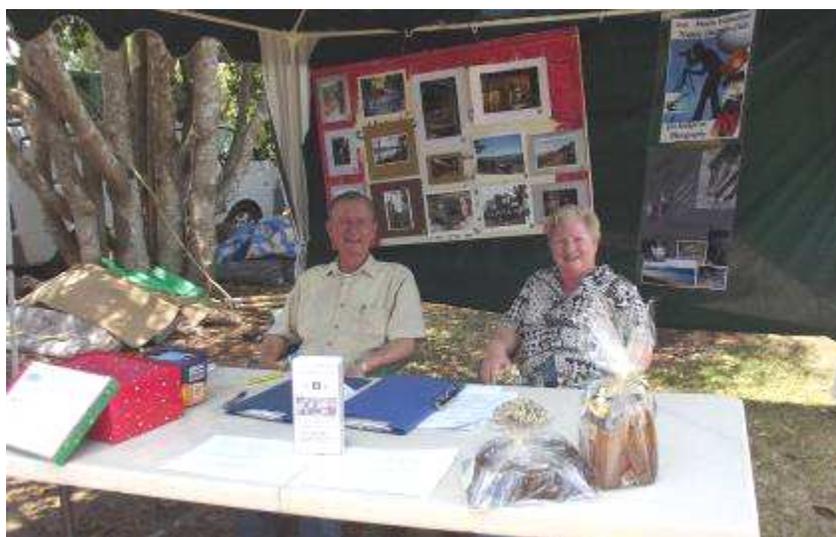


# Live and Learn

Number 5, December 2012

spreading the word . . .



**Ken and Jane Duncanson staff the U3AAT booth at the Tablelands Folk Festival in Yungaburra in October. Picture: Annie Cork**

## the joy of giving

**From your president, Jane Duncanson**

It is that time of year when you say, "I can't believe it's nearly Christmas!" or "Where has the year gone?" That is true in my case. 2012 has gone quickly, but what a wonderful year it has been.

U3AAT has had such diverse talks and activities — more than 50, actually, on genealogy, Australian literature, the Writers Group, art talks, science, nature, photography, keeping healthy, cooking . . . the list goes on. Next year we will continue with a huge variety of interesting and stimulating talks.

The president's role would not be possible without the generous support of the committee. Through John Pollock and Alf Hogan, we have achieved a grant for equipment and our website is up and running for all to use. Helen Myles worked very hard to obtain the use of room 6 at the Atherton Community Centre. This will be our home and main venue for a while.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's column:**  
The joy of giving
- 2 We find a home**  
**On your website**
- 3 Meet your committee:**  
Treasurer John Pollock
- Meet your presenters:**  
Tai chi teacher Maria Gillanders
- 4,5 Happenings:**  
Snap!  
La Nina demystified  
Edible zoo gardens  
Having a go at Patrick White
- 6 Member's story**  
Water
- 7 Coming up**
- 8 Gems from the net**  
**News in brief**
- 9 Other ways to learn**
- 10 Capping a good year:**  
Party fun
- 11 Make your day**  
**A Christmas delight**

We have Mareeba on board, with Anne Davis beavering away at the local media to get our courses out there to the community. Louise Kennedy rounds up news and pictures for the magazine; Averil Douglas is my "quality control", Pat Pollock does the monthly calendars, Maralyn Keller keeps track of membership, Pamela Herriott and Barb Whybird record the minutes, and a special thanks goes to Glyn Davies who is there, as always, to take the load.

I have experienced so much enjoyment presenting Savvy Travel and encourage you all to join in and have a go at giving a talk. You may think you have nothing to contribute, but you'd be surprised! I thought, "How can I talk on travel for six sessions?" Little did I realise how much I actually knew and could pass on to others. Presenting will give you a lot of pleasure and you will meet new people. Contact me at [ken.duncanson@bigpond.com](mailto:ken.duncanson@bigpond.com).

I look forward to 2013 and the wealth of subjects we will present for your enlightenment and enjoyment.

