

ESSENTIALLY ELLIE – THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2019

Hullo Friends, Welcome to the end of year edition of Essentially for 2019 ! We have all enjoyed reading your stories of your classes / groups during this year , and we look forward to reading of your plans for next year, 2020 . This is the final edition of Essentially Ellie - as “the Remington Ribbon finally wore out !”

Yes, 1999 , was my first written attempt at telling everyone of our activities within our U3A Hawkesbury ; and look at how we have grown over the years ! I have enjoyed being in contact in this fashion, and being your Reporter of so many events .

And so , let's all read about our activities during 2019 , and your plans (maybe) for 2020 ===

ART Deidre Morrison

This class had a busy year creating a variety of art works. Starting with drawing a still life subject, later portraits & a kookaburra in pencil. With Pastels we also did a portrait & also an animal. We painted a landscape & also modern flowers with acrylics. We used collage with acrylics to create an Abstract Collage. Pen & wash of buildings in George St, Windsor was next. Then some watercolour Christmas cards & bookmarks. We finished with an enjoyable bring-a-plate Christmas Party. Thank you to all my lovely students for attending every fortnight. I'm looking forward to more creative projects next year to enrich our lives. Have a Happy Christmas.

BIRDS OF THE HAWKESBURY Ken Fraser

Group members report that they have really enjoyed the first year of our new birds course. During the year in the classes we have talked and learnt about approximately 80 different bird species and have enjoyed spotting about 50 different species during the field trips. With about 300 different species living around our area, we still have plenty to learn. We played our part, as “citizen scientists”, in the Aussie Bird Count in October reporting on species at Pugh's Lagoon, Richmond, and each month members have shared their personal sightings and interactions. Many members have said that they are looking at the birds in their gardens and in the bush with very new eyes, and that they have become much more conscious of the birdlife comings and goings. In 2020, new group members and “beginning birders” are very welcome to join, as the classes will cover similar content to this year. Experienced birders are welcome to participate in the field trips only, if they wish.

BOOK DISCUSSION Wendy Dunstan

We meet monthly and enjoy a friendly discussion on a variety of books that have been read. All genres are covered, many shared amongst our members or recommended from the library or community bookshelves in the area. The group now has a healthy number, but always room for more, My thanks to Ellie for supervising in my absence. Some books recently read and reviewed are
Breath , Tim Winton / A Question of Belief , Donna Leon / The Year of the Farmer , Rosalie Ham / Palace of Tears , Julian Leatherdale / Sixty Summers , Amanda Hampson / From Potters Field , Patricia Cornwall / The Happiest Refugee , Anh Doh / Blue Back , Tim Winton / Blue Lightning , Anne Cleeves / Khaki Town , Judy Nunn / The Au Pair , Emma Rous / Next , Michael Crichton / Breath , Tim Winton / The Clock Maker's Daughter , Kate Morton / Tis , Frank McCourt / The Silence of the Girls , Pat Barker / Listening to the Animals , (Becoming the Supernet), Noel Fitzpatrick / Noonday , Pat Barker / Moscow Sleepers , Stella Rimington / A Beautiful Mystery , Louise Penney / Tidelands , Phillippa Gregory / The Birthday , Carol Wyrer / Regeneration Trilogy , Pat Barker / The Big Sleep , Raymond Chandler / The Revolving Door of Life , Alexander McCall Smith / The Nowhere Child , Christian White .

CARD MAKING Suzanne Hinzmann

I hope everyone has enjoyed their year making cards and learning some new folds and techniques. Our class numbers were down on previous years and this allowed a little more talk to happen. Looking forward to great things in 2020.

CLASSICAL MUSIC APPRECIATION David Harper During this year we have covered the broad sweep of five centuries of classical music using Howard Goodall's “The Story of Music” as the basis. It has taken us from Bach to Stravinsky and (Classical Music , contd.) many places in between. We have enjoyed performances ranging from soloists to full symphony orchestras as well as ballet. Next year we shall continue to build on this foundation by looking at the lives and work of a selection of individual composers.

CROQUET Carol Boendermaker

All those who signed up for Croquet at the beginning of the year are absolute converts to the game. Croquet is such a fun game - lots of laughter as well as mentally stimulating and best of all, we're out in the fresh air and moving around!

This is a game for men as well as women; we already have a number of men playing, and thoroughly enjoying it – especially the tactical side.

We look forward to seeing some new faces on the lawns next year - just remember to wear flat rubber sole shoes, bring a folding chair and wear a sun hat.

DRAWING Laurie Forth

The last Drawing Class was held on the Friday November 1. We combined the two classes and had an enjoyable morning. The students had the choice of two subjects, a still life of a woman's head, hat and scarf, or an elephant. The students have made great progress and have proved that anyone can draw.

