

Bayside U3A

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Offices: Beaumaris Senior Centre
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2024 TERM DATES

Term 1 29th January - 28th March 2024

Term 2 15th April - 25th June 2024

Term 3 15th July - 20th September 2024

Term 4 7th October - 13th December 2024

NEWSLETTER

December 2023



Beaumaris Office:

Monday to Friday

9:30am - 2:00pm

Brighton Office

Monday to Friday

9:30am - 12noon

FROM THE PRESIDENT

DAVID HONE



The creation of a Succession Subcommittee led by Sandra Groves has proved to be a great innovation which we should continue in the future. We now have a Vice President in Sue Steele who was endorsed by the COM at its last meeting. We also have several other people expressing an interest in taking up a role and joining the COM in 2024.

As you know we have wanted to have a Vice President serving as the President elect for some time and I am delighted that Sue Steele is taking on this role and will nominate to take over the Presidency in 2024. But it is even better that we look like having a Vice President who will then become President within two years. I know from Rotary, that it is a good idea to have a President Elect and a President nominee to ensure we always have a President who knows how we operate. With Sue Steele we will certainly have someone with a vast knowledge of our U3A. We have always intended the role of President to be two years, so I am pleased that we are heading in that direction.

I will also be asking the Succession Subcommittee to begin seeking members for our 2024 Committee of Management. If you would like to help run our U3A in 2024 please do not hesitate to contact me, Sandra or Sue.

The Bayside U3A continues to grow and prosper.

In addition to our numerous courses run by our wonderful tutors, we have had some outstanding special events. The 'Synergy' book launch which was organised by Cheryl Threadgold with the help of our Marketing, Membership and Events (MME) Subcommittee chaired by Warwick Harding, was outstanding. The MME have also been involved in the Speaker Program. Large interested audiences attended the David Karoly lecture on 'The Perils of Climate Change' and the former Senator, Margaret Reynolds spoke about her experiences as a member of the 'Hawke and Keating Governments' in the period 1983-1996. These events along with the Pre-Grand Final BBQ, have all been held in the Beaumaris Community Centre where our new sound system was very successful enabling all to hear the speakers. We needed to accommodate over 100 people at each of these events, so the Community Hall was our choice of venue! It is obvious that in the future we will use this venue frequently but it requires updating into a modern presentation Centre. We will be talking to the Council about how to achieve this.

I cannot finish this report without drawing your attention to the work of our office staff led by Chris Logan, the ongoing work of our Course Convener, Sue Steele, the behind the scenes work of our Secretary, Chris Birch and Sue Newton who edits this newsletter.

Next Monday we have our Volunteer's Cocktail Party. I hope to see many of our tutors and other volunteers in attendance so I can thank them for making our U3A happen.

2024 COURSES JUST LISTED

We are still receiving new course proposals. Here are four courses you may not have seen, listed after the 16th November: three brand new and two returning favourites.

24HEA002 - Energization Exercises

This new course is 'Exercises using the breath!' The full circuit of energization exercises includes 38 sets of exercises/postures. Participants will become more flexible by using the breath for a 'healthy body and mind'.

24HEA003 - Finding your Dance

A brand new 8 week course helping you to explore the elements of movement (time, weight, space, flow), discover your own preferences, and create your own individual and personal dance.

24HIS013 - Australian History

David Hone is returning to cover Australia 1929 to the 1970's.

24HUM015 - Treasury of Golden Era Movie Studies

Our latest addition. Join a group of Golden Era film lovers to view and discuss movies from the 30s, 40s and 50s.

24SOC006 - Day Trips

Back for its second year. Tours include: Ripponlea, Ballarat Begonia Festival, Heide and many more.

COURSE ENROLMENTS IN 2024

Don't forget - enrolment restrictions lift on the 8th December.

You can enrol in more classes if you wish.

BAYSIDE U3A IS CALLING OUT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Everyone who 'works' at Bayside U3A is a volunteer. We rely on our members to keep our organisation operating effectively, and to utilise their rich variety of skills and resources. Without the people who give their time freely, this organisation would not exist.



