

Bayside U3A

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Offices: Beaumaris Senior Centre
84 Reserve Road, Beaumaris (behind the library)

Old Brighton Court House
63 Carpenter Street, Brighton (next to the Town Hall)

Telephone: 9589 3798 Mobile: 0404 524 028
Mail: P.O. Box 7269 BEAUMARIS 3193

Email: baysideu3a@gmail.com Web: baysideu3a.org.au

2023 TERM DATES

Term 4 2nd October - 20th December 2023

NEWSLETTER

September 2023



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

Brighton Office
Monday to Thursday 9:30am - 12noon

FROM THE PRESIDENT

DAVID HONE

We regret to inform you that there isn't a message from our President David Hone this month, as he is recovering from a bout of COVID. The Bayside U3A community sends David all the best for a speedy recovery and look forward to his energetic return. He will have lots to report next issue!



Beaumaris Seniors Open Day
11am to 2pm Wednesday 4th October
Brighton Seniors Open Day
11am to 2pm Thursday 5th October

Alongside the Victorian Seniors Festival, the Bayside Seniors Festival is being held throughout October. The festival offers many interesting activities for Bayside U3A members and other members of the city's community.

Overleaf are the free activities Bayside U3A is providing, all of which are open to the general public, so please come along and bring your friends. Light refreshments will be available during these events. Bookings are required.

There are many more free activities throughout Bayside and surrounding Councils for seniors to attend.

Check the websites for the Victorian Government and Bayside City Council to find details of what is happening.

Bayside U3A Grand Final Eve Luncheon



Bayside U3A Members and Friends are invited to the Bayside U3A Grand Final Eve Luncheon
at the Beaumaris Community Centre
29th September, 1pm - 4pm.

Hosted by Shawn Cosgrove (The Price is Right), and includes rare football footage, raffles and prizes.
(Please bring some cash)

BBQ lunch, salad and, desserts.

Tables for 8-10 people BYO drinks only

BOOK NOW!

Cost: \$10 per person

Course code: 23SOC008 or call 0404 524 028

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING MAJOR EVENTS

Volunteers are needed for the following 'Major Events', held in the Beaumaris Community Centre.
We will need you generally 2 hrs before the event starts and sometimes after it.

- ⇒ Friday 29th September : Pre-Grand Final BBQ Event Starts 1pm - 4pm
- ⇒ Saturday 7th October : Synergy Book Launch and Art Show Event Starts 2pm - 4pm
- ⇒ Tuesday 7th November : Melbourne Cup Time to be advised

Please email your response ASAP to mary.downie16@gmail.com



Victorian Seniors Festival

1st to 31st October 2023

This festival is a Victoria-wide series of events for seniors. Detailed information on what's on can be obtained on the

[Victorian Government](#)

And [Bayside City Council](#) websites.

The Bayside Seniors Festival is being held throughout October. The festival offers many interesting activities for U3A members and other members of the city's community.

Below are the free activities Bayside U3A is providing, all of which are open to the general public, so please come along and bring your friends. Light refreshments will be available during these events. Bookings required.

BEAUMARIS SENIORS OPEN DAY

Wednesday 4th October 11am-2pm

[Book Online](#)

- 11:00 AM Come and try Petanque**
- 11:00 AM Come and try Balance and Bones**
- 11:00 AM Come and try Western Mahjong**
- 12:00 PM Come and try Moving to Music**
- 12:00 PM Come and try Rummikub**
- 1:00 PM Australian history talk - Convicts**
- 1:00 PM Come and try scrabble**

BRIGHTON COURT HOUSE OPEN DAY *Thursday 5th October 11am-2pm*

[Book Online](#)

- 11:00 AM Finska - skittles for adults**
- 11:00 AM Book Chat**
- 11:00 AM Come and try Tai Chi**
- 12:00 PM Art history talk - Rembrandt**
- 12:00 PM Art history talk - Rembrandt**
- 12:00 PM Come and try Chess**
- 1:00 PM Come and try Balance and Bones**