FICTION & CREATIVE WRITING Laurie Forth (please read 'Write Your Life')

FRENCH BEGINNERS AND CONTINUERS – Jean Pitkin.

The number of students in my *French Beginners* class this year has fluctuated for the same reasons as usually crop up – health, travel and family matters. Earlier in the year I tried to offer places in the class to late enrollees but even with some additional tuition it didn't really work and served to reinforce the fact that students do need to start at the beginning of the year in order to cope with the intricacies of a new language. One member of the class is planning to progress to Continuers in 2020 while some intend to repeat. For 2020 the format of this class will remain the same as it has proved to be successful over many years now. There are already at least five new students who have put their name down. I hope they will enjoy it as much as others have done in the past.

In the *French Continuers* class we managed to get to the end of the murder mystery “Suivez la Piste”. Lemaitre and his lady friend the Baronne de Bisson got their just desserts (death by the deadly virus and a car accident respectively) and Jean (that's John in French) and Catherine walked off into the sunset (shame there was never a sequel to this story!) I think that most of the class will be returning next year and I will probably spend a large part of the summer break trying to put together an interesting program for them. I do know that it will include some reading material on various subject matters and some work on aspects of grammar (I have threatened them with the subjunctive!) My proposed travel plans will not, I hope, interrupt things too much.

I wish all my French students and the wider U3A Hawkesbury community a 'Joyeux Noel' and happy learning in 2020.

FRENCH CONVERSATION Dianne Lanham

Students in the French Conversation Class (many have attended for years!), have worked well both in written work and conversation. Unfortunately 14th July celebrations were cancelled but an end of year gathering chez moi will see the champagne flowing. In 2020 we will continue through the next book and have more time for speaking in class.

(Thank you Dianne, for your hand written and posted report. Ellie)

GARDEN RAMBLE Kees & Ellie Engelen

Our gardening visits continue to delight the Ramblers! During this year the Ramblers have visited gardens at Bligh Park, Kurrajong, Maroota, Oakville, Richmond; our thanks to our hosts and hostesses. Mt. Tomah was the venue for the End of Year gathering.

Thank you to *Louise*, whose garden we so enjoyed in September. Thank you also to *Freda and Richard* who welcomed us to their acres, and orchids in October, another enjoyable ramble to complete the year of contented rambling around gardens.

We thank all our hosts and hostesses during the year for their hospitality, and also for their generosity when sharing their beautiful blooms as well as their knowledge.

Over the 18+ years of Rambling, friendships have been made, knowledge has blossomed (*couldn't help myself with that!*), and we continued to welcome new friends to come rambling during this year. Please come rambling, if you're thinking of it. Expertise is not necessary, as the Garden Guru (*Kees*) will agree, when he brings his non-gardener wife! *Kees & Ellie* are happy to continue leading the Ramblers; 1st or 2nd Mondays just wouldn't be the same without our monthly dose of Garden Guruical Gladness!

GENEALOGY Chesne & John Jones

Every year is special for the Genealogy Group however I think this year has surpassed all the others with work done by the group. One of the members is having mementoes of war medals done to give to her grandchildren for Christmas while another member has taken a cousin to see the original 1800's home built by an ancestor in the Colo/Lower Portland area.

They were able to take photos of the house which apart from a few minor alterations is still the same. This person also had a photo taken in the 1800's of a well which is still there.

Who said history is dead?

Thinking of joining in 2020 – we would love to see you and who knows what you might find.

LIFE WRITING – BEGINNERS & CONTINUERS Julienne Steward

Though the numbers in the classes were fewer this year, the stories told by those present were of great interest to the reader and listener.

(Thank you Julienne, for your hand written and posted Report . Ellie .)

LOOKING AT LITERATURE 1 Jan Brown

This year we were saddened by the loss of a dear member, *Pauline Sanders*. Everyone brings something unique to the group and it is our differences, as well as our common love of books and writing, that make our meetings special in so many ways. We have again visited classics such as Dickens, while also enjoying Australian authors both earlier and current including Mary Durack and Judy Nunn. For our final session we will read three short stories, one each by Herman Melville, Leo Tolstoy, and D.H.Lawrence, and attempt some comparisons of these. As we have missed some meetings this year for various reasons we find ourselves with a left-over subject on our list. So we will commence next year with an old favourite, Robert Louis Stevenson. We will leave setting the rest of next year's programme until we meet in February.

This will give any potential new members an opportunity to have some input into our agenda. Please note, we will be meeting at Hawkesbury Skills, room 2, on the 4th Monday, same time.

