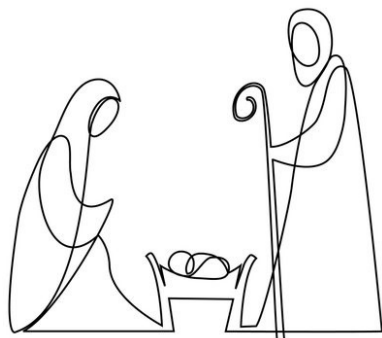


Open Door

6th December, 2023

to healthy minds and healthy bodies



Contact Details

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Armidale Incorporated**

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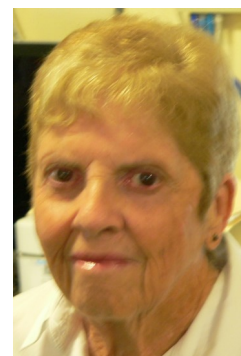
NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

1st February 2024

Please email contributions to
Dorothy Barnes
dkbarnes134@gmail.com

From the Desk of the President — Sue Cameron

Early in November, Adam Marshall and Steve Austin officially opened our most welcome renovations. Once again, our thanks to Adam for supporting our Grant Application, which made the work possible, and to Steve for his advice and encouragement. Over 30 members joined us to celebrate and socialise over morning tea. Thanks also to our builder, Paul Marquardt, who made every effort to safely ensure that continued use of ASCA House was possible during the renovations, which he carried out with a minimum of noise and disruption.



President, Sue Cameron and Treasurer, Doug Barber with Hon. Adam Marshall MP at the Opening of the ASCA House renovations.

As we come to the end of 2023, not only must we give a big vote of thanks to Penny and Doug, who so effortlessly and efficiently drive the office, but also to the many members who generously offer up their time to act as Course Leaders and Office Staff. I would take this opportunity to remind everyone that Armidale U3A runs completely on "voluntary labour", without which we could not operate.

Next February we will be conducting our AGM so, hopefully, some of you will consider putting yourselves forward to serve on the Committee which meets once a month. The work is not onerous, we just need your enthusiasm and ideas.

It was with great sadness, that we said farewell to our dear friend Marnie French, who died unexpectedly in November. Marnie offered her service to both the Committee and office. She will be greatly missed and we extend our sincere condolences to Bob and all her family.

We end this year on a very positive note however. We have been offered an extremely generous donation towards continuing our renovations, particularly in fixing the roof problem which has plagued us over the years every time we receive heavy rain. We hope to start work on this in the New Year. I have just been informed that we have been successful in our application for a Grant from Transgrid to upgrade the office and general use chairs. *Thank you Ros Busby for alerting us to the opportunity!*

We have had great response to our early enrolment policy with 218 new and continuing members joining. We are particularly pleased to see younger people signing up.

Wishing you a safe and happy Christmas with your families and friends. We look forward to seeing you in Semester 1. Please note that the office will close from 12 noon on Wednesday 13th December 2023 and re-open at 9.30am on Monday 8th January 2024.

Sue Cameron

BOOK REVIEW

THIN AIR by Ann Cleeves

This author has become well known following the television series of "Vera" and the "Shetland Series" of stories featuring the detective Jimmy Perez.

"Thin Air" is one of the Shetland series of books and gives a wonderful picture of the Shetland Islands. The descriptions of the coast lines, the encroaching sea, the cliffs, the clifftop pathways and the dense fogs are beautifully portrayed and it's easy to imagine the boats and ferries that ply the coast as well as the planes that fly from various places.

Into this atmospheric setting, six University friends arrive from London to celebrate the marriage of one of them to a local Shetlander. Late on the wedding night, one of the visiting girls goes missing. Detectives Jimmy Perez and Willow Reeves investigate this disappearance into "Thin Air". Prior to this happening there were tales of a ghost of a girl who drowned in the 1920s. Alleged current sightings of the ghost are woven into the story.

The characters are all well portrayed, and come across to the reader as real people. Jimmy Perez is enigmatic, often separating himself from the others to think out the possibilities of the case. His immediate boss, Willow Reeves, is more impatient and wonders how Jimmy divines things so easily. Sandy Wilson, the other police person involved is keen for Jimmy's trust and spends time carrying out his jobs with care. The six friends from London are also well defined and their various personalities take shape over the time of the investigation.

The author provides us with a superb sense of place and its geographical isolation adds to the ominous feeling when a crime is committed. However, I found the denouement disappointing. Despite this it is an interesting and well-written book.

Recommended as a good read especially for a plane or train journey.

Marnie French (16/08/1938 - 16/11/2023)

Marnie French was a faithful contributor to the Open Door and rarely missed sending at least one Book Review. I greatly appreciated her support. Ed.

PARLES-TU UN PEU FRANCAIS?

I am very pleased to advise that we have a volunteer to facilitate a *French Refresher* course in Semester 2, 2024 (on a Wednesday or Monday morning)

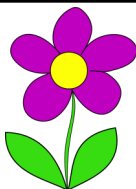
Did you learn French at school (decades ago)? Are you interested in being able to function on a visit or when you meet French speakers? The course will be a revision of all you used to know! It will be based on situations you may encounter and what vocabulary and grammar you need and French for non-beginners in 2025, the year after next.

This year we will try to have real life conversations, read simple texts and deepen our knowledge of how to use French. We will use games to help.

To enable planning and preparation by the facilitator, please advise the office (either by telephone 67722752 or email u3aarmidale1@gmail.com) if you would like to join the *French Refresher* course.