Finally, I'd like to welcome our newest members: Tom and Katherine Murray, Michelle Brasch, Leigh Davis, Carolyn Currie, Pat Phillips, Lynette Morgan, Rita Raso, Phil and Rosemary Frangos, Shane Knuth and Ron and Sharon Newport.

## we find a home

### From venues co-ordinator Helen Myles

Earlier this year, a U3AAT delegation discussed with the Mayor of the Tablelands Regional Council, Rosa Lee Long, the possibility of acquiring a permanent venue in council premises in Atherton.

On June 26, the Mayor met with Jane Duncanson, Glyn Davies, Pamela Herriott, Mary Cooney and me for what proved to be a very informal, cordial and informative meeting. We left the Mayor's office post haste to draft an expression of interest outlining the role of the organisation, its philosophy and the bene-



**Room 6 in the Atherton Community Centre is ready for classes.**

fits to older and retired people on the Tablelands, as some rooms in the Atherton Community Centre (the old Primary School, opposite the council building in Mabel Street) were about to be vacated.

On August 29 we received written confirmation that Room 6 in the centre was available. A bonus was that the room would be free of charge for six months while the council reviewed tenancies. After February next year, U3AAT can reapply for premises under any new policies. The first use of Room 6 (as it is affectionately called) was for the management committee meeting in September. By that time the room had

## on your website

### From webmaster Alf Hogan

Check the website regularly to keep up with what's happening and what's coming up.

News coming out of the monthly management meetings will go onto the Announcements page. Similarly, any late changes to courses, such as venue or time, will be announced here. Announcements are dated, with the newest on the top.

Another area worth looking at is Links to Other Sites. Have a look at what other U3As are doing and if you would like our branch to offer a similar course or activity, bring it to the attention of the committee. It is easy -- simply fill in the Contact Us form.

Also in the Links section is Must-have Forms. Here you will find a link to two forms: Enduring Power of Attorney for both health and financial matters, and an Advanced Health Directive. I had the experience recently where a person thought an enduring power of attorney conferred the right to make decisions on health matters. When it came to the crunch and it was a matter of treatment choices during palliative care of a loved one, the decisions proved too hard to make and the dying process became much more stressful. If an Advanced Health Directive had been made, there would have been no doubt about the patient's wishes. Health directives are made in consultation with a doctor, making completion of the form easier and ensuring informed decisions. Tough subject, but we will all go through it.

tables and chairs, purchased from the outgoing tenants, and soon afterwards some second semester classes were transferred to our new home. The room is light and airy, with a large fixed whiteboard and a small storage room which does for tea-making.

A small laminated sign has been pasted on the veranda window and a large metal sign is available for an artistic U3AAT member to decorate with our name and logo!

The management committee is delighted that many of our future courses will be held in Room 6. This means we will no longer always be dependent on the good will of the many Tablelands businesses and organisations which so willingly supported us in our fledgling days.

See you in Room 6!

## meet your committee

### Treasurer John Pollock

John Pollock grew up on a farm near Mossman. After completing a degree in agricultural science he worked for the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, meanwhile adding a master's and in plant breeding and business and mediation courses to his capabilities.

John left the bureau to take up a number of positions within the Queensland Government, moving from Treasury to the Lands Department and finally back to his first love, Primary Industries. During that time his areas of interest broadened to include rivers and fisheries.

John retired in 2005 but is still connected with a range of government bodies. He and wife Pat moved back north from Brisbane to Yungaburra and since then gardening, cycling, travelling and visiting three sons and seven grandchildren have kept him busy.

John and Pat, who is active on the program sub-committee, joined U3a to satisfy a need to keep interested and involved in, and give back to the community. Its philosophy of continued learning appeals. So far they've been busy with their administration roles within 3a, but they're looking forward to taking advantage of the courses on offer when they spend more time at home!



**Pat and John Pollock**

## meet your presenters

### Tai Chi teacher Maria Gillanders



Maria Gillanders is a Registered Nurse, a successful and passionate continence adviser, baker and ballroom dancer. She loves learning, and she enjoys practising and teaching the ancient Chinese exercise tai chi.

