



SYDNEY **u3a**

learn laugh live

thePulse

JULY 2024 | ISSUE 4

eZine of Sydney u3a Greater West Region



GET ACTIVE

Winter is the perfect time to join our active energetic physical activities . Give it a go.

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In this Winter issue, we have some great contributions from several members, which is always so special.

Just a thought. If you have been travelling, why not share your travels with us in **History and Travel**. Our members love this monthly session. Contact Karen:

karenpaterson@optusnet.com.au and let her know of your interest.

Enjoy Issue 4. If you really find one of the contributions fascinating, let the writer know. It would mean a lot.

Linda
~ Editor thePulse

Congratulations Anne

The King's Honour list had a wonderful surprise for one of our stalwart members, Anne Stanfield. Anne was awarded a **Member (AM) in the General Division** for significant service to St Vincent de Paul Society.

At our recent **Book Club at The Phive**, we had the honour to listen to Anne tell us the history behind her service in various positions in the St Vincent de Paul Society, other social welfare organisations and volunteer work in the community.



Anne Stanfield AM

Replica of medal to be awarded later this year.

Book Club Leader Judy McShane presenting Anne with a gift from the Book Club

This well-deserved award acknowledges Anne's generous commitment in the St Vincent de Paul Society (NSW). Anne has been a member of the Society for nearly 30 years. Currently, Anne is a member of the Society's Winston Hills Conference, having previously served as President of the Society's Parramatta Central Council.

A background in employment and training, Anne has held senior management roles in government regulation and customer service. Some of her roles over the past years have been:

- Director of the Society NSW Board
- Chair of the Service Quality and Safety Committee
- Director of the National Redress company of the Society
- Director of the Society NSW Housing Company
- Chair of the Society NSW Housing Audit, Risk and Finance Committee
- Central Council President (Parramatta)
- Conference member in Western Sydney

A very humble lady, Anne acknowledges that many other volunteers help her in her role

Tuesdays at PHIVE

What a semester this is turning out to be. Tuesdays at PHIVE has been well worth the travel to Parramatta Square to be engaged in such wonderful research and presentations from our Sydney u3a members. And how good are they to put together such inspiring stories about adventures, history, science and more. ~ Editor

Secrets behind the Songs in SHOW BIZ

In June, **Graham Spindler** gave a very energetic presentation on **SHOW BIZ**. Graham leads a course **Behind the Lyrics** for Sydney u3a. The stories behind the chosen songs surprised and, at times, stunned us. Whilst his presentation had us swinging away and having a few laughs, many of us could feel tears as he shared some special stories. Thank you, Graham.



Phil Slattery (host) with **Graham Spindler** (RHS)

I was prompted to develop a course that incorporated my love of the history of songs. It began when I bought some old CDs at Vinnies, which had the original versions of *Anything Goes* and *Putting on the Ritz*, amongst others. When I played them, I was surprised to hear that the lyrics were quite different from the songs I knew. I had to find out why, and that started the 'Behind the Lyrics' series." The songs chosen from Showboat, South Pacific, Porgy and Bess, An American in Paris, the Wizard of Oz and The Lion King all turned out to be controversial. I will share just a few intriguing points:

- **The Wizard of Oz's** *Ding Dong the Witch is Dead* became a death wish for British PM Maggie Thatcher and a celebration after her death
- **Billy Elliot.** *Merry Christmas Maggie Thatcher* kicks off the second act set during the 1984-85 coal miners' strike.
 - *Ding Dong the Witch is Dead* (**Wizard of Oz**) was also threaded into **Billy Elliot** as an attack on Thatcher
- **Porgy and Bess** - authors made it mandatory that African Americans were brought into lead roles.
 - Cast refused to sing at National Theatre in Washington unless management *desegregated* the audience (1937).
 - when show was initially produced overseas (Denmark & Switzerland) white actors in 'blackface' were used.
- Both songs *Anything Goes* and *Putting on the Ritz* had to go through full rewrites
- Elsie de Wolfe, known as Lady Mendl in **Anything Goes** had a daily regime - even up to her 70s - of yoga, standing on her head, and walking on her hands. She had a scandalous predilection for performing handstands/ cartwheels in public. In the musical, these lyrics capture her "When you hear that Lady Mendl standing up, Now does a handstand landing upon her toes, *Anything Goes*".
- **South Pacific** - a direct shot against racial bigotry
 - the song *You've Got to Be Carefully Taught* received criticism as too controversial/ inappropriate for the musical stage. Song is preceded by a line saying racism is "not born in you! It happens after you're born..."
- *Our Love is Here to Stay* from **An American in Paris** was written originally by Gershwin as a tribute on the death of his brother, George.
- Singer Paul Robeson's *Old Man River* originated as an upside-down version of **Show Boat's** opening number, and was then sanitised over time, especially its original and infamous opening verse.

