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**Nothing is impossible,  
the word itself  
says "I'm possible"!**

-Audrey Hepburn

**W**hat different times we find ourselves facing right now. I realise ... and you probably do too ... how large a part of my week U3A has been over the past 6 years.

Despite the cancellation of activities, I have been fortunate to be able to continue with two of my activities online.

The Art Group have been working on weekly tasks with the resulting art being posted to a dedicated Facebook page.

The Writing for Pleasure group was prompted by an initial paragraph to write a "chain" novel, with each of the seven writers taking turns to write a "chapter". It's turned into quite a "Who Dunnit".

Undoubtedly we all miss the contact with others—staying active socially is one of our key goals and I know how many of you look forward to your weekly gatherings with both old and newly formed friends.

Your Committee, following U3A SA's recommendations in complying with current restrictions and protocols, has decided to recommence activities in Term 3, beginning on July 20.

I hope this challenging time has meant that you have found alternative activities to keep you busy. Perhaps some of you will have discovered something that you would like to share with others when we resume.

I stay physically active by doing my daily walk and feel extremely lucky that I can do it in such relative safety. Now that cafes have reopened, albeit with limited diners, we can enjoy a coffee inside ... good news as the weather gets cooler. It's also a good time to reflect on our good fortune living in the Riverland.

The garden has received some much-needed attention. I know that many share the same "inspiration" as I see lots of people at Bunnings and garden centres ... "socially distancing" of course! How those words have come to be part of our vocabulary, as though we've used them daily all our lives!

I keep my travel dreams alive by visiting virtual travel sites or reliving memories of past travels. I'm committed to getting more photographic books created. Once I'm totally refreshed with "Snapfish", I'll possibly run another class. Watch this space!

What has really touched me during this time is the community generosity and the creativity in connecting with others—in many cases with neighbours people had hardly acknowledged in the past. We've all witnessed footage of people in lockdown singing on balconies or cheering for health workers who have been in the front line during this challenging time.

I've watched a lot less TV than I thought I might but have listened to many more TED Talks. I've mentioned these inspirational talks in a previous newsletter and continue to access them when I want to fill in 15-20 minutes. I often listen to them as I'm knitting and my husband is chuffed that he has finally got a pair of my hand knitted socks!

I've read more books this past couple of months and though I'm not really a winter person (I'm sure in a past life I

used to hibernate), I'm quite looking forward to being home and enjoying the warmth of our wood fire.

For those of you who would ordinarily spend your winters up north, I hope you too will find some comfort in a local winter. I'm sure once the borders are opened up many of you will take to the roads.

I've certainly enjoyed some of the especially funny jokes, images and videos that have circulated and I am often amazed at how quickly they appear. There are some genuinely clever, hilarious people out there who have added a spot of humour more than once a day. I love this one ... I must practise!



***I look forward to reconnecting  
with you at some time in the not  
too distant future.***



# INSPIRING SENIORS

www.thesenior.com.au 28 Jan 2020

## *Eric Clinch, 94, shares his gardening tips for seniors*

HE may be 94, but that doesn't prevent retired boot maker and avid gardener, Eric Clinch, from wielding his pruning shears and banishing weeds on a weekly basis.

Green-thumbed Eric is a familiar sight in the communal garden at Aveo's Freedom Care Community Tanah Merah, where he is a resident.

Eric, who owned a boot making shop in the NSW Blue Mountains and was also a firefighter, moved to an aged care community in Queensland in 2018.

"I continue my love for this hobby by tidying up the communal garden area, watering the plants and getting cuttings, as well as helping residents maintain their own gardens on the verandas," said Eric.

"Aside from being a great source of exercise for me, it's also afforded me the opportunity to socialise with other residents. Whether they want some cuttings or just general help with taking care of their plants, it's given me a terrific way to connect with others in my community."

From the age of 10, Eric attended the St Vincent's Boy's Home in Parramatta, Sydney where, in addition to classroom lessons, he was taught trades and technical skills.