SCULPTURE FOR PLEASURE

Tutor : Roy Bird



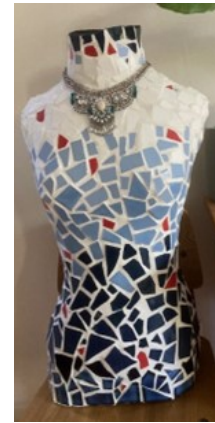
Cypress and
Red Gum
Figure
by Rob



Audrey Hepburn
Styrene and Acrylic
By Jennifer



George Bernard Shaw
Concrete and Iron
By Roy



Female Form
Tiles and Plaster
By Peter



MONTHLY BROADCASTS ON 88.3 SOUTHERN FM

PRESENTER : Pauline O'Brien

This month Sue Steele and Sandra Groves were interviewed by Pauline O'Brien, the host of the Bayside U3A Community Hour.

Sandra Groves chatted about the course she hosts: 'Reading Before the Now', held on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Beaumaris Senior Centre from 7.30-9.00pm. Sandra mentioned how the books were selected with input from the members of the group and also about the meaning of the course, which relates to both fact and fiction being included in the stories.

Sue Steele detailed the course she hosts: 'Bayside Book Lovers Brighton' which is held on the 4th Friday of the month at the Brighton Courthouse from 12.30-1.45pm. Sue also mentioned how the books were selected, again with input from the members.

Sue Steele spoke about her role as Course Co-ordinator at the U3A and mentioned that there are a few new courses in 4th term this year to look out for. If anyone is interested in running a short course, be it for 4 weeks, one term or for the whole of the 2024 year, please contact Sue through the Bayside U3A office on 9589 3798 to discuss.

For the September Bayside U3A Community Hour on 26th September, Pauline will interview Carol West about the launch of the book called 'Synergy' scheduled for Saturday 7th October at the Beaumaris Community Centre from 2-4pm. The book is a collaboration between the Bayside U3A Writers and the Bayside U3A Painting for Pleasure Groups, which celebrates the words of 22 writers and the works of 12 painters.

Tune in to 88.3 FM Community radio every 4th Tuesday of the month from 3! www.southernfm.com.au



TUESDAY WALKERS

Convenor : Margaret Holdsworth

Tuesday Walkers meet at 9:30am each week. We are so passionate about Bayside Melbourne that each week we walk a different trail. We usually walk for about six kilometers but we always stop for coffee to help us on our way. There is always lots to talk about over coffee.

Some of this year's favourites include the Royal Botanic Gardens, Docklands, Williamstown, Frankston Art Trail, Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve [The Old Elsternwick Golf Course], Elwood Canal, Elster Creek, Mordialloc Creek, Karkarook Reserve, St Kilda Botanic Gardens as well using our wonderful Bayside Walking trails especially along the beachfront. There are a number of fantastic walks still to come this year including Albert Park Lake, Port Melbourne and Westgate Park.

If you enjoy seeing your local environment, enjoy good company and enjoy a coffee and a chat you might want to come and join us next year.

WINE APPRECIATION DINNER *Convenor: Sally Mort*

On Thursday 7th September, a magnificent dinner took place at Cilantro, the hospitality training restaurant at Holmesglen Institute in Moorabbin. It was all put together by the staff and students.



It has been 3 years since our last dinner at Cilantro due to COVID and we ended up entertaining 36 guests, booking out the entire restaurant. Working out the seating plan wasn't easy, but fortunately it ended up very well, as every table was chatting if they weren't eating! The menu – from the amuse-bouche through to desserts, was just fantastic! Presentation of each course was also incredible and very few plates were taken away with anything left behind!

To welcome our guests into the restaurant, we started the evening with a delicious Brown Brothers NV Single Vineyard Prosecco. Our maître d' for the night was Dino, who had selected the amazing wines to match our dinner. He spent time at each table talking about why he had chosen them for each course.

At the end of the night, the kitchen staff came into the restaurant to be thanked and we were all surprised by the number of students working in the kitchen, alongside the Head Chef.

LAWN BOWLS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SEASON*Convenor : Rob Coulson*

As the main season for Lawn Bowls approaches, many of our student bowlers have been honing their skills in preparation. Braving the odd winter snap, thankfully most Wednesday mornings have been playable.



