



U3A Northern Illawarra Inc A Bridge to Learning



Newsletter No. 73

Editor: Ainslie Lamb

20 April 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are still coping well after a month away from face-to-face U3A. It's unclear from the different messages from Federal and State governments and Health Advisers just how long the present situation of social distancing and associated restrictions will be expected to last, so we need to ensure that we keep our morale up and stay connected. Joan is putting pics up on our Facebook page – if you would like to contribute something of what you are doing at home to keep busy, contact Joan (jonicat7@gmail.com).



*Anzac Day 25 April
Lest We Forget*

Some of our groups are still working well together through email. Wolfgang deserves special commendation for his regular emails sending items of interest to his Current Affairs group members. Brain Games and Reading Aloud has also provided some interaction.

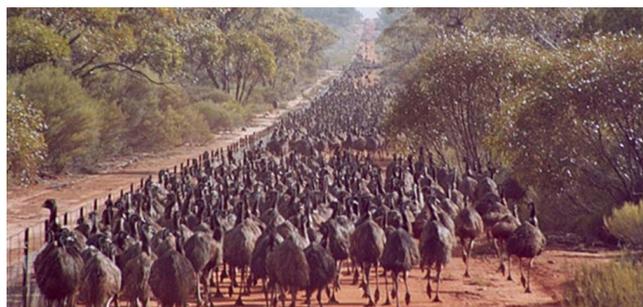
Some of our book U3A clubs are now using Zoom to conduct their discussions, as is the Film group. So the Committee has invested in a one-year subscription for Zoom (no, it's not a concession that the lock-down will last that long, just the option available to us) to enable them to do so. This means that Zoom is also available for other special interest groups to use, which would encourage actual discussion. It would be well suited to the Current Affairs, Philosophy, Australian Studies, Arts Hub, Reading Aloud, Italian Conversation and Stanwell Park groups. It's an opportunity to talk about something other than COVID19. It will also be available after the lockdown is lifted (whenever that is) for groups which may wish to continue with it, and during recess (school holiday) periods at least until next January.

If you are interested in using Zoom, discuss the idea with the co-ordinator and other members of your special interest group. On pp.2-3 you will see how Zoom works. You will need to specify the dates and times you want to use it (probably the ones you would have used if you were coming to the usual venue). Your co-ordinator will also need to contact our VP Development, Sue Rejske, to make the necessary arrangements for access to the Zoom account.

Take care, stay safe and stay connected.

Ainslie

*What's this? Emus on the march?
See p.5 for details.*



How Zoom works (by *Grame Eggins, U3A Northern Rivers*)

The U3A leader (called a host) registers with Zoom and books a virtual room at a convenient time and date. It is much the same as booking a reception room in a hotel for a wedding.

To minimise confusion, tutors may prefer to schedule online meetings at exactly the same time and day of the week as the real meetings have been held pre-Coronavirus.

The host then sends an email inviting students to attend and giving them a link to use on that day. When students click on that link they are prompted to download Zoom to their own device if they have not already done so.

Next, the student's screen changes to reveal a chequerboard of rectangular windows containing a live view of all the students so far assembled.

As more students log in, the programme automatically reduces the size of each person's screen so that each become progressively smaller.

On most tablets, some participants will be moved to the next screen so that individual's faces don't become too small.

Alternatively, each viewer can choose a different view, say of the speaker of the moment taking up two thirds or more of the screen and a film strip of views of everyone else rolling across the top.

Everyone attending can see, hear and talk to all the others.

You can imagine the shambles if you have a class of say 15 people with everyone talking or gesturing at once. Luckily the meeting host has power to switch off all or individual microphones if they think the meeting is becoming chaotic.

Meetings don't have to be visual – you can have audio-only chats.

It doesn't matter if you are using a desktop, a laptop, a tablet or smart phone, Zoom will work for you. It runs on the Windows and Apple operating systems, plus Linux.

It is comparatively stable. If a student is on a poor Internet connection, they can cut their video link and just listen in and comment.

