

From the Committee

The committee has decided to put out a more regular communication until things are completely back to normal.

Have you paid your fees?

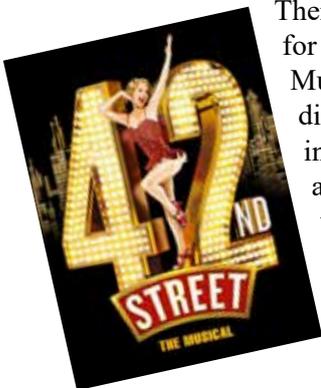
It has come to our attention that members who are not financial are attending classes. At the end of this month all tutors will be supplied with a list of financial members attending their classes. Unfinancial members will be delisted.

We believe the value offered by Creswick U3A is the best in the state and as far as we are aware our fees are the lowest. To maintain this we need every member to pull their weight and pay the fees when they fall due. Last year we had nine months of activities before shut down. Our old financial year was July to June, memberships were carried forward to 1 January giving a full year in 2021 for your participation.

New venues

We have negotiated venue changes for some activities to allow them to proceed under restrictions, with the old Creswick Railway Station and now the Scout Hall being available to use. The Scout Hall now has heating and cooling, the kitchen is being upgraded, new toilets installed and floor coverings put in. This will make it a cosy venue available during the day for our use.

Polish up your tap shoes!



There is a film luncheon planned for Tuesday 27 April at the Regent Multiplex. This will be slightly different due to corona with individual box lunches supplied and limits to numbers as per the regulations. At the moment a couple of the cinemas have a limit of 20 and the largest Cinema 7 only holds 50. The cost is \$22.

The movie, **42nd Street** is a remake of the iconic motion picture. When revered Broadway director Julian Marsh (Warner Baxter) falls on hard times with both his health and his finances, he directs an ambitious musical as a final production before his retirement. His lead actress, Dorothy Brock (Bebe Daniels), is torn

between two loves – the show’s wealthy backer, Abner Dillon (Guy Kibbee), and the earnest but penniless actor Pat Denning (George Brent) – while aspiring young performer Peggy Sawyer (Ruby Keeler) waits in the wings, hoping for her big break. This musical comedy includes a string of hit numbers. Register now for this event.



Learn about your ancestors

Expressions of interest are being sought for a **Genealogy Online** course to be held fortnightly over 16 weeks. What is genealogy? What sources of information are there? Where to start? Original and secondary records. This course shows you how to go about your search and lists the free websites where you can find the information you need. Email your interest to members@creswicku3a.com

Random Acts of Corkage

Bill is starting this monthly wine group which will cover different wines, vineyards, varieties or vigneron. Cost will be only \$5 per session, we will sample one wine per month. The time will be 1.00 pm-3.00 pm, commencing Thursday 15 April in the Scout Hall, North Parade, Creswick. Places are limited so register now. Third Thursday of the month, March to November.

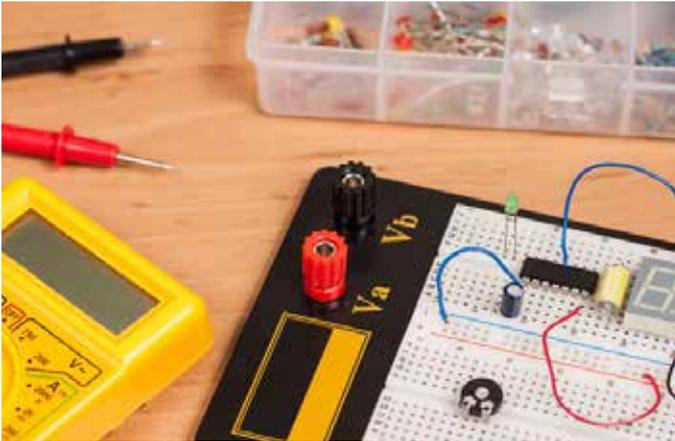


Let's be good tenants

Groups using the Railway Station or Scout Hall facilities need to be aware they are not-for-profit community groups and do not have cleaners. It is up to us to make sure everything is clean before we leave. The station has a vacuum cleaner available.

We are very grateful to both the Scouts and the Creswick Railway Workshop Association for allowing us to use their premises and the low rental they charge us makes us obligated to do the right thing. It is not only the tutor who is responsible for cleanliness; all of us are obligated.

Hobby electronics



Don't forget our bushwalking chief, Andrew, is offering members the opportunity to learn about microcontrollers and peripheral devices. It would require the purchase of a 'starter kit' priced around \$90 and you would also need a laptop computer.

There would be a minimum of formal tuition and an emphasis on discovery and mutual support. By working through the projects in the starter kit, students would acquire basic programming skills, some knowledge of electronics and the ability to construct simple devices. Email your interest to members@creswicku3a.com

Age Pension increases

The Age Pension increases on 20 March. Here's a breakdown of the new rates.