"These practical skills came in handy as the orphanage was self-supporting. Because of our need to be self-reliant, we grew our own vegetables from seeds. This taught me valuable skills such as responsibility and self-confidence, from a young age."

Since then, gardening has remained a passionate hobby "especially as I used

to grow vegetables and flowers for my family in the back yard. I love gardening as it gives me an interest and after all, we all need a little sunshine, fresh air and something to do."

### ***Here are Eric's top tips for gardening, and staying active:***

- Keep aerating the soil so that water can soak into the ground.
- Don't plant plants too close together - make sure you can dig in between them.
- Rake up dead leaves and grass and bury it to make good soil when it rots, which helps to keep the moisture in.
- Look after your body by sleeping, eating and exercising well.
- To keep active, I swim three times a day and try to exercise before I go to sleep.
- I usually lie down and do tummy crunches while I try to touch my toes as it helps tighten my stomach muscles.

### ***Benefits for seniors:***

Ben Miura, Senior Designer at Landsberg Garden Design, agrees with Eric that there are numerous physical and mental health benefits related to gardening and being in nature.

He says gardening reduces stress, gets the body moving, boosts cognitive functions and feel-good hormones, increases social interaction and alerts the senses.

"Gardening can have numerous

benefits for seniors," he said. "It gets people physically active and can remind people of their younger years."

He said while it's important to be sun-safe there's also the health benefits from getting vitamin D.

"The activity of gardening and watching things grow can be a social activity and makes people feel a part of a community. You're breathing in fresh air, not air through an air conditioning unit and it can also be really enjoyable to harvest food and flowers."

He said there's also the sensory enjoyment - smelling, touching, looking, listening and remembering.

Ben says it's never too late to take up gardening.

### ***Ben's top tips for a beginners:***

- Speak to your local nursery about the most suitable plants for your area.
- Understand the environment of your garden: sunlight, heat and moisture.
- Prepare the soil. If the soil is not good the plant will struggle or get off to a bad start.
- It's a good idea to garden early in the morning or late in the day to prevent too much sun exposure.
- Always wear sun protection and remember to drink enough water. Take your time while gardening, take breaks.
- Start a gardening journal— this is enjoyable and helpful. Make notes on what you've seen or done in the garden.







1

CHANGE  
OF  
PLANS

With many people's travel plans thwarted, we can turn to the numerous online videos and virtual travel experiences that can "fill the temporary gap." How temporary? How long is a piece of string? Instead of our planned trip to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Geoff & I will take a look around our own state in the first instance and when state borders open again, we'll check out some of the interstate offerings. I'm sure you'll do the same.

In the meantime, I thought I'd use a few of the many images we've taken as the basis of a travel quiz.

Can you identify the following locations?



2



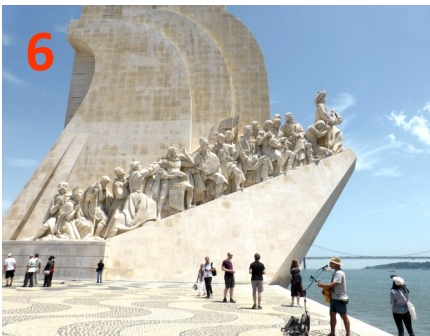
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6



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8



9



10

## QUIZ ANSWERS:

1 Lake Annecy, France 2 Mont Saint-Michel, Normandy, France 3 Nyhavn, Copenhagen, Denmark 4 St Paul's Cathedral, London 5 Parliament Building, Budapest, Hungary 6 Discoveries Monument, Belém, Portugal 7 Merlin Gate, Ypres, Belgium 8 Bamberg, Bavaria, Germany 9 Sibelius Monument, Helsinki, Finland 10 Pena Palace, Sintra, Portugal





# laughter is the best medicine

[www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm)

**Laughter relaxes the whole body**—a good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.

**Laughter boosts the immune system**—it decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.

**Laughter triggers the release of endorphins**, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

**Laughter protects the heart**—it improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

**Laughter burns calories**—OK, so it's no replacement for going to the gym, but one study found that laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn approximately 40 calories.

