

Bayside U3A

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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2022 TERM DATES

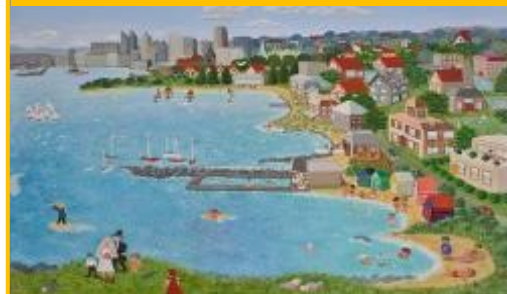
Term 2 26th April—24th June

Term 3 11th July—16th September

Term 4 3rd October—20th December

NEWSLETTER

April 2022



Beaumaris Office:

Monday to Friday 9:30am - 2:00pm

Brighton Office

Monday and Wednesday 9:30am - 12noon

FROM THE PRESIDENT

DAVID HONE



As most of you are aware, I have agreed to do another year as President of Bayside U3A as we were lacking any other nominations. I want to say from the outset that my primary goal will be to put in place a strong succession plan for our U3A. I would like to see the Presidency shared widely amongst our members and we certainly need to have some female Presidents, as women make up the majority of our membership.

I am thinking we should start looking at a process whereby members volunteer to do a three year commitment on the Committee of Management (COM) - one as Vice President, one as President then one as past President. I want to emphasise that in this system it is not a problem for the President to be away for awhile, as the VP or PP can cover for the President and all three can share the light load of being our President. So please think about it and let me know if you would like more information or would like to join the COM to see first hand what is involved. Also expect me to be talking to some of you about how you might be able to help!

Bayside U3A has survived the COVID crisis and we seem to be fast recovering our pre-COVID numbers. We should be proud of the way we have managed to keep U3A going and I do thank Tony Aplin and his Committee for the able leadership they gave us through those troubling times.

The next exciting extension of our U3A will come through hybrid face-to-face and Zoom classes which will allow us to reach an even wider audience.

I want to finish by saying how important it is for us to remember one of the primary aims of our U3A is to have retirees **leave their homes regularly to meet like-minded people in a safe environment**. Zoom meetings do not achieve this, although they do give some personal contact and conversation. I think meetings in non-crowded rooms of triple vaccinated Seniors are as safe an environment as you will find at the moment, especially if we all RAT test should we have any doubts before attending a group. I compare such gatherings to having lunch at the Golf Club or dinner with the Rotary Club. They should be far less challenging than public transport, the supermarket, cinema, theatre, pubs, cafes and restaurants.

I look forward to another exciting year for Bayside U3A.

COURSE and ENROLMENT NEWS**Convenor: Sue Steele**

Term 1 is over and we have a two week break from our U3A activities. Term 2 starts on Tuesday 26th April, the day after Anzac Day. Thanks to all volunteers and members for your patience as we juggled venues and online presentations. Many activities migrated off Zoom back to in-person when restrictions eased during February and March.

As the weather cools, we expect more activities will move back indoors. We are constantly seeking new venues to allow plenty of space and airflow for our classes. We know you will understand if your favourite class moves to a new venue in this post-COVID phase.

JUST LISTED FOR TERM 2

- ***Creating Photo Books on your Laptop*** will teach you to turn cherished memories into beautiful photo books.
Course #22146: 12 noon Wednesday at Beaumaris Senior Centre, commencing 27th April.
- ***Probability*** is one of the least understood areas of mathematics. If you understood it you would never buy lottery tickets, but you might be less stressed over a positive medical test.
Course #22147: 10.30am Friday on Zoom, commencing 29th April.

A FEW TERM 2 CLASSES STILL HAVE VACANCIES

- ***Intermediate iPad : Beyond the Basics*** will extend your iPad skill and knowledge. For people who have completed beginners iPad classes or are confident users.
Course #22087: 2pm Tuesday at Beaumaris Senior Centre, commencing 26th April.
- ***Fitness Group Training*** will suit our more active members looking to improve their strength, endurance, balance and flexibility.
Course #22145: 8.30am Wednesday at Beaumaris Senior Centre, commencing 27th April.
- ***Basics of Western Numerology***. Numerology is easy to understand and needs only a Birth Date and Name to work with. Interpret your own Birth Date and Name numbers or those of public figures.
Course #22081: 10am Monday at the Brighton Courthouse, commencing 2nd May.