Coaches Tony and Peter, together with an enthusiastic band of helpers, have been running it for two weeks while Rob has been at the Bowls World Championships.

And our session is also featuring in the Victorian Seniors Festival as a 'Come and Try' event on Wednesday 11th October at 9.45am. If you feel like you want to try it out, there will be a few coming on that day.

Plenty to look forward to!

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL*Convenor: Claire Andrews*

Please help! I am the tutor hosting Armchair Travel, a friendly U3A group in Beaumaris. We meet monthly to discuss our travels, whether holidays, living overseas or trips around Australia.

I know how much we in Bayside U3A look forward to our get togethers and how important these meetings are to so many people, whether it is for companionship, education or a 'change of scene'.

We are looking for members to share their travel stories, talking for about 60 minutes on the destination of their choice, with some photos or images of the places discussed. I can provide you with help putting the photos together into a presentation (for example on PowerPoint.) We are lucky to have a helpful admin team in the Beaumaris office, who assist with setting up the laptop (you do not need to provide any technology.)

If you think you might be interested, please contact the Bayside U3A office on 9589 3798 or email me, Claire, for a 'no obligation' chat about what's involved. My email is: claire.bec.waters@bigpond.com

I look forward to hearing from you. Many thanks!

**DAY TRIP TOURS***Convenor : Joan Gibbs*

During Winter we were able to enjoy a few Wineries. We will continue this next Winter!



We have some interesting venues for the next few months: Daylesford Convent, Bruno Sculpture Gardens, Marysville, Sassafras, Mt Macedon, Mornington Peninsula, Blue Lotus Gardens, Botanical Gardens, Ballarat Begonia Festival, Williamstown Ferry, Redwood Forest, Heidi Museum and much more. Pick up is at Brighton Court House & Beaumaris Library.



Ring 0417 768 433 or email me joanlgibbs37@gmail.com for more information .

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS**Co-Coordinator : Susan McCarthy & Alison Barnett**

A highlight of term 3 for Crafty Conversations was celebrating Christmas in July with a Christmas Decoration Workshop. There were several choices of decorations to make, from an origami flower, a star made from recycling printed paper and patterns for knitted Christmas lights, stockings, Santas and snowmen. Our collective efforts are illustrated in the three Christmas photos below. The Christmas mood was enhanced with Michael Bublé singing in the background and fruit cake for morning tea. A most enjoyable time was had by all.

Christmas Lights, Santas & stockings



Book Page Stars



Kusudama Flower Ball

Some other projects recently completed by Members:



The Elephant Quilt (front and back) by Anne Tresise is a stunning piece of work and a present for Anne's niece's baby in Scotland.

Bluey & Bingo by Alison Barnett.

Alison was just going to make Bluey and Bingo but her granddaughter wanted to know where Bluey and Bingo's parents were! So, Alison is now tasked with making the other family members too!

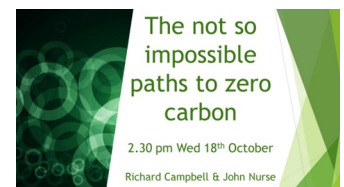


One Skein Wonder by Lynette Taylor. A beautiful warm scarf especially for this changeable Spring weather. The project was inspired by another member in the group who has knitted several of these scarves. This is a great example of how we work together to inspire each other and share resources.

SPEAKER SERIES ... Continuing the climate change discussion**Wednesday 18th October**

We received lots of positive feedback from the recent David Karoly lecture on 'The Perils of Climate Change'. One topic of feedback was an interest in hearing not just how big a problem we are facing, but what is being, and what can be, done about it. In response to that, two Bayside U3A members, Rick Campbell and John Nurse will run a session next month on the topic of **'The not so impossible paths to zero carbon'**.

Richard (a former Sharebroker and Financial Advisor) and John (a chemical engineer and former Process Technology Director) have previously been involved in a number of projects addressing climate change issues and in particular the development of alternative energy systems.