After completing her nurse training in Germany, she migrated to Australia as a young woman. Here she nursed in four states and gained further experience in England. Her experience in gerontology and paediatrics predisposed her to a career helping people of all ages to stay "dry", well and on their feet. Apart from working part-time as a continence adviser she is involved with tree planting and National Parks volunteer activities.

Over the last three years Maria has completed tai chi courses with Exercise Medicine Australia for health and falls prevention, which she practises and teaches regularly; she also attends regular tai chi classes on the Tablelands. Maria, with her husband Alan and other volunteers, intends to continue giving tai chi classes in Yungaburra and assist occasionally with other classes on the Tablelands. So if you intend to stay well on your feet and "dry", you might want to come along to a tai chi class and maybe even a continence talk.

### John Clarkson, principal botanist with the Department of National Parks From Mareeba representative Anne Davis

John is a true Aussie – with a lingering Scottish accent!  
He's a nature enthusiast, author of the Field Guide to the Eucalypts of Cape York, a father of four and grandfather of five lucky little kids who have their personalised story books written for them when a family outing turns into an adventure.

As I chat with him, I too become enthusiastic about his plans for his "practical" presentation, What Gum Tree Is This?

He talks about his samples, his PowerPoint presentation and the years since 1979 spent exploring the Cape, discovering and documenting new and known eucalypt species in a beautifully illustrated field guide which those in his class have right beside them during this botanical experience. Those attending his course come away with a whole new appreciation of our wonderful Australian eucalypts and the work our local scientist has done to help us understand and know more about these great gum trees.



## happenings



### snap!

Happy Snapper Ann Moens captured this image (below) of Bev Masasso getting down and dinkum, to shoot this beautiful portrait, *Rose*, left, at one of the camera group's sessions. Other recent Happy Snappers assignments have included photographing against the light (on location at Tinaburra), and capturing birds (on location at Hastie's Swamp). The Snappers will hold their final meeting of the year on December 6 at 2pm in front of the suspension bridge at Allumbah Pocket. Their first meeting next year will be at 2pm on February 7 in the new meeting place, Room 6 at the Atherton Community Centre in Mabel Street, where they will decide upon their 2013 program.



## la Nina demystified

At last I have an idea of what Jenny Woodward is talking about! Every Wednesday on the ABC TV weather report she tells us what the SOI is for that day. I now know that it means Southern Oscillation Index, that it's an indicator of whether we are heading for an el Nino or la Nina event, and that it describes the difference in atmospheric pressure between Darwin and Tahiti.

Summarising the Bureau of Meteorology's explanation, sustained negative values of the SOI greater than -8 often indicate el Nino episodes -- sustained warming of the central and eastern tropical Pacific

Ocean, a decrease in the strength of the Pacific trade winds, and a reduction in winter and spring rainfall over much of eastern Australia and the Top End.

Sustained positive values greater than +8 are typical of a la Nina episode — stronger Pacific trade winds and warmer sea temperatures to the north of Australia, carrying an increased probability that eastern and northern Australia will be wetter than normal.

Cairns meteorologist Alicia Duncanson explained these and other mysteries of what makes our weather to a keen group of U3Agers. She followed up with a guide on reading the weather from the clouds.

— Louise Kennedy

## edible zoo gardens

Erwin Medley was a wonderful and patient teacher. The art of fruit and vegetable carving has long been considered a valuable heritage in Thailand and much effort is made to conserve the skill. I hope we did it justice! Erwin taught us the fundamentals and the rest was up to us, he said: "It is only limited by your imagination." Lots of practice for me, I think! Deanna Davies brought in the savoury plate at the last lesson, displaying the carved onion which we had learnt in our second lesson.

We also made roses from carrots, crabs and lobsters from cucumbers, fish from sweet potato and swans from watermelon or rockmelon. I'm looking forward to my Christmas table graced by a swan full of lychees or cherries! I am already doing carrot daisies for the grandkids and now they will also have a crustacean crawling over their sandwiches! A big thank you to Erwin for such an enjoyable and interesting course.

