



Last Wednesday, May 31, Red Cross Shop volunteers Danielle Bowser and Robyn David, with shop manager, Blazenska Lesinger (centre), drew the Lindenow Branch raffle. The lucky winner of the garden hamper was Dallas Howell and the winner of the gourmet hamper was Anne Payne. Members thank all involved for helping to raise \$482 for Red Cross funds. (ps)

‘Plant Me Instead’

World Environment Day, held on June 5 (today) each year, is the United Nations’ most important day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of the environment.

It began in 1974, and is widely celebrated in more than 100 countries. The theme in 2017 is ‘connecting people with nature’, and legendary broadcaster Sir David Attenborough reminds us we are very much part of it.

“Every mouthful of food, every breath of air is owed to nature. We depend on it,” Attenborough noted in an interview in the run-up to World Environment Day.

This World Environment Day, East Gippsland Shire Council is joining East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and other natural resource management groups at a ‘Plant Me Instead’ display.

The informative display will highlight a number of native plants that are best suited for your home garden, property and revegetation projects in our region. Of more than 28,000 species of plants in Australia, at least 10 per cent have naturalised into the environment. So go and have a chat about native plants and how they can contribute to our local biodiversity.

You can also learn about the great work done by local Landcare groups together with other environmental and sustainability information.

The display will be on show on Monday, June 5, at Bairnsdale’s Nicholson Street Mall from 10am to 3pm.

There will be free seedlings available and a sausage sizzle over lunch.



Tony Sims, Kay Kennedy and Kath West, among others, did not founder in running out of ideas and another meeting for Aussie slang discussion has been scheduled for this Thursday, June 8, at Bairnsdale U3A. (ps)

Strewth, what a class!

Last Thursday afternoon a group of U3A members had their first discussions about Aussie slang, idiom, vernacular - almost a recollection of voices and sayings from the past and based on oral recollection - particularly of the Australia as it was in the period of the first world until the swinging sixties.

The country town, with its pub, reliance on the farmers and the hazards of drought, depression and war all stirred the memory. Everyone has a nostalgic touch and it was this resource that U3A wanted to tap into - a kind of oral archaeology.

There were books on Aussie sayings from the library and U3A’s own collection of books, but the main resource was memory. A saying, recalled with the genuine Aussie voice, triggers memories and makes the slang authentic.

Writing down the sayings, while helpful, is not quite the genuine thing. You need the voice, the circumstances - not always easy - especially say trying to empathise with life during the Depression which had a bigger impact on Australia.

“What did your dad used to say”, evoked colourful expressions and memories as participants trawled through their collective memories of life in the bush the characters, and the way of life in those times.

Some great sayings were discovered - Beattie

Blennerhassett, wool classer and farmer’s wife, remembered the warning in the woolshed at shearing time: “Five ducks on the pond”.

The migrant experience was another avenue. Why did the puzzled English migrant wonder why the response to comments to an Australian colleague evoke the response “Because?” - he thought “Because what”. The intention was clear and the response appropriate. “Because” was really “Beg yours”. And the very Australian “G day” compared with “Good morning” etc., of England and the United States was also noticeable.

Then too there are the hundreds of sayings, which were used in everyday life - colourful sayings which enlivened conversations - evoked a laugh or a warning - like “Things are crook in Tallarook”. And some which have died with history “You have Buckley and Nunn’s” or has “More front than Myer”.

The study group is keen to emphasise the importance of the proper use of the sayings and slang, an approach which is good for the conversation and points to rich veins of material.

Great input on the stories behind the sayings and the way current usage has changed the meaning and not always for the better.

At U3A people want to have fun with Aussie slang activity. Start time is 1pm alternate Thursdays, with the next being June 8 at East Gippsland Community Hub.

Recall the conversations, sayings of ordinary people and what they then thought.

Some may not be quite politically correct, but participants know discretion.

“While not searching for vulgarity, if it is there we are old enough to deal with it although it must be said these senior citizens are not comfortable with the liberal use of some common four letter swear word these days. But we want to be authentic,” one participant said.

“We have no discipline in how we approach Aussie slang and this is part of the fun of it all - we can share life experiences, there are no experts but ordinary people remembering. Surprisingly once you start recalling Aussie slang and sayings memories of people in our past come flooding back.

“We felt that one hour each alternative week was a good start. A deliberate avoidance of structure to avoid any academic gridlock - just let the conversation and ideas flow and start remembering the sayings of ordinary Australians with their way of livening everyday speech including what was said, what was allowed to be said, what was understood - all very complex - and a real treasure trove.”

And the meaning of “Five ducks on a pond”? When the men in the shearing shed noticed the women folk approaching with their smoko refreshments the rule was “watch your language - stop shearing shed talk the women are coming”.

If you have some sayings of fond memory especially now out of use U3A Bairnsdale’s Aussie slang class would be grateful if you would donate them for future class use. Email Bairnsdale U3A or visit the website.

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