The session aims to demystify the issues of alternative energy options and answer (in 'laymen's terms') questions such as:

- What renewable energy sources make sense and where?
- What are the constraints and problems (eg power transmission, balancing the electrical supply and demand)?
- What role does storage of energy play in addressing these constraints?
- What about the 'hydrogen economy'?
- What opportunities does all this give for Australian industry?

The session aims to make sense of what! We will also have plenty of time for questions and discussion.

No need to book, just come along!

U3A Beaumaris (main hall) on Wednesday 18th October at 2.30 pm.

PLAYING CROQUET AT BRIGHTON CROQUET CLUB

Tutor - Julie Love



6 Bleazby Ave, Brighton (off Male St)

It has been a busy start to the season at Brighton Croquet Club, with the running of our Open Tournament over the first two weekends in September. We are now looking forward to our Seniors Open Afternoon which be held on

Saturday 21st October, 1:30 – 4:00pm

You are welcome to come and join us for a fun afternoon playing croquet and a delicious afternoon tea. Our members will introduce you to the different types of croquet and describe the physical, social and mental benefits from playing this great game. Flat shoes please – plus a hat and sunscreen. See you there!

The Club also has two Bayside U3A courses scheduled in Term 4:

- Introduction to Golf Croquet from 4th October – 25th October at 1pm (Wed) **Course code: 23FITS05**
- Introduction to Association Croquet from 5th October – 2nd November at 4:30pm (Thurs) **Course code: 23FITS09**

For more information about our Open Day, the U3A courses, croquet and the Club please visit our website brightoncroquetclub.com.au or call **0414 278 884**

DAY TOUR TO THE ARCHIBALD EXHIBITION MORNINGTON PENINSULA REGIONAL GALLERY

Thursday 5th October

Please email Noela Foote to book your place
c/- baysideu3a@gmail.com
or call the office on 9589 3798

Limit of 13 people.

\$70 Includes bus tour and entry to the Exhibition



SHAKESPEARE READING and DISCUSSION

Tutor: Peter Summons

The Shakespeare Group met on Monday 13th August to celebrate with flowers and a cake— Pamela Nicholls' **100th BIRTHDAY** which was later that week. What a marvellous achievement!



Until a few years ago, Pamela was the tutor for the Shakespeare Group and now she rarely misses a meeting! We all envy how she is still reading Shakespeare character parts!



VALE PAT FLEMING

We recently farewelled one of our original members of Bayside U3A. A very respected member, Pat Fleming had just turned 97. She was very active and attended as many classes as she could, including Wine Appreciation activities and Current Affairs. She was a great neighbour and we attended some wonderful street events with her over the years.

Two years ago, we celebrated her 95th with a lunch at Brighton Beach Hotel which she thoroughly enjoyed.

I learned so much about her life recently – Pat was an amazing woman and as well as graduating from university, she had an incredible thirst for knowledge and tried her hand at many different things. At one stage, she even ran a cattle ranch on her own in the country! Pat will be much missed in Black Rock and at Bayside U3A.

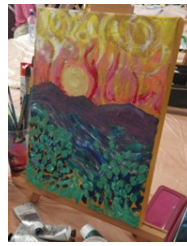
Pat with dear friend
Judith Hampton,
another Bayside U3A
member who recently
moved to Queensland.



Written by Sally Mort



Pat enjoying her
95th birthday cake
with friends and
neighbours

PAINTING WITH ACRYLIC**Tutor : Naomi Heath**

Everyone in the Acrylics Painting class has been working hard and having fun, creating amazing pieces that reveal hidden talents!

Each week I guide the class, step-by-step in a chosen painting.

Some students prefer to work independently to create their own work based on that week's theme.

Here is a selection of some of our marvellous art!

We have a lot of fun and laughs.

The class is very relaxed and everyone is free to work in their own style and at their own pace.

I absolutely love teaching this class.

**LET'S DO DINNER - August 2023****Convenor : Karen Hall**

This one has to be our most interesting yet! Starting off as a small motorcycle shop back in 1988, since transformed to a premier class and vintage dealership, it includes a remarkable museum housing over 250 exotic antique motorcycles and memorabilia. There was so much to see!