— Jane Duncanson



## having a go at Patrick White

Many readers find Australia's only Nobel laureate in literature, Patrick White, daunting, so it was enlightening to hear Glyn Davies unpack this rewarding writer's poetic prose. Glyn outlined White's background as a privileged youth from a pastoral family, and some of his friendships – with actress Kate Fitzpatrick, inspiration for his plays, and Manoly Lascaris, his lifelong companion. He explained why White returned from Europe, and why he stayed. His project, said Glyn, was to contribute towards a nation of understanding, and this he did through his epic symbolism and championing of the outsiders in our society. Glyn then led us through an in depth examination of the novel in which White attempted to relate the great Australian myth to the story of Western civilisation, *The Tree of Man* – grand themes, but themes White expounded with an epic psychological and narrative art, according to the Nobel committee. – Louise Kennedy

## member's story

### Water

By Malcolm Bottrill

It's almost midnight, and a mystical blanket of cotton wool covers all but the highest peaks. The cold moon bestows slivers of silver on the remnants of the range, and an occasional small, defiant light suggests that not every blanketed person is asleep.

Long, tousled red hair and heavy eyes look out from a rug on the back seat in response to the vehicle lurching to avoid a wallaby. Through the mass of hair a tired voice asks slowly, "What's all that white stuff Grandpa?"

"You should be asleep!"

Driving at night was pleasant relaxation.

Grandpa, an old truckie, had long enjoyed the aloneness, never had trouble staying awake, and hated being interrupted.

"What is it Grandpa?"

"Water! It's water!"

"A lake?"

"No! Just water! Go back to sleep! Won't be breakfast for hours!"

"But ..."

"No buts! Just ... go ... to ... sleep!"

Under his breath Grandpa mutters, "Can't understand that stupid daughter of mine calling a red-headed bub *Indigo!* No wonder the poor kid asks dopey questions. Red dogs are Blue! But Indigo! Hell!"

"What did you say Grandpa?"

"I said, 'Go to sleep!'"

A pre-dawn sluggish mixture of yawn and slur reaches from the back seat, "Grandpa."

"Hell woman! Ya scared the wits outa me! Why didn't ya toot ya horn?"

"If I yelled *Blaaaaah!* like a truck, we'd be up a gum tree!"

Under his breath, Grandpa grouches, "Smart arse!"

"Pardon?"

"Nothin'."

Grandpa?"

"What?"

"See those dark colours in the sky before the sun comes up?"

"Mmmm."

"Which is blue? Which is indigo and which is violet?"

Indigo breaks the exasperated silence, "Can we stop please? I need to find a bush."

As she returns to the Land Cruiser, Grandpa is leaning against the vehicle, staring well beyond the horizon, where the blue and violet colours are getting a little lighter and brighter.

"How can you tell which one is indigo, Grandpa?"

Taking a while to focus on the nine-year-old standing by him, he realises how very pretty she is, and how much she looks like her grandmother.

"Dunno. I reckon it's just blue or purple. Seems to me that uppity people, people who like to sound important, say blue, indigo and violet." His sarcasm is overtaking his anger.

With emotion starting to affect her voice, and the peeping sun adding fire to her red hair and hazel eyes, Indigo snaps as she fights back the tingling in her eyes, "My Mum is not uppity! She does not like to



sound important! She will do anything for anybody! She's the most loving, special person in the world! And she called me Indigo!"

Grandpa is taken aback, hooking his left arm over the rear vision mirror and leaning on the Cruiser, while exchanging stares with the half-sun glaring at him from the top of the distant range. Despite the light hurting his eyes, he prefers that to Indigo's stare, which he steadfastly avoids.

Being with such a grumpy grandfather is not her idea of a pleasant holiday. Her mind races, talking to herself, "I'm doing this to please Mum. She said my red hair and bright eyes would bring a sparkle into Grandpa's loneliness. Fat chance!"

"Grandpa."

