Hamilton *Newsletter*

September 2025

Contacts

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Speaker and Trip Coordinator: Marg Langford 0428240830
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September Meeting

Tuesday 9th September at 10am - 12 noon
Senior Citizens Centre, 104 Lonsdale St, Hamilton.

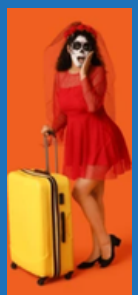
Guest speaker

Jo Reid

Editor of the Hamilton Spectator

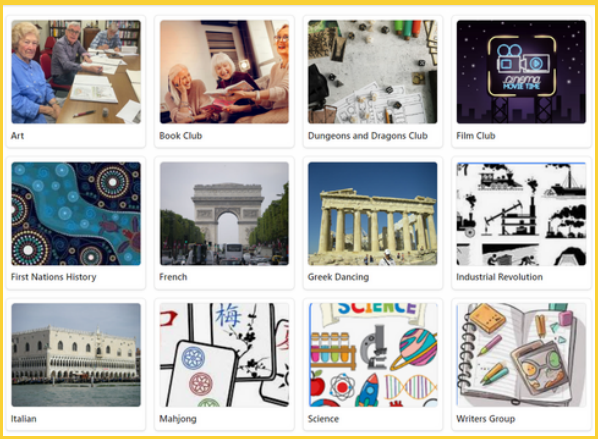
September Excursion

To be Advised



U3A Hamilton Course Calendar

Click here to view the course calendar.



Seniors Week

Tuesday October 14th

More inside....

Current Short Course

The Industrial Revolution
conducted on Zoom
starting 1:30 pm - Thursday 3 July 2025
Registration and Enquiries to
David Ingham 0423 670 994

In Recess until further notice

Click here for 2025 short course calendar

Read on for...

- Meeting Minutes
- Book of the month: The Thursday Murder Club
- Film of the month: Singing in the Rain
- From the Writers Group:: With a Deep Breath by Anna Puls

Meeting Minutes

August 2025

WAlex Pederick opened meeting at 10am

APOLOGIES M Dufty R Main, Z Hallam K and E Haines J and J Murrihy

ATTENDANCE 30

VISITORS Betsy Hunt

LUNCH at the CALLY

Minutes of previous meeting as circulated
Accept D Stevens second L Hobbs

Business arising
Tour organiser Marg Langford has 8 booked on Port Lincoln trip 27 September
9 Members enjoyed pizza lunch at Dergholm pub last month
Outing for August changed to Koroit hotel on Tuesday 26th
Congratulations to Leanne Huf on taking on our newsletters
Any suggestions for anyone to teach Auslan to interested members?

Correspondence nil

TREASURERS REPORT $8,945.61 profit $29.24 small loss $40
Accept Edwin Maclean Seconded Lyn Radley

Reports from interest groups
science languages Greek dancing Book and Film groups writers and Mah-jong

General Business
Decision made by committee to restrict short courses to school terms as some have grand parent duties (industrial Revolution on hold)
Speaker today is Sherri Symons on alternative use of wool
Any further ideas for interest groups?
Chess if interest?
Kylie Gerber from U3A Southwest has contacted us regarding inclusion of Casterton members so watch this space.
Bev Baillie spoke about the life of Cynthia Annett

QUIZ CONDUCTED BY Bob Cadden all ways fun

Meeting closed at 11.50am

May Ferguson

Secretary

Hamilton U3A Inc
University of The Third Age
ABN 56 608 802 184

Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL

Proud Sponsors

Special Guest Speaker
Robert (Bob) Handby A.O.

Red Cross Disaster Relief Expert and published author

VICTORIAN SENIORS FESTIVAL 2025

University of the 3rd Age Hamilton will celebrate the Victorian Seniors Festival with a delicious morning tea and guest speaker.

All seniors welcome.
Cost : $10.00
Bookings Essential
Ph: 0428 240 830

Tuesday, October 14th

9:45am for 10am start

Hamilton Baptist Church
48-50 Gray St,
Hamilton 3300

ROBERT (BOB) HANDBY AO
Water and Sanitation Aid Worker

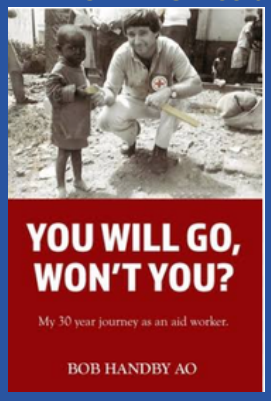
During a career of twenty-seven years in Local Government working as an Environmental Health Officer, Bob took leave to work with the International Committee of the Red Cross to some of the world's worst humanitarian disasters where he was responsible for providing safe water and improving sanitation. These disasters include conflict zones in Uganda, Iraq, Rwanda, Kosovo and Sri Lanka. Bob has also worked throughout Asia and the Pacific, including significant natural disasters like the Boxing Day Tsunami in Banda Aceh, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and floods in Pakistan.