Volunteering keeps you active and connected and it feels great to give back - plus it can improve your health and wellbeing. *We are always looking for new volunteers and especially for people to lead or tutor classes. Currently we would love to find additional Balance and Bones, Qigong and/or Tai Chi tutors as two of our long term tutors have retired; and we really need some Beginners Language classes for our members such as French, Italian, Spanish or any language really.*

There are many other ways you could offer to help Bayside U3A. These include:

- Assisting in the office
- Assisting with events: eg Open Day, Speaker program, special morning teas by:
 - ⇒ Setting up and take down of equipment for special events.
 - ⇒ Assisting in the kitchen
 - ⇒ Arranging pick up and drop off of food, drink and equipment needed for events
- Assisting with marketing

Volunteering offers vital help to our Bayside U3A community, but the benefits can be even greater for you, the volunteer! Volunteering and helping others can keep you mentally stimulated and provide a sense of purpose as well as give you a fabulous social network.

Have a chat to a Committee member about how you could give some of your time to help Bayside U3A or call the office and register your interest.

We have included AAVOL: VOLUNTEERING in our Course Codes so you may go online and register your specific interest.

This will assist us to keep a record of those who have kindly volunteered and how we can utilise their skills.

Enrol online now or email: baysideu3a@gmail.com or call the office on 9589 3798

BAYSIDE COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RELIEF CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Bayside U3A have joined with **Bayside Community Emergency Relief (BCER)** to create a wonderful Christmas Raffle with amazing prizes!

Our charity this year - Bayside Community Emergency Relief - is a 100% volunteer-run, unfunded community-driven charity that empowers people experiencing hardship and tragedy. It mobilises the community to help provide requested emergency aid supplies when disaster strikes, helping thousands in need every year.

The raffle, which has been created via the Beaumaris Wine Appreciation Group, has been made possible by our local businesses and friends. We have been given the most generous prizes including wines, dinners, beauty treatments and many other items!

Donors so far include: *Red Bluff Cellars * Black Rock Cellars * Black Rock House * Bailey & Co Hair Salon * Studio Skin * Ventuno 21 Restaurant * BCER * Byrd Electric * Cerberus Beach House * Sustainable Soul.

Other great prizes to come! A full list will be available at the Bayside U3A office from Monday 4th December.



Tickets \$3 for \$5 (Cash only please)

Available at the U3A Office, Beaumaris



Prizes will be drawn on Thursday 14th December and winners will be notified by Tuesday 19th December 2023.

A list of the prizes will be compiled and as a number is drawn out, they will be allocated the next prize on the list.

Please give generously to this worthy cause.

BCER are there at times of great need, especially at this time of the year, when many are doing it hard.

Coordinated by Sally Mort

BAYSIDE U3A GOVERNANCE AND POLICIES

As reported in the October Newsletter under 'Bayside U3A Governance and Policies', the Model Rules and associated Policies are available on our website. Recently the Victorian Consumer Affairs Department updated the Model Rules.

The main changes cover updated language to reflect use of technology, new processes for disciplinary appeals, more options for appointment of a mediator during grievance procedures, and stronger disclosure requirements for a conflict of interest.

The Committee is reviewing the new rules and once adopted they will be uploaded to the website and members will be advised via the Newsletter.

Written by Chris Birch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BLISTER PACKS—NO MORE PACKS PLEASE



Thank you for the enthusiasm you have shown for the Blister Pack Recycling Program. Unfortunately, we have learned that it is for participating pharmacies' customers only as it costs the pharmacy \$178 to recycle each box! We were regularly filling the box leaving no opportunity for the customers' packs to fit, so they have asked us to stop.

THANKYOU for your amazing efforts and enjoy the fact that between us, we have saved about 20 bags of Blister Packs going to landfill! We have been enquiring about further recycling of the packs, but it seems everyone pays, even if we drive to Burwood to drop them off, the cost is \$25 per kg!

We will certainly keep investigating but in the meanwhile **NO MORE PACKS PLEASE!**

From Helen Redding

BALANCE AND BONES**Tutors: Jocelyn Besly and Sandra Ashton**

I think I speak for most of the Balance and Bones Tuesday and Friday zoom sessions in thanking Jocelyn Besly and Sandra Ashton for stepping in and helping out when Helene Redding was out of action and also when she was limited while healing. These sessions are so important to our mobility and balance that having these two people step up has aided in our continued strength and flexibility.