His eyes are locked on the sun, and appears to be unaware of her presence. Frustrated and determined, Indigo presses on.

"Grandpa. I want to ring Mum. I want to go home. I won't stay with you. You're so grumpy. I don't even like you!"

Grandpa, hooked over the rear vision mirror, and propped against the Cruiser, is faded denim stone, only superficially warmed by the just risen sun. With no understanding of the significance of silence, Indigo charges on. Nothing can stop her now.

"I want to ring Mum!" Her voice rises. "I want to tell her you're horrible! That I don't like you! And that you think she's stuck up!"

The statue bursts into life.

"Don't you dare tell your mother that!"

"Why?"

"You tell her and I'll just go to water". Indigo is oblivious to the crack in his voice and the hurt in his eyes.

"Go to water? You mean you're so scared of Mum that you'll wet your pants? Yuuuk!!"

"No! It just means ... Oh, come here!"

Indigo cannot remember being hugged at all by her grumpy Grandpa, so she is momentarily shocked, then swept up in a new feeling of warmth and love.

Grandpa thinks, "I didn't believe I could hug anyone ever again after Patsy died. Now I can barely remember a time when I haven't felt alone and angry." Tears fiercely dammed for twenty years stream down his face.

Still clinging tightly, Indigo looks up as she feels moisture on her forehead.

"Grandpa! You've gone to water!"

Without easing his grip, and twinkling a little through his tears, Grandpa whispers, "It was fog."

"What?"

"You asked me last night when we came through the range. It was fog."

"Yeah I know."

"Then why did you ask?"

"Just thought it'd be nice to talk."



## coming up

Thanks to the generosity of members and the community, the program committee can foreshadow some exciting presentations in 2013.

Dance, health and exercise; science and natural history; the arts, history and literature; travel and cooking are all represented, along with many other areas of interest – check the web site, [athtablands.u3anet.org.au](http://athtablands.u3anet.org.au), for a full list of course descriptions.

In the field of natural history, for example, zoologist John Winter will speak about **marsupial gliders** and lead an excursion to spot them in their habitat. John will also talk about the landscape ecology of the Wet Tropics.

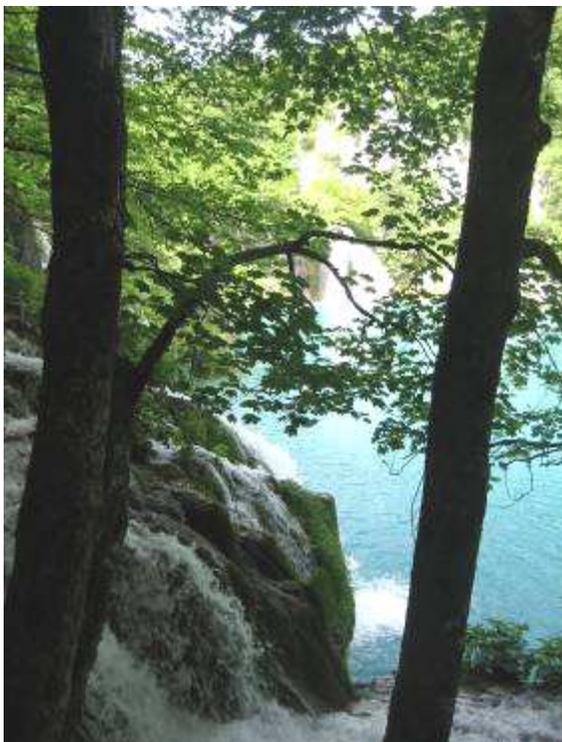
Ever wondered what really happened to Peter Falconio? History and mystery buff Ken Cotterill will tease the brain when he asks participants to turn detective to solve a series of actual **unsolved crimes**.

Glyn Davies will give a series of talks on **The Language We Speak**. Get out your dictionaries, your thesauruses and your speaking voices! David Turnbull's series tackles **professional ethics**. Topics include The Beginning of Life, The End of Life, The Quality of Life and Communication across Boundaries.