Thank you to everyone who made an effort to revisit their youth with leather jackets everywhere! (Most of them still almost fitted).

Very important correction to last month's Xmas in July dress-up prize which went to Juliet Charles – not Janet Charles as reported in the newsletter. Apologies for the typo Juliet.

Kristina's delicious-looking sizzling seafood platter set off the fire alarm. Everyone waved their arms madly to disperse the smoke. Chris Birch found a motorcycle just like the one he had in 1966!

Somewhat noisier on our second dinner on 19th August, and the staff and service were exceptional considering the number of very large bookings on the night. Parking was so easy. Food amazing (mostly) with a slight hiccup with meals when the steaks were mixed up (by us). Excellent company with a few new members in attendance. We enjoyed having the corner all to ourselves.

**Dinner dates for the remainder of 2023**

October 7th & 21st : Newbay Hotel, New St Brighton
 November 4th & 18th : Mordy HQ, Nepean Hwy Mordialloc
 December 2nd : Cheltenham Moorabbin RSL, Cheltenham

If you wish to be included on future dinner invitations and reminders, please enrol in [Let's do Dinner - Course code: 23SOC003](#). Everyone is welcome!

HAPPY HOUR ON FRIDAY 25TH AUGUST 2023



Busy night at Hampton RSL for 35 Bayside U3A members who attended the Happy Hour.

Helene Redding and Chris Birch hosted the evening as Karen, our convenor, had a nasty sinus infection. We greeted 3 new members. The Gardening course was well represented with Ann Swiers and several of her group, capped by Ann winning a leg of lamb in the raffle!

The bistro was closed for a function so 16 of our members enjoyed dinner in the bar instead.

Many thanks to Helene and Chris for stepping up at the last minute!

Enrol In **Course code: 23SOC004 Bayside U3A Happy Hour.**

Convenor : Karen Hall

The BAYSIDE U3A HAPPY HOUR ... CHANGE OF DATE FOR SEPTEMBER!

Friday 22nd September 2023 5pm at the Hampton RSL

- * No need to reply—just turn up! *Drinks: \$6.50 sparkling or house wine, discount beer and some spirits.
- * Please wear your Bayside U3A name badge. * Bring along your RSL membership card if you have one!

Dinner is available for those wishing to stay on. *Table of 10 is booked for anyone wishing to stay on for dinner to try out the new Asian Fusion menu* <https://www.hamptonrsl.com.au/wp-content/uploads/khaw-waan-menu.pdf>

To confirm a booking, call the Hampton RSL on 9598 0460.

Do bring along some cash to support the RSL raffle. It's a worthy cause and we historically have an enviable high rate of prize success! Everyone is welcome including a friend of Bayside U3A members. Enrol in **Course code: 23SOC004 Bayside U3A Happy Hour.**



25 Holyrood St Hampton VIC 3188

SPEAKER SERIES IN NOVEMBER

SAVE THE DATE

Wed 29th November

"The Way we Were The Hawke and Keating Years"

Margaret Reynolds, Former Senator and Minister in the Hawke and Keating Governments



At our next Eminent Speaker session on Wednesday 29th November, former Senator Margaret Reynolds will be talking about her experiences as a member of the Hawke and Keating governments in the period 1983-1996.

This was a period of big personalities and big policies, such as floating the dollar, dismantling trade barriers and introducing superannuation. Margaret will contrast her experiences then with today's national public policy agenda.

We are looking forward to Margaret's insider-look at a pivotal period in Australia's national development.

