Afternoon Tea with Pip Williams. The ever popular Sue Garforth has this semester 5 stories of "Stabbed in the Back", physically or metaphorically. And two excursions, one to Urrbrae House and because it was so popular, two groups to Adelaide Desalination Plant. Added to our invaluable continuing courses, these round out a full and exciting programme. Of course some will be over by the time you read this, but check the website for any still available.

Cheers, Suzanne



Thanks to the office of Rebekha Sharkie MP for assistance in printing this newsletter

Some of our groups' activities



Family History end-of-year get-together, with a "cuppa"

I hurt my back walking like an Egyptian. Now I have to see a Cairo-practor.



Ukelele group entertaining at Resthaven, Lobethal, February 12, 2026.

A good start for their year's performances, with many more to come I hear.

BTW, the Hawaiian pronunciation is "oo-koo-leh-leh"



Bridgewater luncheon.

Thanks for the photos Wendy B



Talking Centipede.

A man sees an advertisement in a pet shop window: 'Talking Centipede £100.' The man goes in and buys it. He gets home, opens the box and asks the centipede if he wants to go for a beer. The centipede does not answer, so the man closes the lid, convinced he has been swindled.

Thirty minutes later he decides to try again. He raises his voice and shouts, 'Do you want to go for a beer?' The centipede pokes his head out of the box and says, 'Pipe down! I heard you the first time. I am putting on my shoes!'



Wednesday Walkers had the joy of seeing Rakali— native water rats—at beautiful Laratinga Wetlands recently.

Photos by Frankie



If anybody wants to know where you're going, just tell them you're going for a SCAN.
SCAN means you're going for a Senior Citizens Afternoon Nap.



COME LUNCH WITH ME

We were all pleased to catch up for lunch at the Maccie Hotel. We all found something to our taste and the kitchen adapted to our preferences eg salad instead of chips with the fish. The photographer needed to be added to the photo. *Thanks Janet*

ART GALLERY VISIT MARCH 23

This month's exhibit was contemporary art, a bit bewildering as it was based on interpretations on various canvases. *Cheryl Oliver*

Coconut trees (outline) oil enamel on linen & cable ties.

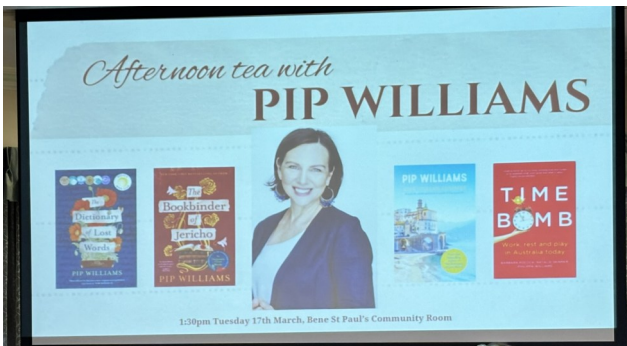


Copper sheets with dribbled candle wicks dipped in tar.



Hessian dipped in turmeric, gold leaf & tar.

Un-recyclable household objects from hard rubbish collections.



AFTERNOON TEA WITH PIP WILLIAMS

We were a fortunate audience of fans getting to meet and hear a most engaging and articulate local author, Pip Williams.

Pip read from her last book "The Bookbinder of Jericho" and was interviewed by Merrilie Rowley, prior to a Q&A session.

Thank you Pip for a real treat. Thank you Merrilie for leading Pip on lovely sidetracks as well as addressing questions most of us would not have thought of. Such an informative and a special shared U3A session!

Beautiful afternoon tea was served at the end of the session, with thanks to Bene.

Thanks Susan and Michelle for arranging this wonderful session.



Pip said privately that Merrilie was one of the best interviewers she has encountered (Sorry Merrilie)

OUTING TO URRBRAE HOUSE.



Aboriginal peoples and the pastoral frontier

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the legal concept of terra nullius (meaning "land belonging to no-one") was used by the British government to justify the settlement of colonial Australia and the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their lands. However, when the Waite brothers came to the semi-arid pastoral lands over 250 kilometres north east of Adelaide, they were not settling on terra nullius. These frontier pastoral lands were the traditional country of the Ngadjuri people whose lives were forever changed by the incursion of white settlers.

Few records exist to reveal Peter Waite's interactions with Aboriginal people. Nineteenth century newspaper reports and early histories of pastoral pioneers portrayed Aboriginal people as "troublesome", regularly stealing sheep and clashing with settlers. Today we recognise these actions as acts of resistance against the seizure of country.

Peter Waite's name appears in a small number of records indirectly related to this residence. In July-August 1865 Peter was a local Justice of the Peace. In this role, he reported to police authorities of a serious confrontation on 'Indulcaroo Station' where two Aboriginal men were killed and the station owner was injured.

