

CHATSHEET

Aug 2023

The Gathering

Booking is now open and is essential for the next Gathering on **Friday 11^h August** commencing at 12.30pm. Bookings are essential for catering purposes. You are able to book online by logging into u3abawbaw.org.au as you would for a course. If you prefer, you can email courses@u3abawbaw.org.au or phone Lesley Anstee on mob 0408 226 254

Bookings close on **Wednesday 9th August**.

Not the President's Report

David Ingham

John Parker has been indisposed, so it has fallen to me to provide a slight insight into the past month. Firstly, we wish John a speedy recovery and look forward to his return very soon. The program of courses offered by U3A Baw Baw continues with a wide range of excellent programs operating this term. Jim and Mary's course on the History of Ireland is proceeding apace and those of us fortunate to attend are learning a great deal.

The Treasures course is also receiving an excellent reception, along with the wide range of courses that operate on an ongoing basis, such as Cryptic Crosswords, Mystery History, and Film Club. Our thanks to all those who work so hard to present these courses. The Literary Lunch is coming up soon and promises to be an exciting and entertaining activity. Registrations are open so now is the time to register. Thanks to all those involved in the organisation of this event. The sub-committees have been busy as well with a great deal of activity by the IT committee, looking at the purchase of a new computer and further developments to the UMSS program.

Given the demise of the urn in the Drouin RSL, a replacement is on its way. The Administrative Committee is also in the process of negotiating a new User Agreement with the Shire. Thanks to those members who have been so active in reviewing and modifying this document. Planning is underway for Term 4 courses, so keep your eyes peeled for further news. Our U3A is hosting the Gippsland Regional Network Meeting on the 5th of September. A report will be provided next month.

We are always looking for your input on potential courses, responses to current offerings and ideas to make U3A Baw Baw a more responsive institution. Please pass on any suggestions you may have to John. In the meantime, stay well, keep warm and we look to seeing you at the Gathering.



And a big welcome to our newest members –

Patricia Giblin and Julie Phillips

Courses Report

Mary Howlett



Participants in the Irish History Course have been enjoying an overview of Ireland's history and are now hearing about the literary giants of Ireland. This small island has produced four Nobel Laureates in Literature who were preceded by authors and poets such as Dean Swift and Oliver Goldsmith. Richard Sheridan created the character of Mrs Malaprop in his play, *The Rivals*.

The following are some of her malapropisms:—

"promise to forget this fellow - to illiterate [obliterate] him, I say, quite from your memory."

"O, he will dissolve [resolve] my mystery!"

He is the very pine-apple [pinnacle] of politeness!"

"She's as headstrong as an allegory [alligator] on the banks of Nile."

"I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence (influence) over my niece is very small."

"Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter! - but he can tell you the perpendiculars." [particulars]



Oscar Wilde wrote sensitive beautiful children's books, lovely poetry and witty, biting plays. He is remembered for his tragic life and for these pithy sayings: —



"Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell the truth."

"I can resist everything except temptation."

"A man's face is his autobiography. A woman's face is her work of fiction."

"True friends stab you in the front."

"Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much."

"Anyone who lives within their means suffers from a lack of imagination."