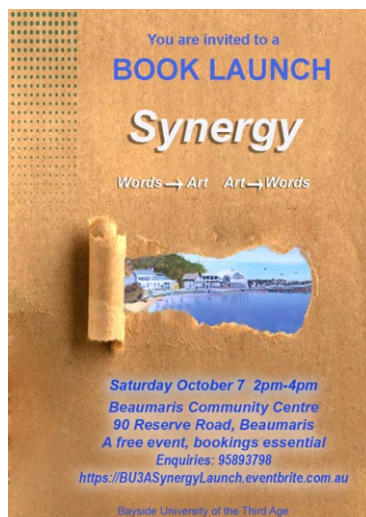
SENIORS FESTIVAL TO LAUNCH INNOVATIVE BOOK PROJECT

An innovative collaboration between Bayside U3A Writers and the Bayside U3A Painting for Pleasure Groups has led to the creation of **Synergy**, a book celebrating the words of 22 writers and the works of 12 artists. A joyous ode to the creative powers of Bayside residents, the 142-page, A-5 sized, full-colour anthology will be launched by renown local writer and literary journalist, Jane Sullivan, during Seniors Festival this October.

Dr Cheryl Threadgold OAM, convener of the Writers Group, spearheaded the project which rapidly took shape thanks to the enthusiastic support of Nance Silverman, Geoff Rolls, Dr Vicki Cowling OAM and the artists, together with the writers, including 'page-maker' Evelyn Cronk, who all wholeheartedly embraced the idea.

'We have enjoyed meeting the writers and working with them. Producing this book has been a wonderful collaboration,' said Nance Silverman on behalf of the Painting for Pleasure group.

'Writings inspired from art and art inspired by the written word provided a creative challenge for both groups, but the project wouldn't have reached fruition without financial support from the Bayside U3A Executive and generous donors,' added Dr Threadgold. 'We're delighted and it's a fitting tribute to mark the tenth anniversary of Bayside U3A.'



Stories and paintings reflect both local scenes such as a notorious trial at the Brighton Courthouse and the reflected tranquility of Albert Park Lake to Paris street scenes and a pilgrim's progress on Camino de Santiago. As writer Vivienne Player says in the book's preface:

'We all see the world and interpret it differently; hence the variety of styles, voices, formats and media in this collection.'

There will be a free Seniors Festival event to launch the anthology on Saturday 7th October 7 between 2pm - 4pm at the Beaumaris Community Centre in the Large Hall

90 Reserve Road, Beaumaris

Bookings are essential.

<https://BU3ASynergyLaunch.eventbrite.com.au>

For more information contact:

Carol West 0412 424 598 caw8744@outlook.com

SPECIAL GUEST ANNOUNCED FOR SYNERGY BOOK LAUNCH

Melbourne writer, Jane Sullivan has agreed to launch Synergy, an anthology comprising words to art and art to words as part of Bayside U3A Seniors Festival.

Jane specialises in literary journalism and her column 'Turning Pages' focuses on books and writing - it appears in the Saturday Age and in the online Sydney Morning Herald. Her latest novel is 'Little People' published by Scribe.

BAYSIDE U3A WRITERS GROUP 2023 on 88.3 SOUTHERN FM

The Bayside U3A Writers Group joins Pauline O'Brien in the 88.3 Southern FM studios on the third Tuesday of every month.

On **Tuesday 19th September at 9am**, Nance Silverman and Cheryl Threadgold will join Pauline to discuss the collaborative Synergy anthology created by the Bayside U3A Painting for Pleasure and Bayside U3A Writers Groups.

Carol West will be interviewed during the Bayside U3A Community Hour on 88.3 Southern FM on **Tuesday 26th September at 3pm** to promote the Synergy project launch on **7th October, 2 - 4pm at the Beaumaris Community Centre.**

BAYSIDE U3A WRITERS GROUP 2023**Convenor: Dr Cheryl Threadgold****Word of the Month: 'WHEEL'****THE TAXI'S WHEELS SQUEAL****Evelyn Cronk © 2023**

My body heat is making my clothes stick to the taxi's vinyl seat. I regret choosing a cream silk shirt and linen trousers for the meeting with the legendary Kerry Packer.

Silk and linen clothes do very well in Melbourne but, to my chagrin, not in this humid Sydney weather. I look out the car window marvelling at people walking about as if this dripping, breathless, enervating heat isn't happening. I feel like crepe paper left out in the rain.

My phone rings; I fish it out of my briefcase. It's large and heavy, like carting around a brick. *They'll have to make the things smaller*, I think, as I pull up the aerial and press the answer button.

'Evelyn.' It's my executive producer's voice.