Wealth generated by the pastoral industry in South Australia was made possible through the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples and the use of their labour. Pastoralists regularly used Aboriginal men as stockmen, trackers and shepherds. Peter Waite was no exception. A family member states that Peter employed a young Aboriginal man named Joske to assist him with land surveys. Newspaper articles note that Harry Stokes, a Kuyana Elder and well-respected tracker, was a coachman at Urrbrae House.



Above is a sample of the original wallpaper (yellow) and the design reconstructed (blue). This is all that remains of the wallpaper, but most of the ceiling papers are intact. See (left) the magnificent Minstrels' gallery, and far left the opulent dining room with oak table.



We had a conducted tour of the areas of the house open to the public, followed by afternoon tea under a tree in the rose garden. Above left the school-room, with examples of toys and teaching aids, and hand-writing copy-books on the desks.

Above right the group photo in front of the grand fire-place and mantelpiece. *Thanks Dorothy for organising this.*

STABBED IN THE BACK—a series of 5 stories of historical people who were literally or metaphorically stabbed in the back.

Fascinating presentations by Sue Garforth

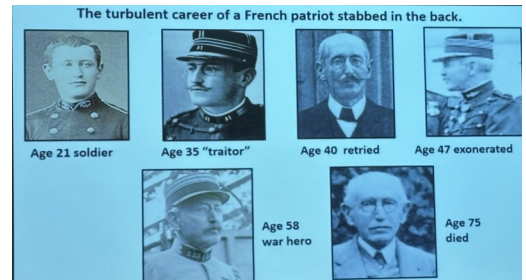
Julius Caesar—100 BCE—44 BCE. A successful army commander, he declared himself “dictator for life” in 44BC, which led to his assassination on March 15—the Ides of March. He was the lover of Cleopatra, and fathered a child (Caesarion) with her. He defied the Senate, which ordered him to step down from military command, “crossed the Rubicon” and marched towards Rome, causing a civil war which he won, and which led to his downfall. Stabbed all over by a group of Senators, including his good friend Brutus. Who has not heard “Et Tu Brute” from Shakespeare’s play? (You too Brutus?)



Death of James II
1701, age 67.
An embittered old man. Comprehensively stabbed in the back, and rejected by his country and his own family.

James II of England and Scotland—1633—1701. Ascended the throne in 1685, during a time of religious and political turmoil. His reign was marked by conflicts over religion, absolutism, and the “Divine right of Kings”. He was the last Catholic monarch in England, fled to France when parliament invited his nephew and son-in-law, William of Orange, to assume the British throne. In this way James was metaphorically stabbed in the back by his country and family.

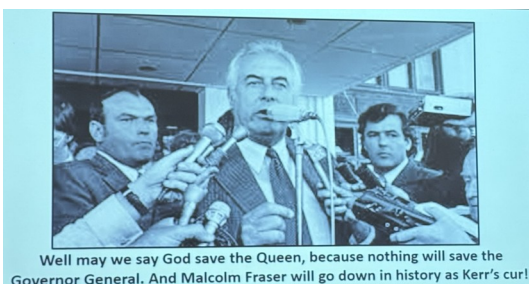
Alfred Dreyfus—1859—1935, French army officer. Wrongly accused and convicted (on false evidence) in 1894 of being a German spy, because he was the only Jewish officer. He was imprisoned on Devil’s Island in French Guinea for 5 years. Although several people, including the eminent writer Emile Zola, produced evidence that he was innocent and naming the real culprit, the military refused to back down. Those who produced evidence supporting him were punished, and the actual spy, fellow officer Esterhazy, was pardoned. Zola escaped to England, on his death was “repatriated”, but during the transfer of his remains to the Pantheon Dreyfus was the target of an unsuccessful assassination attempt. In 1899 Dreyfus was sent for retrial, with the same result. Eventually, after years of political protest, he was finally “pardoned”, rather than being exonerated, and he returned to army life, fighting heroically in World War I.



LEON TROTSKY—1879—1940-, Russian revolutionary, Soviet politician and political theorist. A key figure in the 1905 revolution, October revolution of 1917, Russian Civil War, and establishment of the Soviet Union. He was presumed successor to Lenin, but the previously little-known and brutal Joseph Stalin outmanoeuvred him to become dictator until his death in 1953. He had Trotsky exiled, and ultimately assassinated in Mexico by a Spanish communist and NKVD secret agent. Trotsky was axed in the back.

The exuberant, fascinating, entertaining and enlightening Sue Garforth.

GOUGH WHITLAM—1916—2014—Former Prime Minister of Australia. His successes—abolishing the White Australia policy, creating Medibank. Failures—raid on ASIO, the Junie Morosi affair, the Khemlani affair, high unemployment and inflation. Malcolm Fraser, leader of the Opposition, refused to vote Supply unless Whitlam called an election. Whitlam tried to “barter”, and Sir John Kerr, Governor-General of Australia, dismissed Whitlam’s government. Stabbed in the back by Fraser and Kerr.