**Laughter lightens anger's heavy load.** Nothing diffuses anger and conflict faster than a shared laugh. Looking at the funny side can put problems into perspective and enable you to move on from confrontations without holding onto bitterness or resentment.

**Laughter may even help you to live longer.** A study in Norway found that people with a strong sense of humour outlived those who don't laugh as much.



## Is home schooling such a new phenomenon?

*Back in the 1950s and '60s, there was no hiding behind a keyboard or phone and some of the most memorable and hilarious quotes came straight from your parents' mouths.*

I recently received an email with these home-school "lessons." I can certainly relate to them ... perhaps you can too!

My mother taught me about **STAMINA**  
"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."

My father taught me **LOGIC**  
"Because I said so, that's why."

My mother taught me **MORE LOGIC**  
"If you fall out of that tree and break your neck, you're not coming shopping with me."

My father taught me **IRONY**  
"Stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about."

My mother taught me about **ANTICIPATION**  
"Just wait until your father gets home."

My mother taught me **MEDICAL SCIENCE**  
"Don't make that face or the wind will change and you'll stay like that forever."

My mother taught me about **WEATHER**  
"Your room looks like a tornado went through it."

My mother taught me about **HYPOCRISY**  
"If I told you once, I've told you a million times, don't exaggerate!"

My mother taught me **EMPATHY**  
"Eat your food. There are kids starving in China."

My mother taught me about the science of **OSMOSIS**  
"Shut your mouth and eat your vegetables."

My mother taught me about **CONTORTIONISM**  
"Just look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

My mother taught me **FORESIGHT**  
"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident and have to go to hospital."

My father taught me the **CIRCLE OF LIFE**  
"I brought you into this world and I can take you out."

My mother taught me about **BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION**  
"Stop acting like your father!"

My father taught me about **JUSTICE**  
"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

My mother taught me **WISDOM**  
"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

My mother taught me **GENETICS**  
"You're just like your father."

My mother taught me **RELIGION**  
"You better pray your father doesn't come home before you clean up that mess."

*Aren't you glad that you were home-schooled?*

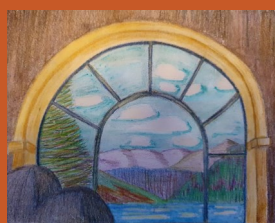
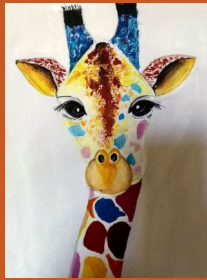
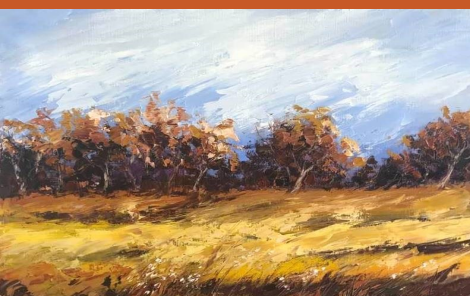
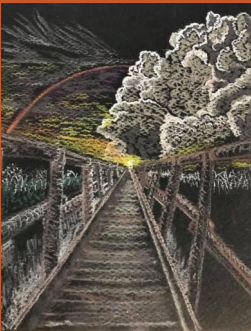




# Art is too important not to share.

— Romero Britto

*With challenges such as "Wearable", "Outside my Window", "Somewhere Else", "Anzac" and "Mothers' Day", the art group has not rested on its laurels. Unable to meet face to face, the group continued by posting their works online. This has only been possible because Anna Harper had the knowhow to set up a private Facebook page for the group. Take a look at what they've produced.*







# Eye health tips for over-60s

[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

***Our eyesight changes as we get older, so many of us will need to wear glasses or contact lenses as we age. Here are some tips to help keep your vision clear.***

## HAVE REGULAR EYE TESTS

An eye test is not just good for checking whether your glasses are up to date. It's also a vital check on the health of your eyes.

An eye test can pick up eye diseases, such as glaucoma, cataracts and melanoma in the eye, as well as general health problems, including diabetes and high blood pressure. Good eyesight is important in reducing accidental injuries from falls and motor vehicle accidents.