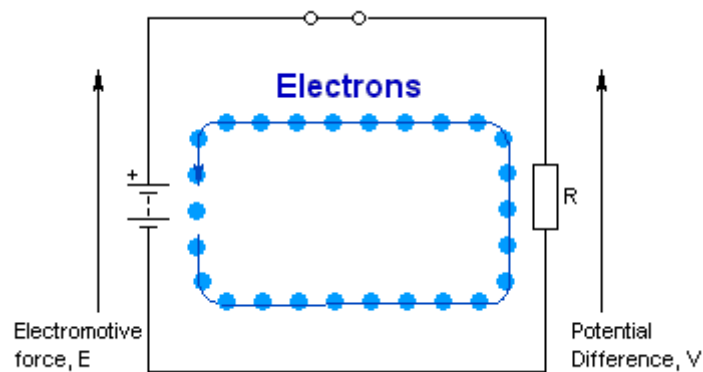
Science Titbits

David Ingham

The development of Scientific endeavours impacts all our lives. Like most people we enjoy the fruits of Scientific research as users, often without realising the amount of work that leads up every development. Our views are often coloured by our memories of science at school, and often how tedious and difficult it was. If we venture to take a fresh look at the concepts that underpin our natural world, it could open a whole new vista of exciting and marvellous things! Have you ever been motivated to ponder the passage of electrons in a circuit and which direction they flow? Would it surprise you to find out they travel from the negative terminal of a battery to the positive? This is a part of technology we employ as an integral part of our lives and yet the magic of it all sits in the shadows.

Much work is currently being conducted on superconductors, which if successful will create a whole new world. A super conductor conducts electricity without resistance and the ensuing heat. This would enable a revolution in how we use energy and provide modern technologies which would be much kinder to our planet.

In the future it is hoped that U3A Baw Baw will be able to provide more Science content. It is hoped that this will be much more interesting than the Science you studied in the past and will provide a practice, and exciting format to build science understanding and enthusiasm. We have a wealth of members who are experts on so many aspects of science and we hope to tap into their skills and depth of knowledge to provide entertaining and informative programs. BRING IT ON!!



Historical Teasers

Virginia Rowley



In Term 1, 2020 before Covid grasped the world in its tenacious grip, Mystery History members celebrated *The Secret World of Barbie*.

Well before the movie came out, but well after that very catchy tune was being sung (and a long time after I bought my Barbie-pink long sleeved t-shirt), we talked about the advent of Barbie from a little sex doll in Germany named Lilli - a little doll men would give to each other. US businesswoman Ruth Handler (who features in the new movie as a ghost) saw the doll and thought that she would be a great two or three-year item for the Mattel toy line. That's all toys have a life for apparently!

Now, Barbie has her own movie and a fabulous movie it is - I laughed all the way through. Not really a kids' movie though...

You never know what you will hear about in Mystery History do you? Anything from toilet paper to Barbie; from the first dinosaur fossils to the first balloon flights.

And on another note, I hear that the movie ***Chevalier*** might be coming to a cinema near us. Mystery History buffs might remember that in Term 1 2022, we visited the life and times of this amazing man, Joseph Bologne (bol-oyne) the Chevalier de Saint Georges who was born in Guadeloupe, in the West Indies in 1745.

His father, a plantation and slaveowner, took him to France and entrusted him to the care of a master in the art of sword fencing. By 17, he had become a master in fencing, boxing and making love. He was also a musician of the highest degree. It seemed there was nothing he couldn't do.

He was the son of an enslaved woman (whom his father hadn't freed) and he became a violin virtuoso, then the leader of the most prestigious orchestra in Europe. It was not luck, it was not good connections – it was hard, hard work that got him to the top of his chosen fields. At 20, he was that good.

He duelled with a woman; he was jailed; led a very successful military regiment. And at the end of it all, Napoleon ordered that the Chevalier's music be destroyed - this is the reason you may not know it.

Treasures from the Past

Reece Isaac

I recently had occasion to present a couple of railway handlamps at a U3A Treasures Roadshow meeting. The story behind these lamps or one lamp in particular, the oldest, was that I "inherited" it from my paternal grandfather through my aunt, who had a number of his artifacts after he died. My Aunts and Father felt that I would appreciate it as I was by that time also working on the railways.

M.A. Isaac started on the railways in 1925 as a Lad Trainee Porter at Dandenong Railway Station, which was considered to be out in the country then.