Enrol [online](#) or via email. Don't forget to look at [our website](#). The latest course information is always found there.

**LET'S DO DINNER****Convenor: Karen Hall**

Great turnout at Our Casa in Hampton Street for our 2 dinners in March.
44 people attended in all.



The food is freshly cooked and very well received, however it did mean a wait for some tables.



We were a little squashed upstairs for the first dinner.



There was more space downstairs



Only one dinner is planned for April due to Easter holidays at The Onyx Café, Reserve Road, Cheltenham on 23rd April.

If you wish to be included on the email distribution list for future dinners, please enrol in **Course #21002**.

The BAYSIDE U3A HAPPY HOUR is on the last Friday of the month!

Please join us 5pm Friday 29th April at the Hampton RSL

Everyone is welcome!



25 Holyrood St Hampton VIC 3188

- * No need to book/reply. Just turn up!
- * Drinks: Special \$6 sparkling or house wine, discount beer and some spirits.
- * Please wear your U3A name badge and bring along your RSL membership card if you have one!
- * Dinner is available for those wishing to stay on.

Happy Hour on Friday 25th March....

It was lovely to see so many new and existing members turn up for Happy Hour at the Hampton RSL in March. There were more than 40 of us sharing a drink and chat.

Sadly our members had no luck with the RSL raffle this month. Seems that they have reverted to cash prizes as *legs of lamb* are now way too expensive!

Many of us stayed on for dinner. The whole flounder is always a hit!

Next Happy Hour is Friday 29th April. Everyone is welcome so write it in your diary now.

Better still, enrol in the **Happy Hour Course #22056** to receive an email reminder closer to the date.



HISTORY AND CULTURE**Tutor: Joan Gibbs****VISIT TO MT MACEDON**

The Bayside U3A History and Culture class ventured on a day trip to Mt Macedon area to see first-hand the history of the area.

The group left in two small buses and stopped at Bourke's Bakery Woodend for lunch. Driving into Woodend the local landmark is the clock tower constructed and funded by the local community in 1927 in memorial to the local men and women who served in World War 1. It also commemorates men and women who served in the Boer War and World War II. The group enjoyed the village atmosphere and the beautiful historic buildings.

The ascent to Mt Macedon from the north side started with clear weather with glimpses of Hanging Rock. The lovely drive up to the peak was slowly overshadowed by a thick fog. The walk to the magnificent 21-metre-high Memorial Cross was eerie and the Cross was not visible until quite nearby. When Major Thomas Mitchell named Mt Macedon on 30th September 1836 his view was different - he observed the wonderful view of Port Philip Bay and a few buildings in Melbourne. The Cross was built between 1932 and 1935 by a local businessman William Cameron as a permanent memorial to the Australian servicemen and women who lost their lives in WW1. Building also gave employment to people who were out of work during the Great Depression.

The Kurana Memorial commemorates the crash on the Mount, of a Douglas DC3 aeroplane flying from Melbourne to Deniliquin in 1948. Nineteen passengers and one crew member miraculously escaped the crash.

The Sanatorium Lake indicates the historical history of the tuberculosis centre that housed patients between 1899 to 1910.

On the south side of the Mount the group were greeted at Forest Glade Gardens, recognised as one of Australia's finest private gardens. The magnificently landscaped garden covers 5.6 ha and has four distinct themes, the large English section with its huge exotic trees and masses of colour; the delightful Japanese section; the beautiful woodland area and the fern gully. The garden has been re-established since 1983 after being ravished by the devastating fires.

The home drive passed through Macedon Avenue of Honour, a memorial avenue of 154 Pin Oaks. It is regarded as the world's most scenic road in Autumn. Each tree symbolises a person who enlisted for WW1 from the region. It creates arches of leaves in remembrance of those who fought or died in war.

The group enjoyed a wonderful day and is planning to make monthly visits to other historical areas around Melbourne.



*Tour bookings are now open for trips on:
Thursday 12th May - Mt Macedon
Wednesday 18th May - Daylesford Convent
Wednesday 1st June - Sassafras Dandenong Ranges.*

Book with Joan Gibbs 0417 768 433 or email joanlgibbs37@gmail.com.au

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS**Co-leaders: Susan McCarthy and Alison Barnett**

After enjoying life on the terrace at Beaumaris with the cooler weather we have moved indoors, back to our traditional space! This term we welcomed a couple of new members and a few returning members. As we have said on many occasions seeing people face-to-face again is fantastic and the conversation buzz attests to that!