An optometrist is a trained health professional who can assess your vision but also pick up any more serious eye conditions such as glaucoma or macular degeneration that lead to blindness. Eye testing by an optometrist is covered under Medicare. The Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) provides for a comprehensive optometric consultation every 2 years.

However, if you experience significant changes in your vision, new signs or symptoms, or you have a progressive eye disease, you may be able to access subsidised consultations more regularly. The MBS website lists Medicare services that are subsidised by the Government. You can also ask an optometrist or ophthalmologist about these services.

You may also be eligible for discounts on your glasses and contact lenses if you hold a Seniors Card. Check with eyewear stores in your area to see which ones offer a discount. Another tip that can sometimes save you money is to recycle a favourite pair of frames by having new lenses put in them.

## WEAR THE RIGHT LENSES

An eye test will establish whether you need a different prescription for your glasses or contact lenses.

It's important to wear the correct prescription lenses. This will improve your quality of life and reduce the risk of accidents such as falls.

## KEEP YOUR EYES HEALTHY

As well as having regular eye tests and wearing the correct glasses, you can do several things to keep your eyes as healthy as possible.

### ***Eat well:***

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is important for your eyes. Eating plenty of vegetables and fruit will benefit your overall health and may help protect against some conditions such as cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.

### ***Wear sunglasses:***

Strong sunlight can damage your eyes and may increase your risk of cataracts. Wear sunglasses or contact lenses with a built-in UV filter to protect your eyes from harmful rays.

### ***Quit smoking:***

Smoking can increase your chances of developing conditions such as cataracts and AMD.

### ***Stay a healthy weight:***

Being overweight increases your risk of diabetes, which can lead to sight loss.

### ***Use good lighting:***

To see well, your eyes need 3 times as much light when you're 60 as they did when you were 20. Increase the daylight in your home by keeping windows clean and curtains pulled back. Make sure you have good electric lighting too, especially at the top and bottom of stairs so you can see the steps clearly. For reading or close work, use a direct light from a flexible table lamp, positioned so the light is not reflected by the page and causing glare.

### ***Exercise:***

Good circulation and oxygen intake are important for your eye health. Both of these are stimulated by regular exercise.

### ***Sleep well:***

As you sleep, your eyes are continuously lubricated, clearing out irritants such as dust or smoke that may have accumulated during the day.

## EYE PROBLEMS AS YOU GET OLDER

As you get older, you become more likely to get certain eye problems:

### ***Difficulty reading:***

Eye muscles start to weaken from the age of 45. It's a natural ageing process of the eye that happens to us all. By the time you're 60, you'll probably need separate reading glasses or an addition to your prescription lenses (bifocals, multifocals or varifocals).

### ***Floaters:***

These tiny specks or spots that float across your vision are normally

harmless. If they persist, see an optician as they may be a sign of an underlying health condition.

### ***Cataracts:***

Easily detected in an eye test, this gradual clouding of the eye's lens is very common in people aged over 60. A simple operation can restore sight.

### ***Glaucoma:***

This is related to an increase in pressure in the eye that leads to damage of the optic nerve, which connects the eye to the brain. Left untreated, glaucoma leads to tunnel vision and, ultimately, blindness. However, if it's detected early enough, these complications can usually be avoided with eye drops.

### ***(AMD) Age-related macular degeneration:***

This is the name given to a group of degenerative diseases of the retina that cause progressive, permanent loss of central vision, affecting the ability to see fine detail, drive, read and recognise faces. It is the leading cause of major vision loss in Australia.

There is no cure for AMD but treatment can slow down its progression, depending on the stage and the type of disease (wet, dry and other forms). The earlier the disease is detected, the more vision you are likely to retain.

Regular checks and eye tests are recommended to reduce the risk or slow down the progression of AMD.

### ***Diabetic retinopathy:***

People with diabetes may develop this condition that can lead to serious loss of vision. If you have diabetes, make sure that you have regular eye tests.