Chasing advancement required applying for and transferring to various locations throughout the state. Places like Wodonga where he worked nights cleaning the "Sydney Express" as a Lad Trainee Car Cleaner, sleeping through the day in sleeping quarters in the station building having to listen the baying cattle in the adjacent cattle yard, through the heat of the day, and on to Traralgon where he was stationed during WW2 being a signaller and achieving Assistant Station Master rank. It was here he controlled the safe passage and crossing of troop trains that had to occur without causing either train to stop. A feat that the local populous turned out to watch, one Sunday morning. Other locations, in no particular order, were South Yarra, Werrenen, Bourke, Murchison East, Lancefield (where he was the last Station Master prior to track closure), Yea, Essendon (as senior S.M. and retirement) and Camperdown (his second last posting mid 1960s). This is where the kerosene light handlamp came from.

When I retired from driving in 2012, shunting instructions from the shunter or second person (as the fireman became known as) to the locomotive driver was done primarily via "End to End" radio (Walkie Talkie) with hand signals during daylight and handlamp in darkness relegated to almost never. When I started on the railways, the first day involved classroom lessons with a high percentage of that time learning hand signals for day and night. Night time signals used a battery powered tricolour handlamp that could easily be operated by finger or thumb tip control. These hand

lamps were a fairly new innovation as the kerosene handlamps were only being phased out through the 1960s with train operations (Guards kit, shunters and locomotive equipment) being done first and stations with country stations being near the last to receive the new fangled contraptions.

The lamp I have was a stationmaster's hand lamp and that is how my grandfather came to have it on his transfer to Essendon station. As electricity was a commodity that had not fully encompassed the state, fixed signals that controlled the entrance and exit to stations and single lines sections were lit with long duration kerosene lamps, as were the handlamps (although probably not capable of being lit for a week continuously). Kerosene would have been supplied by a delivery train each month or so.

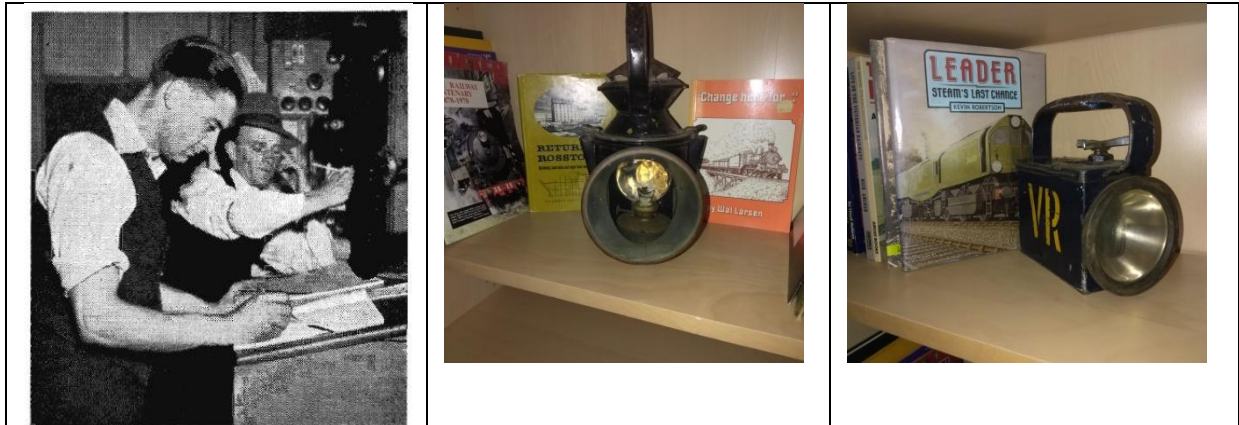
This lamp would have, in its heyday been kept shiny clean with the reflector and glass spotless, the wick correctly trimmed with the tank kept topped up and checked at the start of each shift and the brass slides super smooth for reliable operation as the inability to show a RED light to the train driver instantly could result in a lethal event. Of course not every REDLIGHT was this urgent but you could never know and that is how drivers were trained to regard seeing a red light shown to them from hand lamp (or a daytime hand signal for that matter).