I would like to thank all 3, Helene, Jocelyn and Sandra for their encouragement and motivation to continue with the exercises and help us keep moving. It means so much that they give up their time to make us fitter. We are very appreciative and grateful for their help. Job well done!

Personally it has helped me pre and post surgery to achieve a better outcome in my mobility.

*Written by Joy Wood***PICKLEBALL****Tutor: Marianne Welton**

Over the course of this semester, the increased level of improvement in skills within the group, motivated our dedicated **Bayside Pickleball tutors** (David, Jill, and Dot) to introduce an element of friendly Round Robin competition run in the second half of each session. Many players were keen to compete in the Round Robin, which was played on two of the courts, while the remaining courts were used for social games.



Players	Carol & Kate	Marianne & Marlene	Paul & Jane	John & Pam	Anna & Sue	Time & Lst	Total
1. Carol & Kate		5	0	0	0		5
2. Marianne & Marlene	4		0	0	0		12
3. Paul & Jane A	1			0	1		5
4. John & Pam B	5	5	5		5		20
5. Anna & Carol	1		5	1			13
6. Lynn & Jill		4	5	1	4		14

It was pleasing to see newcomers to the sport, our 'newbies' from the waiting list in Term 3, among the winners of some of our Round Robins.

CRAFTY CONVERSATIONS**Co-Coordinator: Susan McCarthy and Alison Barnett**

Throughout the year we have shared photos of a selection of work completed by members of the Crafty Conversation group. But whilst hand stitching projects are the focus, we also enjoy great conversation, friendship and lots of laughs. It is a place to make new friends and to generally find the answer to any patchwork, knitting or crochet challenge that you might have. We enjoy being inspired by seeing all the completed items made by group members, especially the amazing and beautiful quilts that are produced. We are a supportive network of women, caring for each other especially in times of illness.

Some of the events and activities we have enjoyed during 2023:

- * The annual trip to Bendigo to visit the Art Gallery and The Bendigo Woollen Mills. Lunch together and the train journey are always a great time to get to know each other better.
- * 'Christmas in July' craft morning making Christmas decorations with some Christmas cake thrown in!
- * In August we celebrated WYPD (Wear Your Pearls Day) that gave us a chance to dust off our pearls to wear.
- * In November we celebrated the Spring Carnival with a rerun of the Melbourne Cup and of course, we were suitably dressed with hats or fascinators!

We will finish the year with lunch together for our last session.

But coffee catchups are planned during the summer recess.



SCULPTURE FOR PLEASURE

Tutor : Roy Bird



Dog Wire and Plaster Bandage
(by Adrienne)



Abstract Sculpture Mix media
(by Marion)



Sconce Concrete and Wire
(by Roy)



Figure Wire and Plaster Bandage
(by Jo B)



Mosaic Birthday Brick
(by Jo B)



BAYSIDE U3A MONTHLY BROADCASTS ON 88.3 SOUTHERN FM



PRESENTER : Pauline O'Brien

Every 4th Tuesday of the month from 3-4pm, Bayside U3A have a Community Hour on local Community Radio Station 88.3 Southern FM www.southernfm.com.au.

On Tuesday 28th November, Committee Member of the Bayside U3A, John Nurse, chatted to Pauline O'Brien about the Speaker Program to be held on Wednesday 29th November. The Speaker Margaret Reynolds was a Senator in the Hawke/Keating Government. (Pauline attended the Speaker Program event when Margaret was interviewed. Margaret chatted to the audience about that era and of course, the personalities in that Government. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the program which was very informative and quite a few laughs were had!)

John Nurse also mentioned that the 2024 course guide is now on the Bayside U3A website with lots of new courses. John spoke to us about the course that he will be running called: *The USA In A Critical Year*. John's program will be held fortnightly starting from Monday 29th January 2024 via Zoom from 1pm - 2.30pm. Of course, this will be all about the 2024 Presidential Election.