Rhythm of the Dance & Line Dancing



Rhythm of the Dance & Line Dancing

is an energetic class held weekly on Wednesday afternoons. Perfect way to strengthen your balance **AND** improve your memory skills.

Bookings: Carol Limbo
carohlinaalbina@gmail.com

0421 618 081



"Good teacher with friendly ladies who are keen to learn."

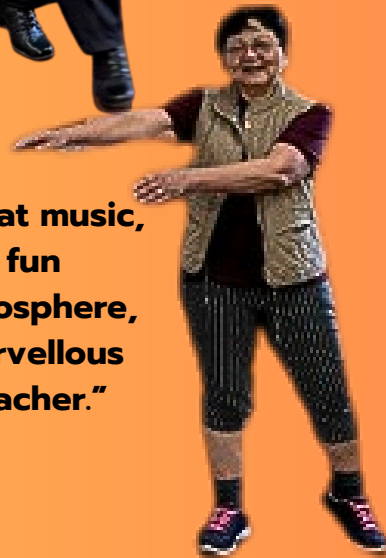
"Best day of the week!"



"Love to have Bobbie as our teacher. We have a lot of fun and joy together, beautiful music."



"Great music, fun atmosphere, marvellous teacher."



"It's the complete package - movement, music, laughter, grace, social connections and friendships and brain training."



Con Bugden presented the **Evolution of Modern Humankind** for the **Castle Hill Discussion Group**. He will present this again at a Tuesdays at Phive session in 2025. Here is a short overview concentrating on just one aspect of his presentation - evolution of hominins – and how we homo sapiens won the race. So far!!

Hominins vs Hominins: And The Winner Is?