We have celebrated with a couple of members significant birthdays. Elizabeth Lovett turned 90 in February and Susan McCarthy achieved her platinum birthday in April. (AKA 70th birthday but she is following the lead of the Queen and celebrating platinum!) Cake was enjoyed by all!

The creative endeavors have not been ignored!

Elizabeth Lovett had knitted a Poldark doll for her granddaughter. The hair proved to be a bit of a challenge!



Anne Tresise completed this beautiful quilt for her grandson's 21 birthday. The quilting pattern includes stars as Anne made him a quilt when he was younger with stars on it. She told him each star had a hug and a kiss in it for him. Many of us admired the backing fabric too!



Last year we talked about doing a number of projects/workshops but of course like many plans, circumstances had different ideas. However, we did manage to start the woollen blanket project. Everyone was very enthusiastic and we had more than enough beautifully knitted squares. The blanket languished for a while and was referred to as 'the wretched rug'.

We need to thank Lynette Taylor who with the assistance of Sandra Groves, stitched the squares together and then Gail Williams crocheted the border, so it has become a beautiful blanket. The blanket will now go to a local charity.



Susan McCarthy & Alison Barnett

PAINTING FOR PLEASURE

Tutor: Geoff Rolls

The Sunflower Project

For the last few weeks members of the Painting for Pleasure class have been busy working on paintings and drawings based on the theme 'Sunflowers'.

The idea was put forward by one of our enthusiastic members Janice Lawton, who in an email said, "Just had an idea! How about we introduce a project to the art group - to paint or draw sunflowers **in support of Ukrainian people**. We could fill the courthouse walls by end of term!"

The sunflower is the national flower of Ukraine. I am sure we all feel very concerned about the war raging there and worry about the safety and welfare of its citizens.

Our group embraced Janice's suggestion and we have filled one wall of the Courthouse with our works. Call in to the Courthouse and have a look.



Dear Fellow Members of BU3A,

I would like to ask you to support the Ukrainian people in their fight against Putin's Russia, who started the war with no reason at all. Russian troops, directed by Putin's government, are committing crimes against Ukrainian children, women and old people. Using massive air and ground attacks, they are killing them and destroying the cities and villages, including hospitals, theatres, apartment buildings as well as industrial plants.

Millions of Ukrainians continue to flee from their homeland to different countries in order to save their and their children's lives. Today many countries around the globe open their doors for Ukrainian refugees and support them. We are talking about 2.5 million people who require our support.

Please donate to help Ukrainians in this unjust war, where Ukrainian fights for the values of the whole Western world. You can do so by sending some money to Ukraine Crisis Appeal

<https://www.ukrainecrisisappeal.org/>

Thank you.

Vladimir Metter



Ukraine Crisis Appeal | Humanitarian Aid for those in need

The Ukraine Crisis Appeal - a collaboration between the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) and Caritas Ukraine - is the largest Australian tax-deductible fundraising effort for Ukraine

www.ukrainecrisisappeal.org

SCULPTURE GROUP

Tutor: Roy Bird

During the first term we concentrated on creating sculptures from objects found, plus creating Sunflower sculptures as a tribute to the Ukraine.



Air Dried Clay by Janice R.



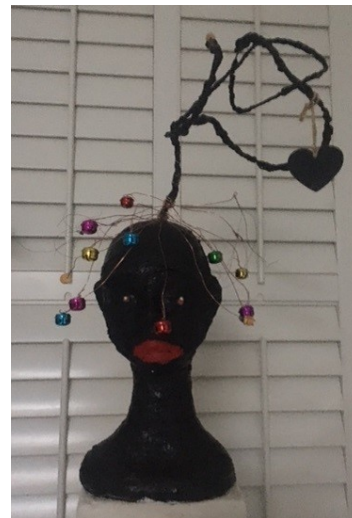
Air Dried Clay by Janice L.



Styrene and Acrylic by Jennifer



Beach stones and driftwood by Carol B



Styrene and Acrylic by Marion



COMMUNITY RADIO 88.3 SOUTHERN FM

Convenor: Alina Skoutarides



Bayside Community Hour broadcasts on the fourth Tuesday of every month, from 3pm to 4pm.