John and Pauline also chatted about how to access and enrol as a new or renewing member of the Bayside U3A. Information about how to access the website and options to attend the offices of the U3A including dates that they be open over the Christmas/New Year period, was also discussed.

DAY TOURS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2023

Convenor: Joan Gibbs

A good year with the Day Tours held twice a month. Our last Tour for the year is on 7th December to Heronwood Gardens, Dromana plus Westernport Bay and a winery.



Our first for 2024 is to the beautiful Blue Lotus WaterGardens, Yarra Valley on 24th January 2024.



Hope to see you in 2024. To receive information on all tours, please contact Joan on 0417 768 433 or email: joanlgibbs37@gmail.com

A Very Merry Christmas to all!

FRENCH CONVERSATIONS-BRIGHTON**Convenor : Marianne Welton and Faye Leader**

Semester 2 has been peppered with the return of overseas travellers and their accounts in French of some unique experiences overseas; Gillian - Italy, USA: Jan - Egypt, Jordan and France: Sue - Thailand: Edith - France, Switzerland: Anna – Italy: Dori - Ireland.

The highlight of Term 4 was the introduction of a unit entitled L'Art et L'Artisanat. Every fortnight, class members brought an art or craft object to present to the class. The brainchild of Faye Leader, this was yet another way of stimulating lively conversation in French. The choice of objects was varied, as can be seen in the photos. It was a very enjoyable and engaging project, so much so that we hope it will continue to be part of our French program next year.

It is also a fitting endorsement of how Faye has enriched the program in her final weeks as an inspirational French tutor for our U3A. We thank her for the time she has given so generously to promoting French in her inimitable way over several years and we look forward to her visits as a guest tutor in our 2024 program. Faye, on vous doit une fière chandelle!

Written by Marianne Welton

Coquillages bijoux
par Jan



Deux tableaux peints par ma mere
par Sue



Une coiffe pour une danse folklorique
par Marianne



Lapis Lazuli et l'Art
par Nirmala



L'histoire de ma courte-pointe
par Gillian



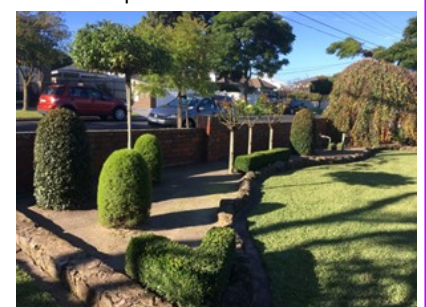
Mon ami le photographe, Pierre
par Anna



Souvenirs de Paris mode
par Carol



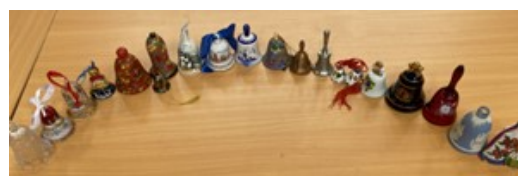
La Dame et l'Unicorne
par Gwen



L'aménagement paysager
par Keith



Mes appareils photo et mon art au fil des années
par Rhonda



Les cloches de Noël par Elena



Fromage artisan d'une recette ancienne
par Edith

LET'S TALK FRENCH**Convenor : Faye Leader****Une leçon extraordinaire!**

On 20th November our French tutor, Faye, organised a very special class for us. She lived for some time in France and teaches and entertains us with very interesting stories of some of her memorable times there. With her knowledge and experience, she led us through the French cheese producing provinces and wine regions.

So, at 10am on that Monday, we were sipping wine and sampling cheese at Bayside U3A! Faye organised all the fromages, laying them out on the table in tasting order. "How did the 2021 Riesling Domaine André Lorentz taste after eating the fromage de chèvre? Did the taste of the cheese alter?" Faye asked.

"Did you like the fromage persillé?" (Surprisingly rather than fromage bleu, this is blue cheese, named as it looks like parsley!) "How did it taste after the 2021 Côtes du Rhône, M. Chapoutier red? Which was your favourite cheese and why - le goût, la consistance, l'arôme?"



A very tasty, enjoyable learning experience was had by all the class!!