'I'm nearly there, Jill.'

'I'm not. My plane was turned back to Melbourne.' A pause, a beat. 'You'll have to meet Kerry by yourself.'

Humidity and crumpled clothing concerns vanish. Completely winded, a sensation of ice water running down my spine replaces the heat. It doesn't bring relief. I am gripped with pure horror. My stomach threatens to reject my lunch.

'Meet Kerry Packer by myself?' My voice sounds like a mouse squeak. 'Noooo Jill, I can't do that. I was only coming to the meeting with you because I'm here finishing an edit.'

'You know enough about the project. You'll be fine.'

'But ...' I stop, I recognise that "steel claw in the velvet paw" tone in Jill's voice. The voice that ensures Jill gets the results she wants.

'My secretary has faxed the documents to Film Australia. They're waiting for you at Kerry's office. I'll call you later.'

The phone clicks.

The taxi's wheels squeal as it stops suddenly at a red light. It's outside a typical Sydney pub. Green tiles half way up the wall to allow regular hosing. Through the open car window, the smell of beer wafts towards me, further assaulting my heaving stomach. Men in singlets and Stubbies shorts, are drinking on the footpath. More jugs of beer are lined up on the shelf against the wall. Clearly this is the way to keep up fluid intake in this climate.

'Pull over please.'

The driver pulls into the kerb under a No Standing sign. I am beyond caring.

'Please wait.'

Raucous laughter as I run the gauntlet of leering men. 'Hey girlie. The silk department's round the corner.'

They mean the Ladies Lounge; I ignore them. 'A brandy and water please.' I ask the barman. He pours the tot of brandy with a water jug beside. I gulp it and rush out. The cab takes off. My stomach apparently grateful for the brandy, settles just a little.

Inside the iconic Packer headquarters, the air conditioning provides a little relief. The receptionist hands me a manila envelope. I scan the contents. Story synopses, director's notes, casting, budgets, timelines. I might just manage this if Mr Packer doesn't throw me any questions out of left field.

Upstairs, I wait in the reception area to his office suite. I try to draw some courage from the unseen presence of women such as Nene King, Ita Buttrose, Helen Dally, Lisa Wilkinson and other legendary women who must have sat here before a first encounter with the boss. How did they feel?

'Mr. Packer will see you now.' The PA gives me a soft smile.

I feel those other women gently drape a gossamer fine cloak of support across my shoulders. I enter the inner office; the door closes behind me.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Packer.'

WHEEL OF FORTUNE**Mary Birch © 2023**

Anna Marie, Anna Marie. The plaintive voice of Jim Reeves echoes through the warm evening air and the sounds of laughter and chatter fill the village square. The carnival has arrived.

I watch quietly, taking in these sights, sounds, and smells of the outside world. The dodgem cars are very noisy; they smell funny and look a little scary. A man collects the money until all the cars are occupied and then they set off, children screaming with excitement as they drive around. I listen to the crackling and screeching of the cars as they whiz past, some with the aim of going round in circles. Others are hell-bent on ramming into other cars, much to the delight of the driver when this happens – which seems to occur quite often. When two cars become wedged together after a crash, the man rushes over to separate the vehicles. I'm not sure about the dodgems ... how do they move around? Do they use petrol? I can't see any wheels.

No one in this village has a car, apart from the priests, the doctor and the postmistress. Usually, we walk to the church, three miles away every Sunday morning, or if we are lucky, we may be able to cycle. We have to fast before receiving communion, so we haven't eaten since the evening before. Stomachs growling with hunger, we stop off to buy sweets around the half-way mark on the way home. Occasionally, we are lucky and the priest picks us up and we get to ride in his car for the return journey.

The carnival comes to town every couple of years, and at other times a circus arrives as if by magic. Where do these people come from? I wonder. Along with plays performed by local amateur theatre groups, these events from the outside world are the highlight of our entertainment.

Sometimes I watch on weekdays as the bus comes into the village at 11am for the one-hour trip to Dublin. It returns at 6pm and if there is no one waiting to board, the driver throws a bundle of newspapers on the pavement outside the post office and keeps on driving.