Back by popular demand are the **genealogy** and **travel**

courses. And Bev and Ian Smyth have undertaken **photographic safaris** in Kenya and we will share their adventures.

Among a plethora of offerings on health and well-being, podiatrist Suzi Douglass will provide insight into how to **care for our feet**, and chemist Adam Hogan will explain **generic medicines** and other pharmaceutical matters.



**Plitvice National Park, Croatia.**

Picture: Louise Kennedy

## gems from the net

U3A Online provides lists each month of web addresses with articles about anything from health to the vagaries of computers. Here are some of their November offerings:

Know Your Risk Factors to Help Prevent Dementia

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121005134619.htm>

Aspirin May Temper Brain Power Decline in Elderly Women at Risk of Heart Disease

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121003195137.htm>

Fast walking and jogging halve development of heart disease and stroke risk factors, research indicates

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121009112425.htm>

Exercise Improves Memory, Thinking After Stroke, Study Finds

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121001084126.htm>

Green Tea Reduced Inflammation, May Inhibit Prostate Cancer Tumor

## News in brief

**Smart phone** driving you mad? Courses in how to operate them have been hugely popular on the coast, and the committee thinks they'd be a great idea for Tableland members too. What do you think? Drop a line via our website or express your interest to one of the committee members.

The good word is spreading . . . We've heard they're keen to start a U3A branch in **Port Douglas**.

Like to see a show in Cairns but don't want to drive home afterwards? The Arts Council already runs **bus trips** for such events, and we're wondering if U3AAT could team up with them or offer something similar. Other suggestions are dinner at the training restaurant at Cairns TAFE, or lunch and a movie. And what about the concerts at The Tanks, or the Chamber Music Festival in Townsville? Interested? Let us know, as above.

## something to say?

Maybe you enjoyed the class you attended; maybe you took some great pictures — if you did, share your experience with other members through *Live and Learn*. Email your words or pictures to [info@athtablands.u3anet.org.au](mailto:info@athtablands.u3anet.org.au) and they will be passed on to the editor. Don't forget to include your name and the name of the class and instructor you're writing about. See **Keep in Touch** on page 11.

Growth, Research Finds

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121018121956.htm>

Plant-Based Foods May Offer Reduced Risk for Aggressive Prostate Cancer

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121019141128.htm>

Fruits and Vegetables: Seven-A-Day for Happiness and Mental Health

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121009102003.htm>

Prostate Cancer: Curcumin Curbs Metastases, Study Shows

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121012112152.htm>

A fascinating introduction to how Nokia/Google/Apple get images for your street.

<http://jo.my/n99p9h>

Slow machines represent one of the largest sources of questions to Ask Leo! Perhaps when you purchased it, your computer ran like a champ and did everything you needed (and quickly). Why is my machine slowing down?

<http://jo.my/eu35pu>

Audio CDs confuse many people and Windows - trying to be helpful, of course - doesn't help. How do I burn an audio CD?

<http://jo.my/b5uxks>



Caught in traffic, Agra, India. Picture: Louise Kennedy

## other ways to learn

### Online courses through U3AAT

Autobiography and Journaling, Writing Family History, My Life Story, Genealogy Online, Unleashing your Creative Spirit, Writing for Pleasure and Science: The evolution of Life on Planet Earth are now available through U3AAT. Interested members should contact Jane Duncanson: [courses@athtablends.u3anet.org.au](mailto:courses@athtablends.u3anet.org.au) or phone 4096 6693.

### U3A Online

To check on other U3A Online courses please go to [www.u3aonline.org.au](http://www.u3aonline.org.au) and click on '**Courses**' in the left-hand panel and then on '**Looking Ahead**' from the drop-down list.

### U3A Cairns

Financial members of U3AAT have reciprocal rights with any other U3A group in Queensland. For example, Tableland members can attend Cairns courses. You'll find all the information you need about U3A in Cairns at [www.u3acairnsinc.org.au](http://www.u3acairnsinc.org.au), or phone Cairns Course Coordinator Frederika Hatley (4036 4263).