Our March program featured fascinating interviews with:

- * *Stephen LePage*, who outlined novel ways of approaching life via the Careliv Techniques and;
- * *Louise Williams*, who discussed the role of Mindfulness-based Meditation within the framework of these techniques.

We look forward to the Tuesday 26th April interviews that will focus on fine arts. They will centre around Bayside U3A programs delivered by Sue Steele and Nance Silverman.

BALANCE and BONES**Tutor: Helene Redding**

Balance and Bones had a get-to-know-you coffee morning at the Concourse.

Unfortunately quite a few people had left before the photo.

I will be continuing Balance and Bones during the school holidays.

Happy Easter and best wishes!

**TUESDAY WALKING GROUP****Leaders: Margaret Holdsworth and Jane Alcorn****VISIT TO BRAESIDE PARK**

Last Tuesday the Walking Group visited Braeside Park, Braeside. For anyone who loves the bush but can't get out too far from home, Braeside Park is a pocket of wonderful sights and smells that will take you back to previous holidays/trips to the countryside.

The park is hidden in the middle of urban development, tucked between a golf course, a freeway and school playing fields. There are gum trees, grassy scrub areas, clear heathland areas (complete with rabbits and echidnas), and wetlands just teeming with waterbirds. There are some quite amazing larger-than-life carvings of native animals and birds and a carving of Pharlap's head.

There are two entry points to Braeside Park, the main entry off Lower Dandenong Road and the lesser known entry off Governor Road. As you could guess *Yours Truly* went into the park through the wrong gate so missed the start of the walk. Fortunately the Park has marvellous clearly marked walking tracks, so with a bit of brisk backtracking the stragglers who entered through the wrong gate tracked the group down in time to view the water birds from the specially made 'hide' and for a group photo, looking over one of the marsh areas. The bird-life is extraordinary!



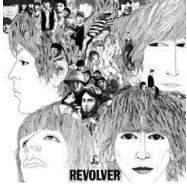
Our walk took us on a loop through the middle of the park (approx. 4km) and left us enough time to motor over to *Garden World* for a beaut cup of coffee and a good chat.

Once again, this week's meeting for the Tuesday Walking group provided a marvellous walk, followed by a happy social gathering for our coffee break. Old friends from last year's walking group making new friends with our new members.

THE BEATLES**Tutor: Dr Robert Mason**

With the Beatles, we are always chasing rabbits down Lewis Carrollian rabbit holes and now we will literally be doing that, with the release of Jefferson Airplane's 'White Rabbit' in early 1967 and its massive impact on the Beatles.

The Beatles class is currently progressing through 1966, the most tumultuous and creative year of their existence. It is also the year in which they redefined the recording studio as a kind of musical instrument. The inventions include (it's a long list) sampling, tape loops, backward recordings, close miking of musical instruments, phase shifting, artificial double-tracking, as well as the incorporation of a plethora of musical instruments and other sounds, etc. etc. The editing of this complex melange reached a peak with the first song of the year, 'Tomorrow Never Knows' and in the last, 'Penny Lane', which has about a squillion different and carefully overlapped keyboard pieces, yet the average listener would never know.



And the stories - or possibilities - being discussed in the lyrics are equally fascinating. As always there is a strongly autobiographical aspect but now this is couched in the fact that many of their interests have become complex and controversial. For example, in order to approach 'Revolver' we devoted a whole session to the theological aspects of LSD, which was seen not just as a kind of therapy but an actual spiritual experience. This may sound arcane but is still being played out to this day.

In the coming term we will be opening with the last three songs from 'Revolver', then progressing to the 1966 world tour, which was so awful for the Beatles that they permanently retreated to the sealed bubble suggested in 'Yellow Submarine'. After that, it's Sgt. Peppers phase 1, before the idea of Sgt. Pepper emerged... and then cometh the white rabbit.

MOVING TO MUSIC**Tutor: Bill Puls**

Moving to Music (M2M) still has vacancies. It has been going for more than four years now and takes place in the Beaumaris Senior Centre each Friday from 10.30am to 11.45am. Attendance has taken a bit of a hit because of COVID over the last two years and we could now do with some more 'movers' to add to the fun.