The Monday *Let's Talk French* class talking French over an end of year cheese degustation. We have been studying the various types of French cheeses, the making of cheese in France, the relevance of different regions and the regulations involved in the process of cheese making.

Thanks to the participants for their willingness to experiment with different appearances, smells, textures and tastes!

Joyeux Noël à tout le monde.

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL**Convenor: Claire Andrews****Last Meeting for 2023 and 'Request for help!'**

'Armchair Travel' is a friendly group which meets monthly at Beaumaris to share our travel stories, whether they are holidays, living overseas or trips around Australia.

After our last 'Armchair Travel' for 2023 we enjoyed an interesting round-table chat from everyone on their favourites destinations from their past travels, plus festive mince pies. Our discussions ranged from a studying trip at Cambridge University to backpacking around Italy and India.

And now a request for help, please....

We would love to have **travel tales from different people** in or outside of our group, being part of U3A or not. We ask you to speak for about 60 minutes, with some photos or images of the places discussed. I can provide you with help putting the photos together into a presentation on PowerPoint, plus setting up the laptop and projector. You do not need to bring any technology equipment.

We are also looking for a **convenor to facilitate the group from May 2024** onwards and, again, I am happy to support the handover with whatever may be required. If you think you might be interested or know of anyone who might be, please call the Beaumaris U3A office for a 'no obligation' chat on **9589 3798** or email me at: claire.bec.waters@bigpond.com

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

**BALANCE AND BONES, THURSDAY****Convenor : Janneke Casson**

A wondrous year comes to a close! Thanks to my enthusiastic Zoomers on Thursday mornings. I hope you all keep balanced and well over the Festive Season. Continue on in 2024 with strengthening your bones and doing your balance exercises.

My love and thanks to all, Janneke

HAPPY HOUR Convenor : Karen Hall

FRIDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2023



Another great turn up on a rare sunny Melbourne Friday evening with 36 members including several new faces and guests.

Congratulations to both Jim Maynard and Barry Podger for their RSL raffle wins!

Hope the lamb roast was delicious!

18 stayed on for dinner in a busier than usual bistro with the usual positive feedback received on the Thai fusion menu.



HAPPY HOUR

FRIDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2023

It was a wet and windy night with heavy traffic apparently due to Black Friday sales! It was wonderful to see more than 40 familiar faces and new members attending. 17 of us later enjoyed dinner in the bistro. Beginners luck for Joe Arnephy who won a bottle of wine in the raffle on his first attendance at Happy Hour!



Officially that was the final Happy Hour, however Karen will be at the Hampton RSL on Friday 29th December at 5pm if anyone would like to join her for a final toast to 2023 and/or dinner?

So, if you happen to be at a loose end and ready to party again after a big Christmas please do come along. Thank you everyone for your friendly support this year. I wish you a safe and happy Christmas with your loved ones.

If you would like to receive a reminder email closer to the day, please enrol in the Bayside U3A Happy Hour course for 2024 at

Course code: 24SOC004 Bayside U3A Happy Hour

Happy New Year everyone!



LET'S DO DINNER - OCTOBER 2023

Convenor : Karen Hall



Our first time at the NewBay Hotel in Brighton for our dinners in October. Surprised that we were booked outside in the very exposed beer garden (on a cold night), however the friendly staff quickly relocated us to warmer quarters inside.

Second night we were securely tucked up inside. Everyone seemed to enjoy their food. The barramundi was particularly well received.



Look at the size of the beef and guinness pie!

LET'S DO DINNER - NOVEMBER 2023

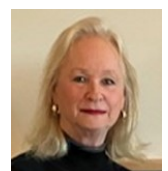
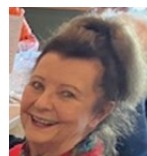
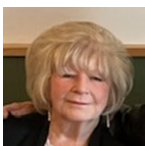


Smaller groups this month at Mordy HQ restaurant (Mordialloc Sports Club) in Mordialloc. Parking was easy, and tables were nicely spaced out which made it much easier to hear properly for a change. A very comprehensive (including Seniors) menu was enjoyed by all.