Pros and cons of Zoom

Pros include:

- Easy to use and join. Get Zoom apps for portable devices through Google Play or the Apple App Store. Download desk/laptop versions from ***zoom.us***
- Suits both NBN and ADSL2 connections
- Ability to send text messages and to all or just one or two of your fellow students
- Exchange files and photos with others during meetings
- Zoom allows participants to drop in a background of their choice. Some of the more elaborate backgrounds Zoom offers as a default can cause screen distortion if participants hold up an item to show to others online.
- Zoom offers much helpful information online for hosts and participants. Access Zoom's training Webinars on <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360029527911>

Cons include:

- The internet may be intermittent. By the end of March *The New York Times* reported that the volume of messages sent via Facebook and Instagram had grown more than 50 percent in countries that ordered people to stay home amid the coronavirus outbreak. Providers are rushing to add extra capacity.
- Zoom and similar programmes may deplete batteries in some tablets and smart phones quite quickly. Plug into mains power if possible.
- People with slow/intermittent Internet connections may experience problems. Uses may counter by shutting down unnecessary apps/tabs/open sites in browsers to maximise download speed. A personal hot spot may be used but can be expensive.
- Smart phones are fine but older people usually prefer looking at larger screens
- Zoom has been criticised for sloppy programming leading to security and privacy problems. The company has switched all its resources to fixing these ASAP.

The Australian Cyber Security Centre urges video conferencing hosts to protect against hackers and online pests.

Hosts can do this by:

- Telling students to be aware of their surroundings to accidentally broadcast private or sensitive details in their background. Use a private room and headphones if possible.
- Allowing only invited participants to join the meeting. Meeting passwords should be enabled by the host.
- The programme has recently changed some protocols so that now invitees will go automatically into a virtual waiting room so the host can check before he/she lets them into the actual meeting.
- Make sure *Screen Sharing* is set to *Host* only.
- Hosts need to make sure they and their students have the latest version of Zoom (and other programmes) installed as well as the latest security updates for their devices.



FILM SOCIETY ZOOM sessions

To join the Film Group ZOOM, you need to contact Virginia Casey Ph. 42943503 or email: vcawsey@gmail.com. She will help you through the process. You need a device with a camera to participate.

The film to watch this week is *Withnail and I*. You can watch it on SBS On Demand if you missed it on SBS World of Movies. The discussion will be on Zoom on Wednesday 22nd April at 1.30pm.

The Optimist by D H Lawrence

The optimist builds himself safe inside a cell
and paints the inside walls sky-blue
and blocks up the door
and says he's in heaven.

What to do when there's time on your hands and you're at home in isolation?

I asked a random group of U3A members what is something challenging that they have been doing during this isolation time, that they haven't done before or not for a long time. Here are their replies (hopefully more next newsletter)

Refraining from hugging my locally based teenage granddaughters. A negative for me and hopefully not a positive for them! - Therese Jordan

Being a certain age, I've embraced the warnings and now live in isolation - what's totally new for me is 'staying at home'. I'm so enjoying my home and garden, even showing acts of kindness to a pesky blue-tongue haunting my garden. – Sue Rejske

Mick and I have been exercising on our front verandah, often with our grandson's lap top running the Balance'n'Bones DVD. I have used Zoom twice now, once for a singing practice and the other for the book club (classics). Spending too much time obsessing about food, planning mainly because we're trying not to go out every day to shop, instead internet ordering groceries once a week. Playing with my new window cleaning vacuum but I've found it works best if the glass is cool and the sun is not shining on the windows directly. -Helen Whelan

I'm ashamed to say that I cleaned out the large bathroom cupboard after I don't know how long, and found these items of historical interest - Julie Davis



Cleaned out the bottom shelf of the pantry - the top one may have to wait for the next virus - Gill Evans

I've started playing chess again against my computer chess set. It still beats me but I'm enjoying it.- John Martin.