M2M is not dancing lessons and never involves couples dancing or learning steps. What happens is that 'dance' videos are shown on the big screen - mostly consisting of old pop songs with people dancing and novelty dance items, including a lot of line dancing and zumba style tracks. There are mostly steps to follow if you want to, but most of us just move however we want to. There are plenty of chances to rest up, and there is a social tea break in the middle of it all. You don't need to be fit or graceful - nobody takes any notice of anyone else's skills - eyes are usually on the screen and there is no pressure.

We started M2M with the idea that this sort of activity is good for brain and body fitness, social contacts and for lifting the mood. It's also good for those who could never shine on the dance floor in years gone by, but have always wanted to dance in some way. (And that description includes me!) ***So, why not give M2M a try?***

BAYSIDE U3A WRITERS GROUP**Tutor: Dr Cheryl Threadgold*****Word of the Month: 'Flip'*****THE FLIP****by Carol West ©2022**

The compact room is sited away from the main work floor. No need for prying eyes to know what's going on. Nothing to see here people. Move along. Through the open door, two women sit facing each other. One, her nemesis. The other from human resources. She can find no fault in the 'human' descriptive but baulks at being characterised as a 'resource'. Setting out on this career path nine years earlier, the sense of 'square peg, round hole' had never really left her. But that was almost a decade ago. She knows she has become a valuable 'resource,' an asset to the company. She also knows that that belief is about to be flipped on its head.

Continued overleaf....

Her eyes slide to a small square box strategically placed on a round table. A white tissue points perkily in her direction. Pick me, pick me. *I'll not be picking you today* she thinks determinedly. Taking a seat, she sets an impassive face. The woman opposite looks edgy, sounds nervous. The human resources executive lowers her head, absorbed by her neatly folded hands. *Embarrassed? You should be*, she thinks. She knew this moment was coming. Anyone who says they had no idea they were being retrenched – such a wretched word – obviously hasn't read the room. She'd read the room the week prior during a senior management struggle for supremacy. In a winner-takes-all face-off, she'd become collateral damage. Tails, you lose.

She had had a stellar year but that counted for nought. The fix was in and she knew it. Her mantra? Get out in front of negotiations. Don't get blindsided. A meeting with an industrial lawyer had provided her with a plan. Now it was game on!

As the list of her 'inability to meet future changes to the business' are enumerated, she says nothing. The indefensible deserves no defense. She opens a leather-bound pad and takes notes. It unnerves the woman delivering fatuous platitudes couched in corporate speak. Finally, words peter out and a white envelope slides smoothly across the table. The offer. Snapping the notebook shut, she ignores it. In the ensuing silence, she calmly asks her nemesis to leave the room. What Chutzpah! Her sudden impulse to flip the focus from victim to victor leaves her breathlessly in the moment.

The woman from human resources looks bewildered. The box of tissues inch closer. "Are you feeling OK?" she enquires. "Never better," comes her firm reply. Bold-faced, her stomach is in freefall. She tells human resources who will replace her. "It won't take long," she says. "I don't think that's right," comes the hesitant response. *Honestly*, she thinks, *these people never know what's going on*. Despite the secrecy, a steady stream of people stop by her desk with shocked expressions, lips pursed in surprise. If it can happen to her ... the unwritten subtext. The following day, she's asked to leave the building. The company is moving on. Her presence is too disruptive, an unhealthy distraction. It's time to find that square hole.

FLIP by Helen Graham ©2022

"Felicity Jane."

Felicity Jane, how she hated that name. So-o-o-o-oo uncool. Her face contorted as she glared at the mirror.

"Felicity Jane!!!"

FFS*, why can't she shut up.

"Felicity, please come and say goodbye to your Nan and Pop." Aw, now he's at it.

Why can't they leave me alone?

Why can't they just call me Flip?

Why Felicity, why Jane?

Why the big clam up when I ask?

What's their problem? All this whispering and pretending to talk about something else when Nan and Pop come to visit. It's got something to do with Pop. Why won't he talk about his family? It was gross trying to do my family history project in Year Seven. Everyone clammed up about Dad's side. Mum got that funny look on her face when I asked, Dad just took off, as usual.