The final dinner for 2023 is on 2nd December at the Cheltenham Moorabbin RSL, Cheltenham

If you wish to be included on 2024 dinner invitations and reminders, please enrol in [Let's do Dinner - Course code: 24SOC003.](#)

Everyone is welcome!



BAYSIDE U3A WRITERS GROUP 2023**Convenor: Dr Cheryl Threadgold****BETRAYAL****Andy Payne © 2023**

40% of marriages end in divorce. How do the other 60% end?

Marion flicked through the pages of a magazine that lay on the waiting room table. She didn't pick it up, for to have done so would have signalled engagement, and she was not in the mood to engage with anything or anyone.

She caught a glimpse of herself in the neglected window on the far side of the room and adjusted the shawl she had bought at Liberty's on her last visit to London. 'Your husband may be leaving you,' she thought, 'but that's no excuse for sloppy dressing.'

One could have excused Marion for a lack of her usual sartorial elegance at this moment. She had been at the hospital for six days straight, a model of wifely devotion, dashing home fleetingly to feed the cat and fetch the clothing changes which now lay unused in Gerard's hospital bedside drawer.

He had not thanked her for her pains. In fact, he had said very little in the past thirty-five years. Always a silent man, often retreating into the metaphorical cave he used to shield himself from Marion's unswerving devotion. This time it was different, this time there was no temporary retreat into the man cave. This time he was not coming back.

Marion was seven years older than Gerard, and the actuarial expectation saw them dying at roughly the same time with sufficient funds to leave a not inconsiderable sum to their two adult children. Gerard's early demise was not part of the equation. At retirement he had agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to Marion's plans for world travel and the purchase of a smallholding where they would agist horses and indulge her passion for dressage.

Gerald's undisclosed cardiovascular anomalies and his reluctance to seek medical intervention of any kind had come as a shock to Marion. She had always viewed him as a strong, sensible, and dependable partner. His lack of emotional intensity had been a small price to pay for the stability he brought to their relationship.

Marion sat back in her chair. In a moment, she would return to Gerard's bedside and would remain there until his last breath had escaped him. She knew the time was coming, the pallor of his complexion and the rattle of his once-manly chest whispered his imminent demise.

In the waiting room, she rehearsed the sadness she would feel as the man she had loved for most of her adult life slipped quietly into another's arms, and she felt, in that moment, betrayed.

ROBERT**Lynette Payne © 2023**

Robert was always impeccably dressed in tweed suit, matching waistcoat and smooth cotton shirt. His appearance was dapper and, yes, respectable. Observing him, one would judge him a prosperous, successful and affluent businessman, a good family man, a father and provider. He lived in a modernist house with a large pool in the leafy streets of Turramurra on Sydney's North Shore. His sons attended Riverview College, as he had done, and rowed for Owen House, as he had done, along the quiet inner reaches of Sydney Harbour.

He married well. His wife, Valerie, was the daughter of a wealthy property developer who traversed the brown lands of western NSW in a light plane, gazing below for opportunities. Valerie collected fine antiques, French oak furniture and Victorian porcelain dolls. These sat glazed eyed on various beds and chairs, their lacy gowns carefully arranged to show delicate embroidery and white gleaming limbs. The family dined from porcelain plates and fine linen tablecloths. Robert drove a rather battered Bentley for his long business trips into the western hinterland of NSW and up to the northern rivers and the southeast corner of Queensland where the land was lush and fertile.

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous page...

He was my cousin on my mother's side. They were close, this aunt and her nephew, and he maintained frequent contact with her throughout her life. Robert owned and managed several avocado plantations and my mother frequently received large boxes of just-ripened fruit. There were other fruits as well, mangoes, paw paws and bananas, harvested from the productive activities that took up so much of his time.

As a child I frequently stayed with young Robert and his family at their home at Huntley's Point and watched him row past the house to the song of the coxswain and the splash of oars. While staying there, I took delight in the proximity of their home to the harbour's dark, waters, to their high beds with plump pillows, and to their servant named Bat. It was a privileged life, very different from my own, but I adored my cousin and his home on the harbour. Later, when he built his own house in Turramurra, he was geographically close to my family and he would call in with flowers for my mother or chocolates for his cousins.

