



**STAY CONNECTED**  
CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER



**Welcome back to Volume 14 of Stay Connected**

Thank you once again for all your wonderful messages of support.

When I renamed our Central Office newsletter *Stay Connected*, I had a simple objective - ensure that we stayed in touch and positively interacted throughout these difficult and harrowing times. The response has been magnificent and our members awesome and supportive. As VP Public Relations it means so much to me. *Connect and Stay Connected* is now our official tag line and *Stay Connected* we most definitely will.

Keep your feedback coming. [vppr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:vppr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com) After Volume 13 I received over 40 positive responses. Many members "loved" the Sydney U3A 3<sup>rd</sup> Age Rock Orchestra. Other enjoyed meeting Laurie, our Facebook Editor, others just enjoyed the content.

Let's hope as we roll into 2021, we are able to resume more and more face-to-face activities. The good thing, probably one of the few positives that has come from the COVID-19 pandemic is that e-learning via Zoom will continue to be an additional forum for those of our members who, for whatever reason, cannot attend face-to-face. COVID has given our world a definite shake up and caused us to quickly move forward. Sydney U3A is embracing that movement - it can be an exciting time for all of us as we learn to adjust and harness the opportunities before us. Let's look at the positives and keep our great organisation strong.

Dianne Ekert VP Public Relations  
Sydney U3A

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**SHARING GROWING SOCIALISING**  
**PASSION**

**SYDNEY U3A CREDOS**

## **A COUPLE OF THE LOVELY EMAILS FROM OUR LOYAL MEMBERS TO SHARE WITH YOU - REFLECTIVE OF MANY RECEIVED**

Thank you for the newsletter and the video of the Northern Beaches orchestra. I loved it and was very impressed with the members. I would like to convey my appreciation and to wish them all the best for the future.

Kind regards,  
Rita Todrin

Dear Dianne,

Thanks for the last newsletter, sharing the wonderful work of some U3A members whose contribution has been pivotal throughout Covid19 difficult times thus enabling members to keep connected within our community. I've enjoyed U3A talks even more than in "past normal" times as we have access to other regions in Sydney which, otherwise I'd have missed had we not had the advantage of zoom, etc.

Congratulations to everyone in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age Rock Orchestra and in particular to Francis Buttle for his song "Having A Ball".

I'm so grateful for being part of U3A and very especially to you Dianne as well as to all those giving their knowledge, time and experience to make U3A the exceptional organization that it has become, including the many "unsung heroes".

With kind regards,  
Heidi Kleckin

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## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

Membership renewals are being sent out as they fall due. We ask that you renew by your due date so that our cash flow stays positive into the future.

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## **COURSES AND TALKS**

Visit our website's regional pages for details of face-to-face and Zoom courses and talks. Bookings are essential especially for face-to-face. Please do not just **"turn up"** as has recently happened in a few instances. We **must** observe NSW Health Orders including the four-metre rule and social distancing which means that we must limit numbers accordingly. Ensure that you wear your membership badge so that you are able to provide your membership number for the attendance sheet. We have a responsibility to ourselves, members of our U3A family and the community generally to observe NSW Health Orders to curtail the spread of the virus.

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## **COURSE BOOK CHOICE**

Remember to let us know your course book choice **by September 30**

Email [officemgr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:officemgr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com)

- Members who elect to access the course book online will receive the book free of charge
- Members who elect to receive a hard copy will be charged \$10 (2 books @ \$5 each) per annum **payable on membership renewal date**

If you do not respond by September you will not receive a hard copy, but a PDF

## What is Commonwealth Literature?

1. In general, Commonwealth literature is a vague term which defines English-language works written in the former British colonies or place which had the status of dominions.
2. 'Commonwealth Literature' is to promote the writing of those who might not get attention.
3. Also known as New English Literature, grouped together because of the underlying cultural history and certain recurrent patterns.
4. Commonwealth writers come from a wide variety of regions they win fame in the Anglo-American world because of their exotic setting and characters.
5. Commonwealth Literature is really an academic label. The exact characteristics of Commonwealth literature also remains debatable.
6. Recurrent motifs are misuse of power, exploitation and alienation as well as post-colonial society.
7. Commonwealth Literature is thus used to cover the literary works from territories that were once part of the British Empire.