In 2007, Bob left Local Government and joined Australian Red Cross as Manager, Water and Sanitation, International Emergencies. Bob retired from the Red Cross at the end of 2012 but came out of retirement in December 2014 to assist with the Red Cross response to Ebola in Sierra Leone, where he led a small team to a location resulting from a spike in Ebola cases. This led to him being responsible for the cleanup of a dysfunctional hospital and the building of an Ebola Treatment Centre. Bob has also worked in disasters throughout Australia including bush fires, floods and cyclones.

In November 2021 Bob published a book "You Will Go, Won't you" which documents his 30 years working in the field as an International Aid Worker.

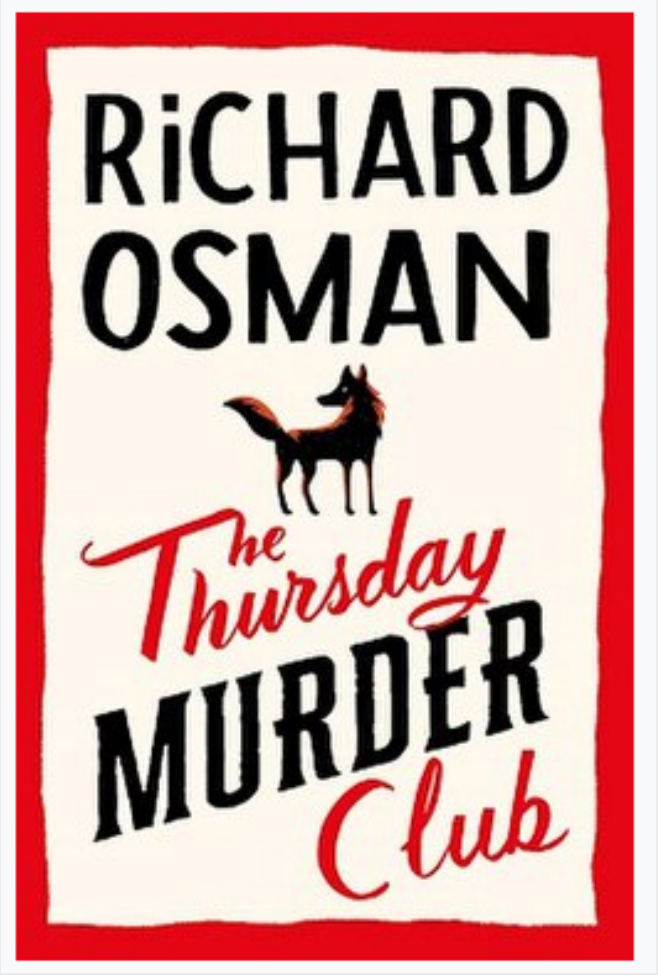
Bob is an Honorary Life Member of Australian Red Cross and in 2018 was awarded an Order of Australia with the citation 'For distinguished service to the international community, particularly with humanitarian disaster assistance missions and the environmental health profession'.

Bob is a Life Fellow of Environmental Health Australia.



Book Club Book of the Month

The book was read in July & discussed in August., Notes thanks to Rhonda



The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman

This funny, light and engaging murder mystery was our August book.

This is the first in a series of five books where a group of four residents in a retirement village are involved in reviewing old murder cases taken from files belonging to a friend who is comatose in the nursing home hospital. When a murder occurs in their general community they decide to pool their skills and help the police solve it.
The characters are engaging and there are many times when actions and thoughts will seem familiar to more mature readers.

Richard Osman is an author, producer and television presenter. The Thursday Murder Club is his first novel.'

Contact May Ferguson
0429914471 for more information

Film Club Film of the Month

Wednesday 10th September 4pm - 6pm,
Hamilton Senior Citizens Rooms,
Lonsdale St, Hamilton

Reviewers say 'Singin' in the Rain' is a celebrated classic, praised for its charm, wit, and infectious energy. Gene Kelly's performance, especially in the title number, is lauded for its seamless blend of dancing, singing, and charisma. The supporting cast, including Debbie Reynolds and Donald O'Connor, is commended for their stellar performances and chemistry. The film's vibrant choreography, clever script, and memorable musical numbers are frequently celebrated. Despite minor criticisms about predictability and humor, it remains a beloved musical.

Story of the Month - Writers Group

With a deep breath

Like most people she knew, Janice, a mother of three has a bucket list. Things she wanted to do or see, from reading War and Peace, finishing the embroidery her mother had started, travel to exotic places and other either secret or “out there” plans and ambitions. Janice was a practical person and realized that her immediate priorities were her husband Wal, her children Chrissy, Tony and Joy, and her job, which in the main she enjoyed and kept her very busy. In the meantime, she kept dreaming.

When the PE teacher of the local country school her children attended, offered the school councillors and volunteer swim attending parents, the opportunity to learn about and “have a go” at scuba diving, Janice jumped at the change.