Penny Nicholson

A very big thank you to our dedicated gardening group as all the ASCA House gardens are looking just so lovely including the side garden which needed remediation and replanting after all the plumbing works.



The 2024 Legal topics for seniors diary

will be available from 1st December 2023. Pre orders are open on 1st November 2023. It contains essential legal information for older people, including scams, neighbour disputes, consumer rights and owning and renting your home. You can order a free copy by going online at [Order a publication \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/order-a-publication)

CROQUET ANYONE?

Looking for a way to increase your steps, get some fresh air and have a few laughs? Come along to croquet on Thursday mornings at The Uniting Court (formerly Autumn Lodge) Butler Street and learn a new sport. It's a game that is quite easy to learn but has lots of strategy and different skill levels. Learn as you play, enjoy some good company and join us for a coffee afterwards. Only \$2 a game and we have all you will need to play.

On Monday, 15th January 2024 at 9.30 we will hold an "open morning" for any U3AA members/or intending members of U3AA, who may be interested, to come along, meet the current croquet players and see what is involved in learning to play this great game!!

Contact Helen Garske on 0493 059 928

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE RENOVATIONS TO ASCA HOUSE



Photo top left:
President, Sue
Cameron
welcoming
Member for
Northern
Tablelands, Adam
Marshall and
U3AA members
to the Opening.



Top right: A
group photo of
attendees looking
well-pleased with
the improvements
to the building.



Middle right:
Member, Steve
Austin had the
honour of cutting
the ribbon to
officially open
the building.



Bottom left:
Hon Adam
Marshall M.P.
congratulating
members of
U3AA on the
completion of
the long-awaited
renovations.



Bottom right: a
photo record of
the progress of
the building
works was
displayed for
perusal during
morning tea.

Please support our sponsors:

2AD, 2ARM-FM, Armidale City Bowling Club, CGA Country Glass and Aluminium, Chris Ferris, Armidale Horticultural Services (0458474035), Home Nursing Group, NECOM, New England Foot Clinic, New England Travel, Newling Gardens, Oak Tree Retirement Villages, Regional Australia Bank, SportUNE.

**For further information sponsors' websites can be accessed from the U3AA website
www.u3aa.org.au**

For the very first time in my life we are not giving presents this Christmas. It has happened without demur and a general sigh of relief. The kids have grown up, there are too many of us and actually we don't really want more stuff.

As a family we are considered very lucky. We don't have to read all that advice that life counsellors shell out about how to cope with the disjunctive rels who turn up for the festive season and make everybody's life anything but festive. A bit of the old Dimboola there.

But we, thanks to the example of our parents, just love being together. That's quite enough and this year we are over doing it as just about everyone will be there and much eating and drinking and chatting will flow. The chatting, the piss-taking, mockery and laughter just happens when we get together. For the oldies of us this is enormous fun but for those less resilient it gets a bit much and boring. I know they secretly laugh at us and wish for slightly less gratuitous exuberance.

Christmas has always been special for our family. Perhaps it is because we were brought up in the bush and in my case brought up our children in the bush. I remember when we moved from Paddington to Deepwater in the early seventies just before Christmas our six-year-old daughter was terrified Santa Claus would not find the place.

For many years the farm became the place of yuletide pilgrimage for the family as there was always lots of space and lots of things for kids to do. In addition, we had our own meat, eggs, milk and vegetables. At that time, I was playing the role of earth mother as there were not too many other challenges in such a remote spot.

The pantry bulged with bottled fruit and plum and blackberry jam. I made two loaves of stoneground wholemeal bread almost every day and they disappeared so fast it was really what they call in the economic sphere a zero-sum game. But conviction is all and the abundance was enchanting as well as exhausting. As we did not have a lot of money we compensated with food, fun and laughter and have always done that.

Not that our family Christmas dinners always went without drama. Of course there were the great faux pas, especially from in-laws who did not get the schtick. But these are stored away in the memory box to be revived with some laughter and disbelief over the years. I remember our daughter swallowing a silver sixpenny in the Christmas pudding and my father-in-law exaggerating the dire consequences. She ran hysterically screaming to her room and would not return to the table under any circumstances. Some of the other stories are unrepeatable.

I actually think Christmas is magic. As a child, I remember the pulsating eagerness to wake up on Christmas morning to open the pillow case full of Santa presents. It was the same with our kids. They would run into our bedroom with their sacks showing us with amazement what had suddenly appeared. It is an intrinsic need in humans, I think, to believe in magic, abundance and loving companionship. That's what Christmas is about to me and always has been, especially this year as we don't have to shop for presents.

Join us to launch the new bus services for Armidale.

Monday 11 December 2023 11am to 2.30pm Beardy Street Mall



Pick up a copy of the new timetable and see where the new bus services go.



Free coffee and giveaways!



An improved public bus network will be introduced to Armidale and Uralla from 11 December 2023. The better bus network will include:

- More services for North Hill and South Hill
- Improved connections to Armidale Hospital
- Better connections onto services for UNE
- New Sunday and Public Holiday services

There are now simpler and easier to understand timetables, more weekday services, and new services on Sundays and Public Holidays to connect you more reliably to where you need to go.

That includes 37% more services in North Hill and South Hill, with 23 additional bus services every week. Armidale and Uralla will also be better connected to key destinations including Armidale Hospital, UNE, Armidale Station and Armidale Airport.