LOOKING AT LITERATURE 2 Louise McKean The group has read a variety of books in 2019 including works by V.S Napaul, Nevil Shute, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Raymond Chandler.

The discussions have been lively and informative. The members of the group have been kind and supportive as I have taken on the leadership of the group at a difficult time. We have started planning our agenda for 2020 and there are many interesting suggestions to consider when making the final list. We are ending the year with a discussion of Steven Carroll's novel: The Time We Have Taken. Following the discussion, we will be celebrating the end of the year at a local coffee shop.

MEDIEVAL HISTORY Jan Cousin My group has had another fantastic year; although we revised some topics, when deciding what to present, I often find little snippets that escaped my attention previously. To begin with - this year we looked at Wales and Edward 1st of England's subjugation of that Nation, his Castle building and the Language. Next was the Church and its hold on all aspects of life: followed in turn by the Crusades, Richard 2nd, Henry Bolingbroke with mention of Henry 'Hotspur', Law and Order, Entertainment, famous Battles including Bosworth and lastly, The Lady Margaret Beaufort, Mother of Henry Tudor who became King after defeating Richard 3rd at Bosworth. Finally, I would just like to say a big thank you to everyone who comes to my class, because, of course, without you, there would be no class; so Thank You All – MERRY CHRISTMAS everyone. See you next year.

MODEL MAKING Peter McHugh Another year of Model Making has finished. Some members have been productive and others, not so much. In any case, we have had a good time with lots of jokes and laughter. We hope to welcome some new members next year. No experience necessary.

PATCHWORK CONTINUERS B Stephy Beseau This year our group has experienced several health issues, all have now been resolved and ladies are back to work. This year is an outstanding year for donation of quilts. In November we will donate 21 quilts to the Richmond Women's Shelter. At our end of year luncheon which was held in the CWA rooms we also raised money to give to the Women's Shelter. Besides making quilts to give away we also made quilts for family and ourselves and I might add these were beautiful. Each 2nd and 4th Fridays each month sees women getting together to help each other and to visit, we are not a quiet bunch.

PATCHWORK FRIENDS Lyn Richardson The small group comprising Patchwork Friends has once again been gainfully employed in producing wonderful quilts destined for the Children's Ward of Hawkesbury Hospital. At the end of June the group presented 15 quilts to the hospital, and another 15 are ready for presentation prior to Christmas. As always our "resident designer" *Val King* is to be commended for her creativity, as is our happy band of quilters who bring the designs to life. While Patchwork Friends will enjoy the end-of-year break, we look forward to coming together to start stitching again in 2020.

PHILOSOPHY Douglas Craigie Our philosophy sessions hopefully challenged all, with the two fundamental questions, 'what do you mean?' 'how do you know?' to the fore. Interesting books were shared and read widely, with Rae being the main contributor. Seeking the best/relevant facts/knowledge, and employing it logically kept us entertained and surprised. It amazed me that we went cheerfully straight through our two hour sessions, into overtime. I presented for much of the year and then Sandra, Anne, Ruth and Donna lead sessions on philosophical issues and individual philosophers. We got a 'toe in the water'. Next year there will be a course in the area 'philosophy' with a new and exciting presenter. THANKS TO ALL, Doug Craigie

PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES Julie Wilson We are a group of members who enjoy photography as a pastime, but at the same time have a strong desire to improve the quality of our images. We meet twice per month, once at Bosworth Street for sharing and discussion of our own images, studying aspects of photography that may help to enhance our knowledge and skills, then the second session is an outing to get us out and about practising what we have been trying to learn and master. At the beginning of the year we concentrated our efforts on recognising qualities of appealing/competition worthy images. To enter an image into Hawkesbury Show was proposed as a possible aim. Our initial outings were planned around the Show themes. We went to Pitt Town, Rouse Hill Regional Park, The Secret Garden and then later on, Windsor, Hartley and Yarramundi Reserve. In September we regrouped, both physically and emotionally, after the tragic loss of our tutor, *Valerie*. Her presence, expertise and dedication are sadly missed. We are continuing our learning through identifying what knowledge and skills we want to develop and then plan topics and outings accordingly. In 2020 we have a change of name to "Photography Fun". Our main aim is to have fun through improving our photographic skills and knowledge which results in increased personal satisfaction. New members of any ability are more than welcome.