She joined 6 other parents in the pool, where they first attended a lecture on safety, how to breath normally, check and don the equipment, hand signals and again a emphasize on normal breathing.
Janice was hooked, after she successfully swam the length of the 25 metre pool, at a depth of between 4 and 6 feet.

For years she told all and sundry of her number one item on her bucket list, scuba diving on the barrier reef, whilst enduring setbacks to that ambition, due to family circumstances, drought and other instances, when life gets in the way.

Then an unexpected invitation to a wedding in Northern NSW came in the mail, which was do-able.

Janice and Wal flew to Coolangatta and had a lovely time with their friends and Parents and uncle and aunt of the bride. After a few glasses of bubbly, feeling thoroughly relaxed, Janice could not help but blurting out her bucket list aim of Scuba diving on the barrier reef. “What’s wrong with diving here”, her friend asked. “My son’s mate runs a charter fishing tourist boat, including scuba diving courses. I’ll give him a ring and see what is available.” Before Janice could think of all the reasons that now was not a good idea, or psyching herself up for an adrenalin rush, Bill came back with some information. “There is a tourist diving trip, tomorrow morning and they have a vacancy.” Instantly gone, was the euphoric feeling of the champagne, food and company.

Dreaming of ideal conditions and preparations were gone in an instant, as reality and excuses rushed out. “I’d love to but, I have been drinking” Janice said. If you stop now, you’ll be okay in 12 hours’ time” Bill advised. “I won’t be able to fly for at least 24 hours after a dive”, Janice said “Perfect, your plane does not leave till the following evening.” Then her husband Wal, fortified with courage inducing beverages declared” For Pete’s sake, do it. I have been listening to you droning on forever about your Scuba diving ambitions. Either do it, or shut up about it”.

Instantly sober and with a feeling of being cornered and betrayed, rather than encouraged by her beloved, she agreed.

The following morning was overcast windy and the sea was choppy. Diving conditions were not ideal, but the dive would go ahead. They were told that the large residential shark, if encountered was harmless and visibility was not optimum. Not good news for an extremely shortsighted woman.

Janice joined a group of other tourist divers in a shed, where they had to fill out numerous health and disclaimer forms. Then the safety instructions with an emphasize on breathing normally, cleaning goggles, staying in sight of your buddy at all times and hand-signals. Then the raising of hands, if you have dived before. All hands went up and questions were asked, where of when and how deep. The answers varied from last week to several years ago, from the Barrier Reef, Ningaloo, Thailand and Hawai and up to 40 yards deep. Janice felt like a total idiot and desperately tried to avoid relating her experience. Not taking “Pass” for an answer, she whispered in a small voice, “Over 20 years ago, in the Balmoral pool at a depth of 4 to 6 feet.
Soon they changed into bathers and with the help of the instructors, squeezed themselves into wetsuits, goggles, flippers and a weighted belt. Then came the strapping on of the scuba gear and mouthpiece. After a further check of the pressure gauge, Janice and the others were ready to stagger to the side of the boat, which was a lot higher out of the water than the zodiacs, Janice remembered seeing in the movies. The tank and belt were also a lot heavier than she had imagined. The song of the little red engine became an earworm and she kept hearing; “I think I can, I think I can”, as an encouragement.

She was running on pure adrenalin and when the time had come to topple backwards of the boat, she forgot all about breathing normally and with a deep breath she very inelegantly fell overboard.

On surfacing Janice found that she had lost her goggles, mouthpiece and one flipper. The choppy sea made her swallow a wave and the lead belt and heavy tank tried to drag her under. A full-blown panic attack seemed the only option. With 2 instructors trying to calm her down and refitting the lost items Janice still felt that her end had come. Yelling and after her mouthpiece had been inserted, inventing new hand-signals, she demanded to abort her dive and get back on board. After trying to dissuade her, they gave in and telling her to breath normally, they shepherded her to the boat. After stopping her hyperventilating, she remembered the high cost of the exercise and the humiliation after all that for failing. This was not going to happen. Breathing normally, she signaled:Stop, Okay and Dive to the instructor. Holding his hand, she changed the little red engine sentence to: “I know I can, I know I can”. And she could.

Soon a wonderland opened up to her. Only the sound of the breathing was audible. The patterns of the sand and the shape of the coral was magical. The colours of the thankfully small inquisitive fish surrounding her were beautiful. Soon her time underwater was up and they made a successful return to the boat and then land. Janice was hooked and raved to Wal and everybody else about the beauty of the world beneath the sea, omitting the panic part of her adventure.

The first thing she did, when they became available, was buying a pair of prescription goggles. Since then, she has tempered her ambitions by becoming a very good snorkeler. She loves the relaxation of floating, whilst seeing the most amazing sights, shapes, colour and marine life. Janice has progressed well beyond the Balmoral pool, with her snorkeling both in Australia and overseas.

Way down on her bucket list is the wish to do another scuba dive. She is more circumspect who she mentions it to, always with the disclaimer that it is Insurance companies with an age-related bias that prevents her from diving again.

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