### **SYDNEY U3A READERS FESTIVAL 2021**

**By Nora Hinchon**

**The English writer and newspaper columnist, A.A. Gill once wrote that he didn't see the point of the Commonwealth of Nations. He likened it to inviting all of one's ex-wives around for dinner and having to be nice to them.**

Did you know that Mozambique and Rwanda are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, formerly known as the British Commonwealth? They are the only two members that were not once part of the British Empire. Mozambique joined in 1995 and Rwanda in 2009. Both countries must have believed there were benefits in joining the other 51 member countries.

One of the characteristics of Commonwealth member states is the use of the English language. From October 2008 the Rwandan government decided that English would be the language used in all schools from primary to tertiary level. Mozambique was once a Portuguese colony, and Portuguese is still the official language, even though it is only a second language, spoken by about half the population. English tends to be spoken only in tourist areas.

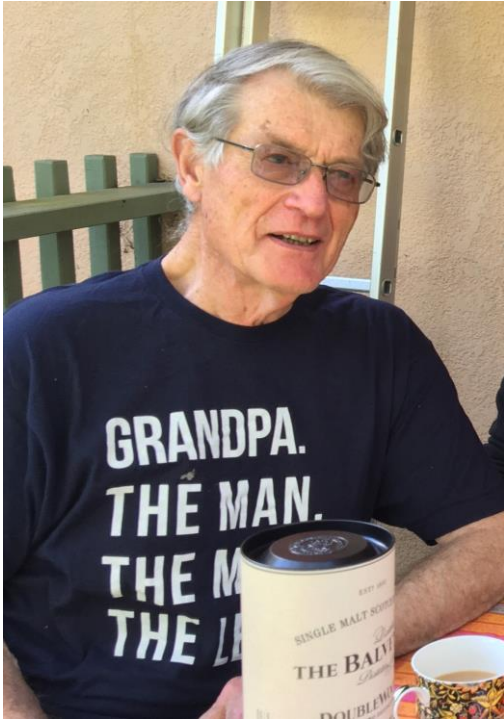
What do Mozambique and Rwanda have to do with this article? Nothing really - but there are a number of experienced U3A presenters who have been busy this year researching aspects of Commonwealth literature in anticipation of next year's very popular Readers Festival held annually as a three-day event at the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba. It promised to be a stimulating and interesting programme. The Festival is organized by Harbourside North, but it attracts followers from all regions in Sydney.

Sadly, the present restrictions of social distancing have led to the cancellation of the 2021 Readers Festival, as it had been planned. Many regular attendees of this event have already expressed their disappointment about the cancellation, and it would be a pity to waste the efforts of our stalwart speakers, so, just as we have seen businesses reinvent themselves during this year, there is quite a possibility that we will see a "reinvented" Readers Festival in 2021.

As Vera Lynn sang, "Don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day". So, watch this space in a future Newsletter for news about the Readers Festival.

## MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS

In this volume we meet Stuart Cumming. Stuart is the IT guru who manages U3A's computer system. Stuart has extensive IT experience across a range of industry. He not only provides technical services, support and know-how but also manages the on-line booking system.



**Stuart enjoying Fathers' Day  
with his family**

I joined U3A in 2011 in the "olden days" when the office ran the "Clubline" software to manage membership. I have worked with computers beginning at university in 1963, well before Computer Science degrees were available.

The hard word was put on me to join a dedicated IT team to look after the office IT systems, and when Sydney U3A decided to move from Clubline to a more flexible replacement, I ended up being the project manager for the choice and implementation of our current MyU3A system which went "live" in September 2016.

The system was chosen because it was essentially free (developed by volunteers), was web-based, allowed members to pay on-line, offered on-line bookings, and had been proven through years of satisfactory use by a large number of Australian U3As.

Association with this system has given me the pleasure of working with or meeting a large number of wonderful U3A members from central office, the regions, and of course IT volunteers. My other great pleasure is to get out on my bicycle whenever possible on a sunny day.

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### **Sydney U3A Inc**

ABN 32 251 810 797

Suite 10.2, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market Street Sydney NSW 2000

**mail@sydneyu3a.org sydneyu3a.org 9267 9056**

**facebook.com/sydneyu3a**

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Produced by Dianne Ekert, Published by Stuart Cumming

Feedback welcome to **vppr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com**