SHIBASHI Jeanette Hatch

Shibashi has had a very good year of gentle exercise. It was found that Shibashi 2 had moves that were more difficult or that they did not join smoothly so the group designed its own set, yet to be named, by choosing favourite moves and putting them together. I give a huge thank you to both *Margarete Formanek and Fay Cattell* who took the class at short notice when I was unable to attend. The group has quite a few male members who I hope gain something from the session. I am moving the class to Richmond Neighbourhood Centre in 2020; same time but less travel for some. I am sad to leave NRCC the staff of which are absolutely wonderful and who create a very welcoming atmosphere. Thank you to each member who attends and may your holiday period be restful and enjoyable. Finally, thank you. Ellie, for the time you have given to your Essentially Ellie Class Newsletter. Your input will be missed by many. God bless.

THE SOCIAL ART & CRAFT GROUP Jeni Chalmers

Once again we finish up with our traditional Christmas Party for the last class of the year. Our little group has experienced some ups and downs health wise for some members and we were without a convenor for a couple of months. Despite this it has been great to get together for a creative session every fortnight to chat, swap ideas and maybe even finish some projects! Speaking of which, the invitation to join the Blue Mountains U3A's End of Year Exhibition did prompt a certain member to finally finish a long term project - which won her a third prize. Not saying the incentive helped but it certainly didn't hurt. Our occasional card making sessions are still popular and have now been streamlined into kits which have proved very successful. This provides a relaxing afternoon and will definitely be on the agenda for next year on a regular basis. Wishing everyone a safe and happy festive season.

TAI CHI *Margarete Formanek*

It has been a beautiful year of Tai Chi shared with humour, some skill, and good will. The support and care has been very much appreciated and I look forward to continuing in 2020, as many have made fine progress during the year.

TATTING *Elizabeth Anderson*

We've had another great year enjoying our tating, We try not to spend too much time chatting. Dannielle had success at the local show, Great talent at tating we all know. Sheila is concentrating on new designs, When they work out she's on cloud nine. Jenny's tension is really great, Her pieces are always au fait. Wendy is learning to handle the shuttle, She's improving and now it's not such a struggle. We're all sorry to hear that Ellie is retiring We'll miss her interesting style of writing. A great job she's done for our U3A. Good health and happiness we hope comes her way. Thank you Ellie.

TRAVELLERS' TALES *Wendy Dunstan*

This group meets monthly and spend an interesting hour visiting places either overseas or somewhere in Australia. Many of these we have been to ourselves or would like to have visited, all are very interesting and accompanied by a slide show. Places this year have included China, Kimberley area of NW Australia, Tasmania, France and UK, Mediterranean, Outback Australia and cycling through Germany beside the river. We will finish the year with a trip to Southern Africa. My thanks to all who have made this such an interesting group. There is always room for more attendees and always more places to visit.

WATERCOLOUR ART *Julia Thorpe (Peter Caines)*

Our Watercolour Art class has met twice a month with our tutor, Julia, mostly on sick leave. Get well, Julia! Class enrolment has been stable at around eight per class. We have practised wet in wet and wet in dry works; landscapes, florals and seascapes. More adventurous students tried semi-abstract. Our group loves to chat and praise each other's work. Overall, a very welcoming group, keen to learn and experiment with new techniques. *(Thank you, Peter.)*

WRITE YOUR LIFE *Laurie Forth*

The writing classes suffered losses this year and the fiction class went into recess.

A new class Just Writing is offered for next year catering for all genres of writing.

The Writing your Life class produced some interesting memoirs and is offered again next year.

WRITING APPRECIATION *Robert Rudkowsky* { new for next year Writing For Enjoyment }

This year has by any measure been a very sad one . We lost two of our most engaged members .

Mike Watson passed away after a short illness. Mike was one of the original members of the Creative Writing Class started by *Beryl Kirkwood* . *Pat Berry* and myself are the only two left still in writing .

The other very sad loss was the accident that led to *Valerie Tabet* passing .

Valerie has been a member of our group for over ten years and was a brilliant writer in all facets of writing but the most exciting in free verse poetry .

Next year we will re focus on the enjoyment of writing . So if anyone from our U3A would like to enjoy writing you will be most welcome .You will be encouraged respected and made a part of a friendly group. .If you can tell a joke , tell a story, you can be a writer .Now a little note to our dear Ellie .

Ellie you have been a wonderful conduit to all classes and groups and we will miss you very much .Thank you for all those fantastic years .

..... and finally, folks here is an Oldie but such a Goldie

Dust if you must but wouldn't it be better to paint a picture or write a letter , bake a cake or plant a seed, ponder the difference between want or need. Dust if you must but there's not much time with rivers to swim and mountains to climb, music to hear and books to read, friends to cherish and life to lead. a flutter of snow, a shower of rain, this day will not come around again. Dust if you must but bear in mind old age will come and it's not kind, and when you go and go you must, you yourself will make more dust. A house becomes a home when you can write "I Love You" on the furniture.