My sister has coerced me into knitting for injured wildlife. Unfortunately, she is not with me to help when I drop a stitch or three! Haven't knitted for forty years and can only do plain and purl - Pam Barnes

Some time ago I was given a box of old *Current Affairs Bulletins 1970-75* – don't know if you remember them, they were produced by the academic staff of the Extension Dept of the University of Sydney on a wide range of topics, very useful for secondary school and university students. So I'm now taking the opportunity to rifle through them for research ideas to include in some talks for our Australian Studies group. It might sound boring to some, but for me it has been enlightening and exhilarating - Ron Browne

When first married, we lived on a farm, no shops nearby. My home-baked cakes and biscuits were devoured with gusto at 'smoko'. I've lost my touch – latest cake baking effort went into the chook bucket.– Joan Fleming.

I don't easily do "handyman" stuff, but I recently sanded back and re-oiled one of my outside decks. I have now motivated myself to work my way around the house! – Patrick Heaven.

And for myself - I found a 1000 piece jigsaw – scene of an old Melbourne tram in a rainy twilight setting. So far I've got the edges in place, and a chunky bit in the middle - only 782 more pieces to go. – Ainslie

PUZZLE TIME The maintenance staff in an office building were asked to affix numbers 1 to 100 inclusive to the doors of its 100 rooms. "We're right out of 7s," said the foreman, "we'll have to get some more in." How many 7s did he need? (answer on p. 6)

Australian Studies : Australia's Emu Wars

Jasper Garner Gore • Australian Geographic, October 18, 2016

Early on the morning of 2 November 1932, the Seventh Heavy Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery alighted at Campion, WA, on to a hot red-dirt landscape about halfway between Perth and Kalgoorlie. There they unpacked two Lewis automatic machine guns and 10,000 rounds of ammunition.

The unit's intention? To open hostilities with the emus of Western Australia that were moving in from central Australia in search of water and, having stumbled on the region's delicious wheat districts, had begun to ravage crops.

No sooner had the unit arrived than a flock of 50 emus was sighted. The company's commander, Major G.P.W. Meredith, immediately ordered his troops to circle the birds and chase them into range of the guns. By the day's end only a dozen birds out of the thousands the men had shot at were dead. Nevertheless, first blood had been drawn in Australia's 'Emu Wars'.

It all came about late in 1932, after a marauding emu population of at least 20,000 had been devastating farms across WA for some time. The farmers under attack (many of them ex-soldiers themselves) had eventually petitioned for military aid from the Minister of Defence George Pearce. He deployed troops swiftly, and they arrived with hopes of quick victory and a few emu feathers for their hats.

No sooner had the conflict begun, however, than it became clear that the Australian military had vastly underestimated the emu. Cunning adversaries, the emus proved almost impossible to hit with machine-gun fire, and they seemed able to shrug off even serious injury from bullets without breaking stride.

Describing the emus, Major Meredith later said: "If we had a military division with the bullet-carrying capacity of these birds it would face any army in the world... They can face machine guns with the invulnerability of tanks."

A few days into operations, a planned ambush by a dam failed miserably when one of the Lewis guns jammed. A later attempt to mount a machine-gun on a truck fell apart when it was made apparent that the vehicle could not keep up with the birds.

Within a week of first contact the troops were recalled. Roughly 2500 rounds had been fired and killed somewhere between 50 and 200 emus. Meredith did note that his men had suffered no casualties. When the question was raised if a medal would be struck for the conflict, federal Labor parliamentarian A.E. Green replied that any medals should go to the emus who had 'won every round so far'. For his involvement in the deployment, Defence Minister George Pearce earned the unofficial title 'Minister for the Emu War'.

Although a second (slightly) more successful military operation was mounted against the emus only a few days after the initial retreat in November 1932, in the end it was the instituting of a bounty on emus that proved most effective. Between 1945 and 1960 around 284,700 emus were killed in WA.

Australia's emu population, however, remains stable to this day. Thankfully, they do not seem interested in resuming hostilities with the Australian government.

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Note – to join the *Film Group ZOOM*, sessions, you need to contact Virginia Casey
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Answer to puzzle on p. 4 - 20: 10 for the digits 7 , 17, 27 ... 97, plus 10 for the digits 70 – 79.