Then that silly old rello. I didn't want to go to that great aunt's or whatever she was, funeral. Hate 'em ever since I had to go with the whole school when that crazy Year Seven kid fell off the bridge. Funny how nobody would talk about that, either. Was it an accident? Who knows? I heard that he jumped. It was so basic*. But at least at Whatever's funeral there was plenty to eat afterwards, not like the other one. Straight back to school after we left the church. No sandwiches and cream cakes for us. It's about the only thing I like about going to fam jam's* with Mum and Dad. There's always lots of awesome food. If I'm really smart, I might nick a bottle of wine from the drinks bin and hide out with the cousins.

But this do was different. The silly old rello got a bit sloshed and started going off about Pop's family. You should've seen what happened next. OMG*. Panic stations. Next thing I see her being hustled into a car. But not before I heard her say that I had a right to know.

Know what?

Thank God for finsta*. If Sara hadn't chatted on about her dad not being her dad, I wouldn't have known.

I'll sort this out as soon as I'm 18. Six more weeks and I'll be an adult. I'll show 'em. It doesn't cost much for an Ancestry.com test and I might find some answers, just like Sara.

Continued overleaf ...

Glossary for those not living in the teenage realm

FFS – For F....s Sake

Basic – boring

Fam jams – family get together

OMG – Oh My God/Gosh

Finsta - a second Instagram account used for sharing with a smaller circle of friends and followers. This account is sometimes kept a secret from parents. Kids usually post info that is secretive from their public profile.

BRINGING HER IN**by Gwen Zammit ©2022**

This is an excerpt from a longer story about my character Stella. It is set in the late 1970s.

DC Jack Dabrowski descended the stairs from the fifth floor flat, no longer cursing the heat of the day that had made the ascent so difficult. Now he felt chilled and oppressed by the gloom of the stairwell.

Questioning Stella Cummings had left him deeply unsettled. She'd scarcely raised her head but her terror had been evident. It wasn't the terror of guilt. He felt he'd seen someone behave like her before. An image was trying to form in his mind but he pushed it away. 'Don't go there, don't go there,' an inner voice insisted.

The gloom lifted and the street noise increased. Fitzroy Street, the detested, scumbag infested heartland of his St Kilda beat. He stepped out. The bright light took him aback then, welcoming the heat, he looked around. Unusually for him, he did not focus on the hookers, pimps and dealers. This time, he noticed the happy, chatty families on their way to the beach; kids with buckets, spades and icy poles, dads and mums with Chiko Rolls and chips. It was okay, life was still good.

He wondered if he should have brought her straight to the Station for questioning instead of telling her to come tomorrow? What if she didn't? There was a dead body involved, this could be a serious crime. He'd been proud of his success in tracking her down through that coat and now he could have blown the whole case. His sergeant would relish humiliating him. He imagined himself recounting how she said she walked away from the body because she didn't think it was real. She covered it with her coat to keep it warm! She said some nonsense about thinking perhaps the kind old sun might rouse it. Kind old sun? She had clearly flipped. Just another St Kilda loony, nothing to give him the shivers.

It was a shame though, to see a girl like her in such a state. He imagined her sitting in one of the cold, dark, reeking cells. Would she completely flip? He'd never had sympathy for the hookers, even the young, frightened ones still carrying traces of their innocent past selves. Stupid of them to get on drugs, deserved whatever came to them. But this Stella, she had him wondering. Her face kept returning to him. She'd only looked directly at him once. It was when she said she put her coat over the body to keep it warm; the coat that had led him to her. It was as though she felt this confirmed her innocence. Her face was pleading with him to understand. He did not understand. He also did not understand why her face moved him. He saw grief, he believed he saw innocence. He also saw something beautiful and, in some way, familiar. He wanted very much to see her face again.

He shook himself, straightened his shoulders and turned back to bring her in right now.

TSUNAMI**by Evelyn Cronk©2022**

The salt breeze and tropical sun layer my skin with well-being. At low tide, I cross the emptying lagoon; scurries of fish rush to catch the tide. I muse upon their similarities to human commuters. I feel a childish delight in the sucking flip flop noises my sandals make in the wet sand. On the ocean side of the atoll, a gentle wash from the sea leads me across vast rock plates to a deep pool of blue green water that defies an artist's palette. I dive in just a little bit apprehensive of what could be lurking beneath me.

After, the lazing palm trees sigh a siren song drawing me into a daydreaming doze. Something wakes me: a ripple of unease makes me look around. Without warning, a giant vacuum cleaner switches on and sucks the air towards the sky. The palm fronds stand up in fright. The water is running backwards exposing the seabed, fish flop belly up. The receding sea has formed a towering, mobile mountain range. Alarmed, I clamber down from my eyrie and run across the empty lagoon.