## JCU

Members are entitled to sit in on JCU courses. There is no charge and no awards are given. Details about JCU subjects can be obtained from the JCU website. When you know the name, subject code and course co-ordinator's name contact JCU's U3A coordinator, Judith Woods, at [judith@ruello.com](mailto:judith@ruello.com) or on 4059 0836.

## capping a good year

A real buzz filled the Merriland cafeteria around sundown on December 2. Christmas party guests were so busy chatting with new friends and discussing next year's offerings that the rather austere surroundings went completely unnoticed.

Not so the food. Thanks to the committee, the guests, and especially co-ordinator and cook extraordinaire Deanna Davies the French feast was memorable. Deanna's scrumptious pates were followed by coq au vin, cassoulet, potato and egg plant bakes, green salads and French desserts, the latter brought along by the guests.

MC Glyn Davies had polished up his French accent for the occasion, and led everyone through a couple of carols—in French! We can't wait to see what Glyn will pull out of the hat next year!



**Best Christmas hat:  
Erwin Medley**

**Denise  
Vrenegoor,  
right, and  
below, Jane  
Duncanson.**

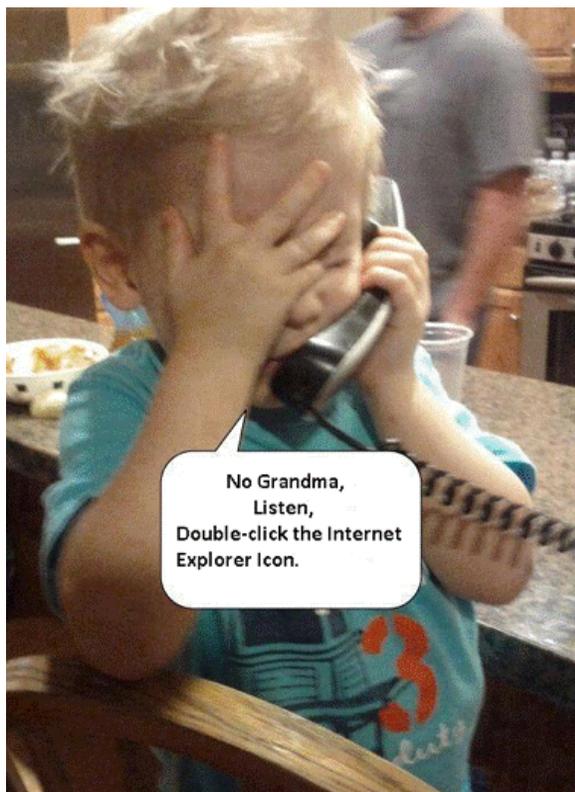


**Below, Glyn Davies and  
Bev Masasso.**



**Top, from left,  
Edna Wright, Helen  
Myles and Sue  
Fairley.  
Above, Maralyn  
Keller, left, and Pat  
Pollock.  
Left, a gallicly dap-  
per mystery man  
peruses the menu.**

make your day



keep in touch

**Inquiries**

Email [info@athtablends.u3anet.org.au](mailto:info@athtablends.u3anet.org.au) or write to U3AAT, PO box 928, Atherton, Qld 4883.

You can also contact us via the website, [athtablends.u3anet.org.au](http://athtablends.u3anet.org.au).

**Course inquiries and enrolment:**

Jane Duncanson, email [courses@athtablends.u3anet.org.au](mailto:courses@athtablends.u3anet.org.au) or 4096 6693

**James Cook University**

For information contact course co-ordinator, Judith Woods, [judith@ruello.com](mailto:judith@ruello.com) or telephone 4059 0836.

And finally, for a Christmas delight:

Go to <http://www.youtube.com/embed/vcmfCXwAFs4>

Merry Christmas everyone!



**AthertonTablelands**

PO Box 928 Atherton Q4883  
Email: [info@athtablends.u3anet.org.au](mailto:info@athtablends.u3anet.org.au)  
Web: [athtablends.u3anet.org.au](http://athtablends.u3anet.org.au)