This handlamp was primarily used to give the "All clear" white light to the guard of a passenger train who would then signal the driver (with his handlamp) to get the train moving. The green shade signified "go slow" (if the train was already moving) or "go". Exactly which was also dependent whether the light was moving or held steady. The white light held steady or being moved also had different meanings but were generally a shunting instruction when moved or an "all right" signal when held steady. The RED light meant stop. This was always given as a steady redlight not moved around.

The day is here that passenger trains can couple themselves without a person on the ground overseeing it and coupling the air and electrical but goods wagons are not that sophisticated (yet) so people on the ground coupling locos to rakes of wagons or rakes to other rakes will still require a means to communicate with the loco driver and while radios have taken over that task there will be times when through equipment failure (read flat battery) or something abnormal, hand signals day or night will be the ultimate means of communication. As such tricolour handlamps or torches are still part of the kit required on locomotives and crew equipment (well that was the situation up to 11 years ago).

After many years kept hidden away in a closet in the "burbs" these lamps have now come out to display amongst my railway books on the bookshelves here in Drouin.

The attached picture shows my grandfather (with the hat) at Traralgon Station. Photo courtesy the VR newsletter.



State Creative Arts Exhibition

Margaret Tormai

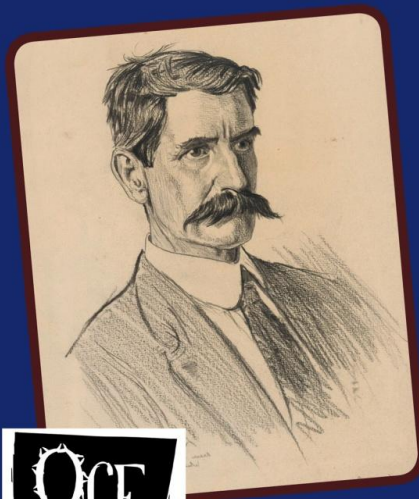
During the last week of July, the Country Women's Association (CWA) held their State Creative Arts Exhibition at St Arnaud. Nine members of the Drouin Branch entered their craft work resulting in eight prizes awarded. I was among them and won second prize for one of my tiny books – ***Some Purr-fect Jokes***. The book contains more than 70 pages of cat jokes and while only measuring 1.5 x 2cm, it is fully legible.

There are always books in a craft room aren't there? So, when making a craft room from a cereal box, books were also required. They measured 3cm x 3cm and the pages were printed on one side of an A4 sheet, cut and folded to form a book. That was in August 2016. This method is still used for young children.

I was also making the 1.5cm x 2cm books and in January 2018, the books halved in thickness when I worked out how to print on both sides of the paper, thus giving double sided pages, which were stitched together. This has enabled me to increase the number of pages – the thickest being the 128 page biography of my father. As you can see from below, the book on display contains 74 pages plus endpapers. This year I have been able to produce books without stitching (for which my hands are very grateful) and have started adding a dust cover. So far, I have written more than 70 titles and am always open to suggestions for more.



U3A Baw Baw presents their
**19th Annual
Literary Lunch**



HENRY LAWSON'S
Legends and Larrikins

**Presented by
Off the Leash
performers.**

**Bringing his prose
and poetry to life**

Friday 13th October 12pm for 12.30pm

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL for the lunch and only those who have pre-booked before
6th October will be able to attend. Lunch and Drinks at bar prices.
(There is no additional attendance charge & Seniors Menu is available)

Please book for the Literary Lunch as early as possible to help us run the event smoothly.

*Further details or to make a booking email
courses@u3abawbaw.org.au
or call Mary 0499 221993 or Lesley 0408 226254*

**The Royal Hotel
2/4 Main South
Road, Drouin**

Pre booking is essential before 6th October

**U3A Baw Baw is grateful to Russell Broadbent MP and his office staff for
printing this Chatsheet. You may visit our website at www.u3abawbaw.org.au**