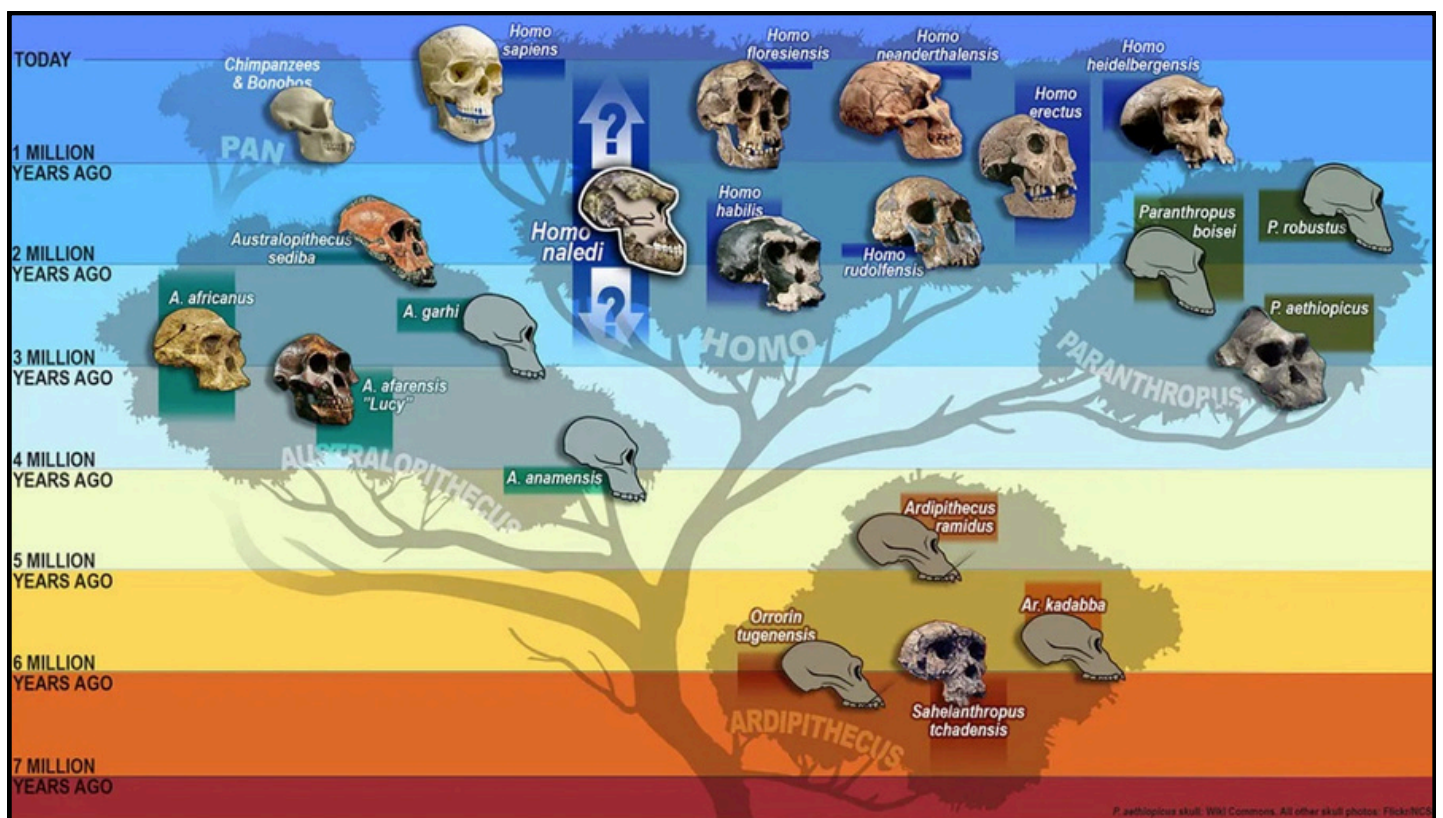
~ Con Bugden

There was a continuous extinction of several hominin species until we became the species that kept evolving – was it our sociability? our change in what we ate? our movement from four-legged to two-legged? our expanding mental capabilities in knowing we can control (perhaps) our future?

Although not the first humans, **HOMO SAPIENS** came to replace all other human species on Earth. Human beings first stepped onto the world stage about 2.5 million years ago. Back then we were not so special. We were just another animal. Our environmental impact was no greater than the parrots, the cheetahs, or even the jellyfish.

Sure, we had **large brains**, **walked upright**, **used tools**, and were **highly social** - but we were not the only ones. So let's have a quick summary of the hominin species - after the bonobos (**make love, not war**) chimpanzees stepped aside. There were over 10 or so hominin species - some of them have cheeky nicknames:

homo antecessor (**pioneer man**) homo luzonensis (**ubag/pygmy?**) homo erectus (**hiker**)
 homo denisovans (**dragon man**) homo neanderthal (**thinker**) homo naledi (**gift/star**)
 homo heidelbergensis (**hunter**) homo floresiensis (**hobbit**) homo habilis (**handyman**)
 homo rudolfensis (**stranger**) and then there was US! - homo sapiens (**wise man**)



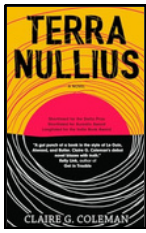
Which hominin species did *our* species finally push back? It's a common misconception that homo sapiens, the last species to step onto the scene, evolved linearly from earlier human species but early **homo sapiens existed simultaneously with at least six to nine other species of humans!** How lucky we were that our species continued to evolve and we became ... well ... the only human species on Earth alive! Now why is that?

Considering **NAIDOC** celebrations, I would like to share a few stories that give a fictional, yet important, aspect of Aboriginal history over recent and historical times. ~ **Judy Buhagiar**

Let's Read

Terra Nullius

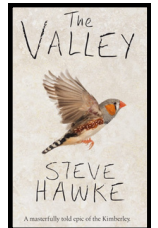
Clare Coleman



What a powerful book! And not what you expect! Another allegorical novel by Coleman, I was so impressed by her earlier novel *The Old Lie* and this is just as good. It is hard to say much without spoiling the plot, however, it does present the horrors and oppression that follow an invasion, giving a new perspective to our Australian history. Coleman includes characters that realise the wrongdoings and want to act as decent human beings, not simply follow cruel orders. Throughout history, these people were often neglected.

The Valley

Steve Hawke

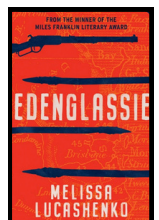


I enjoyed this book despite the challenge of following the many characters. Thank goodness for the inclusion of the family tree diagram and for portraying authentic characters with their faults and strengths. The importance of Aboriginal culture and family were beautifully depicted. Descriptions of the locales brought the book alive. *"A murder in the remote bush in 1916 sparks a chain of events that will haunt a family for generations. When, a century later, Broome schoolboy Dancer falls foul of the local bikie gang, he and his father head up the Gibb River Road. Here, in a maze of rugged ranges and remote communities, Dancer begins to unravel the truth behind the mysterious disappearance of Milly Rider, the mother he never knew."*

Edenglassie

Melissa Lucashenko

Wonderful! Amazing! Brilliant! And so engaging. A well-researched novel, it conveys the impact of colonisation on the Aboriginal mobs who called Edenglassie (Brisbane) home. We feel their anger, frustration, despair, and acceptance of losing their homes, food sources and access to *their* way of life, but also their joy and hope as they dream of better things to come. Dual timeline narrative, it is interesting to compare the contemporary perspective.



That Creative Moment

The challenge for the **Our Words Creative Writing Group** was: Choose one word and write whatever comes into your head about the word, e.g. something it reminds you of; someone you think of when you hear the word; an emotion it makes you feel.

The diverse list of words included: mushrooms, gorgeous, telephone, shout, fur, never, lying face down

Give it a go!



Lerle Craig's response was a delightful (and clever) surprise.