I walk on, giving the dodgems a miss. The swing boats look more interesting. Wooden boats are suspended above the ground. One person seated on each end of the boat pulls on a rope to build up momentum and make the boat swing. It looks like hard work, but maybe I'll try that with my friend later.

As I stroll around, I can see the blue hazy outline of the mountains in the distance. Daddy says they are called the 'Wicklow mountains'. But we don't live in Wicklow.

Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender, the sounds of another sad song fill the air. Anna Marie must be a woman's name, I decide, but I have no idea about this song. What does it mean? And why is he pretending? I pause to watch the merry-go-round. I wonder how it feels, going round and round in circles, sitting on a hobby horse?

'Step right up, step right up!' a man calls out in a high-pitched singsong voice, jingling some coins in his cupped hands. He wears a bag around his shoulder into which he puts the money he collects from selling tickets. 'Buy your tickets here for the wheel of fortune. Just a few more tickets left before we spin the wheel. See the lovely prizes. Step right up.' Now this is more interesting. I remain in the background as my mother suddenly appears from the crowd and buys some tickets. I inspect the prizes from a distance: soft toys, crockery, ornaments, vases ... things we don't buy very often as they are expensive.

Eventually, after all the tickets are sold, and with a great deal of drama and several pushes to build up speed, the man spins the wheel. It spins for what seems an eternity, then gradually it slows down, and the rubber marker makes a flapping noise and lands on three or four numbers briefly before going on to the next number on the wheel, while the crowd cheers or jeers depending on how close it is to their ticket. 'Number 13!' the man announces. I see my mother check her tickets and smile. She puts her hand in the air and steps forward to claim her prize. 'There you are, Mrs,' the man says in a loud voice, 'It's your lucky day!' and hands her a pair of China dogs. 'I never win anything,' she says, and laughs, shaking her head.

The China dogs sat in pride of place on either side of our mantelpiece for years, a reminder of the time the outside world came to our village.

A SHORT and PERSONAL WHEEL RIDE DOWN MEMORY LANE**Norah Dempster © 2023**

I don't recall the exact age of my grandson when his passion for wheels took over my life. He might have been three years old, possibly younger, what I do remember is the satisfaction he showed when he learnt the word wheel. I even remember the place. We were standing in the car park in front of the small apartment block where he lived with his mother. He pointed to the wheel of a parked car belonging to a neighbour and I obligingly repeated the word 'wheel' for him. His face lit up.

After that, looking for, and naming wheels became our regular occupation.

Before we got in our car for an outing he checked and named the four wheels. There are wheels everywhere, of course, which I had previously accepted as a simple part of life and with minimal interest. But then I learnt to notice them.

The wheels on lawnmowers, wheelchairs, road machines, trolleys, barrows, bicycles, trains at nearby Hampton station, and best of all the large steering wheel on the local bus became the purpose of our daily outings.

He never wanted to get close to them, he just observed them, said the word 'wheel'. My job was to stand holding his small hand nodding with appreciation.

And at night when singing him to sleep in my tuneless voice I regularly sang his favourite song, 'The Wheels of the Bus'. I think there may have been a small book, too, with the words telling us how these wheels 'go round and round all day long.'

This grandson turned 18 years a few months ago. His birthday was on a Sunday. On the Monday he got his driver's license without a hitch. He probably has forgotten how he loved looking for wheels, and naming them, when a small boy. But it certainly taught me what a brilliant and inventive thing a wheel is. And I learnt how they are everywhere.

BIG WHEELS**Joy Meekings © 2023**

People in high places are often called a Big Wheel
 Is it because they go round and round, don't care how others feel?
 Their money and position could help someone who's in strife
 In fact could assist many to have a better life
 Big Wheels are in a bubble, don't know reality at all
 Would never understand, be like talking to a brick wall
 They need to get a puncture so their life is put on hold
 Take them down a peg or two, no longer be so bold
 Would it make them become aware of good things they can do?
 Start looking at themselves from a different point of view?
 Doubt will ever happen, still a nice daydream of mine
 Bill Gates actually did it, one day others may step up and shine!