My legs haven't run like this since I was a long-legged kangaroo of a girl. My heart pounds with fear. The alarm has spread to the resort, guests are gathering up children and running away from the mountain of disaster rushing to overtake us all.

Continued overleaf ...

I see my husband struggling to his feet, his arms raised, summoning me. I must get to him; we won't be able to run with the others, he is lame. Breathless, I thud against his chest. Turning we move as one, my legs striding, his arms wrapped around me. Noise and wind at our backs propel us forward. We don't turn to look at the tsunami; a desperate need to survive draws us on. The surging water is already knee deep, rising fast and slamming floating debris into us. If we fall, the power of this malign force will drag us under forever.

Near the hotel, a wave slams us against an external staircase. We climb to the first-floor landing. The door is locked so we wedge ourselves in the corner, his beach towel acts as padding against the wrought iron rails. The water washes over us with terrible force. Will fear or the water choke me first? Just as my legs helped us to this place, his strong arms, the last remnant of the champion swimmer of fifty years ago, hold us against this tug of war with death. The staircase moves: will it hold to the wall or, will we be swept away forever, broken like the doll that rushed past us?

The water dragon finally leaves us to seek more compliant victims. After the water recedes, silence fills the place vacated by the roaring hell. Unsure whether the danger is past we stay wedged in our sanctuary until we can breathe normally. Exhausted, our bodies are so battered and bleeding we can't move. My husband's soft words soothe me.

THE TALE OF FLIP

by Geoffrey Dobbs ©2022

"Your name's Philippa, Phil-ip-pa," her mother repeated to her daughter as a toddler. "Flip," responded Philippa who couldn't mould her tongue around the name. So 'Flip' she remained, except to her mother who always referred to her by her full name, emphasising every syllable. Her father accepted 'Flip.' After all, she was a girl and so allowance should be made. Her older brother, Tom, was the centre of his world. Flip's father was a Consulting Engineer. For him, there were only three classes of people in the world: engineers, would-be engineers, and the rest. Tom, a straight A student in Maths and Science, knew his destiny.

But Flip failed family expectations. She was a middling student at school, shining only in Art and History. She was impetuous or as her mother thought, lacking in decorum. Once, in the middle of a family Sunday lunch, Flip had announced brightly: "I've got my first period."

'Philippa!' shouted her mother. Tom had invited his new girlfriend, Theresa, in her final year at an elite Catholic Girls' School. She blushed deeply and Tom had to apologise for Flip's behaviour.

Tom went to university, as planned, and was soon cleaving his way towards a degree in Civil Engineering. Two years later Flip also went to university, not the sandstone one that Tom attended but a concrete and glass institution. To her father's disgust, she chose to major in 'arty-farty' stuff: Art and Design. But then, she was a girl.

In Tom's last year, another Sunday lunch achieved notoriety. It had been unusually quiet, the only sounds being the clatter of cutlery and a few compliments to Flip's mother on the roast lamb. Suddenly, Tom cleared his throat and announced: "Theresa and I are getting married."

Flip's mother smiled. "Of course, dear, we're not surprised. It will be after your graduation, won't it?"

Her father rose from his chair to congratulate his son.

"Next month," said Tom in a strangled voice.

"Oooh Tom," cried Flip, "is Tessa pregnant then?"

"Philippa!" shouted her mother.

Tom flushed, looked down at his plate, and nodded.

Flip's father exploded. "The stupid girl," he roared

"Oh, come on Dad," replied Flip, "It takes two to tango and to ..."

"Philippa!" shouted her mother.

Tom left university without graduating and joined an insurance company. Theresa produced twins. Flip left home, joining friends in a shabby 'squat'. She returned for brief visits, dreadlocked, metallised up and sporting tats on both breasts. Whenever she appeared, her father fled to the golf course.

Flip graduated with Honours and moved to London where she became famous for her art installations of Escher-like complexity, decorated in startling, clashing colours. She moved to New York with her partner, a woman novelist ten years her senior. She has never returned home.

Flip's mother has been swallowed up by Tom, Theresa and their six children. But everyone she meets hears about: "My daughter Philippa—the famous artist, in New York."