CARD MAKERS EXTRAORDINAIRE

Great card making group. Several are creating their own cards now and sharing with the group. Here are today's efforts.
One is a quilt card. Well done ladies.

Janet Hemsley



Keeping her away

A woman was up before the magistrates for pinching a tin of peaches from the supermarket.

The judge peered over his glasses and said, "How many peaches were in the tin you stole?"

She replied, "Six, Your Honour."

The judge nodded. "In that case, I sentence you to six days in prison — one day for each peach."

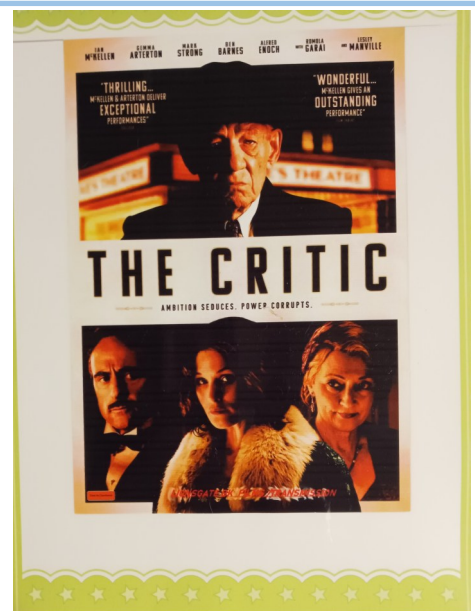
At that point, her husband stood up at the back of the court and shouted, "Your Honour... she also nicked a tin of peas."

FILM CLUB

Welcome to another term of film and information. We watched a more recent film "The Critic" based on the 2015 Novel (Curtain Call by Anthony Quinn). Stars Ian McKellen, Gemma Arterton and Alfred Enoch. In 1934 London, Jimmy Erskine (Ian McKellen) is the Theatre Critic for the Daily Chronicle, a tabloid newspaper now owned by David Brooke (played by Mark Strong) after the death of his father. Erskine delights in writing vitriolic reviews despite requests from Brooke to tone it down. A Faustian Plot, with Blackmail, Love Triangle, it's all here. It was inspired by real-life critic James Agate.

Ian McKellen was marvellous as a very flawed individual.—Ed.

Unfortunately April's movie had to be cancelled



U3A AH VISITS LONSDALE DESALINATION PLANT



Visit to the desalination plant in Lonsdale (group 1). Very impressive plant, informative guide and a perfect educational U3A activity.

Beautiful weather helped us enjoy the views over Gulf St Vincent. The plant offers free information sessions that this group thoroughly recommends!



SA Water also handles our sewage. Look at all the amazing things that come through the system.



We all admired the aesthetics of the Kauwi building, with wonderful natural materials used for displays, and the interior decoration.

The statistics are staggering: this plant opened on 12/12/12, has never stopped since. Processes 300 million litres per day. Can store 50 million litres. 1 litre of seawater produces 1/2 litre of drinking water, but the water is not added to our drinking water as "socially unacceptable". 52% of our water comes from the River Murray. The facility uses vast quantities of electricity, but is aiming for green power. At present there are 69,000 solar panels at this facility, 380,000 including smaller facilities throughout the state.

SA Water processes 630 million litres of waste water per day, but not at this plant!!



Play Reading



Mrs Warren's Profession

George Bernard Shaw



This is a new group which began at the start of the year. Our 8 regular readers meet fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons. We began with “Mrs Warren’s Profession” by George Bernard Shaw, written in 1895. The play skewers the immorality and sentimentality of the values and norms of British society, suggesting that the hypocrisy, corruption, and injustice of the British social system infects everyone affiliated with it.

Next, we travelled forward in time with Noel Coward’s masterpiece, “Private Lives” written in 1935. Here are some of the themes we dug into: love vs compatibility, repetition of patterns in relationships, gender roles, and violence and comedy.

Our third play is by Australian author Ray Lawler, written in 1955, “The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll.” This play helped put Australian drama on the world map and did it without a single convict, bushranger or drover’s wife in sight. Lawler’s cane-cutters, Melbourne terraces and characters who actually sounded like the people in the audience was a cultural shock so profound that some critics needed a lie- down.



“There goes my hair,” said Noel Coward, when a koala bear climbed on his head at Koala Park, Adelaide, during his 1940 Australian tour.



Ray Lawler with “the Doll.”



Our group welcoming the world of Noel Coward, best read while holding an imaginary cigarette holder, a glass of champagne and looking slightly bored with everyone else’s outfit!

Please remember, you do not need to be a group leader to contribute to the newsletter. They are often too busy to think about taking photos, but members are welcome to send photos and/or articles about activities. Thanks