His own money was augmented when Valerie's father was killed in a plane crash and she inherited the family wealth. I think that is when Robert purchased the avocado farms and installed the pool in the back yard at Turramurra. His business interests were certainly demanding and he spent a large amount of time on the road, visiting and checking his investments.

Over the years we lost touch as our lives took different paths. He travelled to my mother's funeral when she passed and we exchanged pleasantries as cousins do. Valerie had died some years previously after a long and drawn-out illness and Robert was still grieving for his wife. They appeared to have been a devoted and loving couple for many years.

The last time I saw Robert was on a visit I made to Sydney for a school reunion and a catch-up with family. He still lived in his Turramurra home and, although it was past noon, was still dressed in his pyjamas and dressing gown. He drank large amounts of Scotch whiskey while I sipped my tea from a porcelain cup. We chatted for hours. He showed me through his home, still decorated with Valerie's old oak furniture. The dolls still sat in their chairs, expressionless, watching the clocks, watching time pass, watching as the years passed. Nothing had altered since Valerie's death. The house remained fixed in time, a rather disturbing and eerie tribute to her memory.

A helpful carer made sandwiches in the kitchen and provided the on-going supply of whiskey. 'What do you do with your time?' he asked me. I told him of my interests and my activities. 'What do you do, Robert?' I asked. 'Me? Well, I just sit and reminisce,' he replied sadly.

When he died, just a couple of years later, I did not hear about his death for some weeks. His funeral was held almost in secret and his friends and family notified after it occurred. I was told about it in a letter from my cousin Francesca, Robert's younger sister. She expressed sorrow at her brother's death but also shock at some revelations that emerged about his life. Robert, she said, had brought shame upon the family. Throughout his marriage to Valerie, he had another relationship, a second common-law wife. Her name was Alison, she believed herself to be legally married, and knew nothing of the Turramurra family. She and Robert had a daughter, Charlotte, who was just a few years younger than his sons. Alison and Charlotte lived in the country near the NSW border, a region that had taken up much of Robert's time over the years. 'Shame on you Robert!' Franny cried. He had been tending to Alison and not the avocados!

But Robert, who we always knew to be a kind and generous man, was unmoved by Frannie's humiliation and her concerns and worries over events that never happened. Valerie never knew about the second wife and her North Shore friends were never aware of her betrayal by her duplicitous husband. 'I've been generous to both families,' Robert told his sister. 'I've supported them both over many years and I have made two women very happy.'

Heavens, who would have thought! I was full of admiration for him.

LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO –

(A RIFF ON THE AULD SCOTS BALLAD, 'EDWARD, EDWARD')

Margaret Boyes-Pringle © 2023

Why have you brought me to this door,
 Husband, Husband?
 Why have you brought me to this door
 And why so stern art Thee, O?

Oh, this is the door that I keep locked,
 Mistress, Mistress
 Oh this is the door that I keep locked.
 Now, ask no more of me, O.

But why would a room be locked from me,
 Husband, Husband?
 Why would a room be locked from me?
 What do you seek to hide, O?

It's the room where I house my secret work,
 Mistress, Mistress.
 It's the room where I house my secret work,
 Your presence I'll no abide, O.

But I would love to see your work,
 Husband, Husband.
 But I would love to see your work,
 Your Muse and Helpmate be, O.

My work is an acquired taste,
 Mistress, Mistress,
 My work is an acquired taste
 And not for the likes of Thee, O.

But we have vowed to share our lives,
 Husband, Husband,
 But we have vowed to share our lives
 With ne'er a secret between us, O.

Secrets give spice to the marriage bed,
 Mistress, Mistress,
 Secrets give spice to the marriage bed,
 Still, your innocence pleases me, O.

Then place the key in the chamber lock,
 Husband, Husband.
 Then place the key in the chamber lock
 And open the door for me, O ...

*He is stroking her hair, he is kissing her neck ;
 Tongue and blade seek the pulse in her throat.*

See the spurting of blood, see the glazing of eyes,
 Newly laid in his tomb of dead wives.