	Previous	New	Increase
SINGLE			
Base	\$860.60	\$868.30	\$7.70
Supplement	\$69.60	\$70.30	\$0.70
Energy Supplement	\$14.10	\$14.10	–
Total	\$944.30	\$952.70	\$8.40
COUPLE (Each)			
Base	\$648.70	\$654.50	\$5.80
Supplement	\$52.50	\$53.00	\$0.50
Energy Supplement	\$10.60	\$10.60	–
Total	\$711.80	\$718.10	\$6.30

CRESWICK HISTORY

William Guthrie Spence... trade union leader and politician



William Guthrie Spence (1846-1926), trade unionist and politician, was born on 7 August 1846 on the island of Eday, Orkney, Scotland, son of James Maxwell Spence, stonemason, and his wife Jane, née Guthrie. He came to Geelong, Victoria, with his family, probably in February 1852.

The following year the family moved to Spring Hill near Creswick and in 1854, as a small boy, he reputedly observed the Eureka rebellion, later claiming that he had vivid and formative memories of it. At 13 William was a shepherd at G. Bell and P. McGuinness's station, Corong, in the Wimmera, and in 1861 he was a butcher-boy.

At the age of 14 he had a miner's right. In 1912 he recalled that goldfields life had "made such a deep impression on my youthful mind that nothing but the grave will efface it". Spence had no formal schooling but 'at odd moments' was taught by a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He read 'in a curiously miscellaneous way' including, as he matured, the works of Bellamy, Blatchford, Ruskin and Morris. ▶



He became secretary and Sunday school superintendent for the Creswick Presbyterian Church and in the 1880s often preached with the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians.

On 20 June 1871 at the Presbyterian manse, Creswick, he married Ann Jane, daughter of William Savage of Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Spence's mining experience included work as a 'shift boss' and manager. In the Clunes district in 1874 he initiated an ephemeral trade union that was part of the process of the formation at Bendigo in the same year of the Amalgamated Miners' Association of Victoria. In 1878 as secretary of the Creswick Miners' Union, with John Sampson president, he led 600 men into the AMA; both were later black-balled by the mine-owners.

In 1882-91 Spence was general secretary, and under him the association 'was moderate and conciliatory but firm on fundamentals'. He claimed it never refused a conference, but it had 29 strikes before 1890. A superb negotiator, he wanted a union that would cover all kinds of miners in Australia and New Zealand, and from 1884 several unions, including New South Wales coalminers, affiliated loosely and the union became the AMA of Australasia.

Spence co-operated with the Melbourne Trades Hall Council but could not convince his union of the need of political organisation, although in 1886 he secured several amendments to the colony's *Regulation of Mines and Machinery Act*.

At the second Intercolonial Trades Union Congress in Melbourne in 1884, he gained unanimous approval for the establishment of an Intercolonial Federal Council of Amalgamated Trades, but nothing came of it.

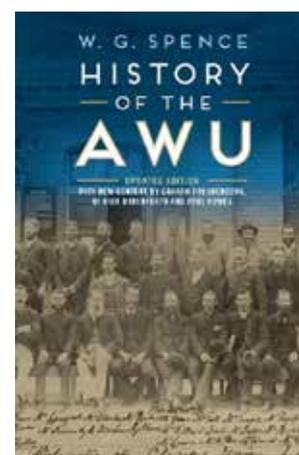
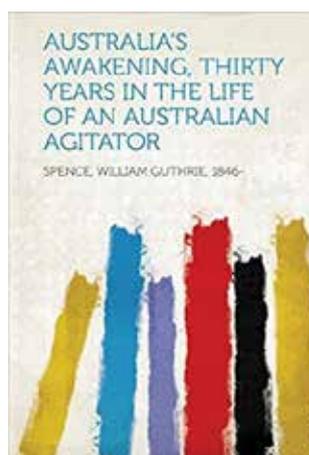
A teetotaler, in Creswick he became a member of the militia and a leading temperance advocate. Prominent in the debating society, he was a borough councillor from 1884 and a justice of the peace from 1888. A recent historian has said of him, "Genial and quite imperturbable, he stands out as the most remarkable man in the remarkable town of Creswick in the eighties".

Spence's great repute as an industrial organiser of widely dispersed workers led to his appointment in 1886 as foundation president of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union of Australasia. By 1890, with great skill and zeal and against aggressive opposition from many pastoralists, he had unionized most shearers in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales and had gained the 'closed shop' in about 85 per cent of the shearing sheds. With main objectives of recruiting the Queensland shearers and obtaining the complete 'union shed', this work took him for the first time consistently among city unionists. In the late 1880s he encouraged his New South Wales branches to join the Trades and Labor Council in Sydney.

On 17 May 1890 he dominated a conference in Brisbane at which the owners of Jondaryan station recognized the Queensland Shearers' Union in the face of a putative united front of maritime unions which had refused to handle their wool. This victory led Spence to intensify his efforts for maximum unionism in New South Wales and Victoria. In a verbose manifesto of 12 July which put great pressure on non-union pastoralists, he claimed incorrectly that the Wharf labourers' and Seamen's unions had agreed to back his campaign with direct action.

His plans excluded strikes by shearers, but he exacerbated inflamed industrial relations in the intercolonial maritime industries, especially in New South Wales and among ships' officers, and helped to precipitate the maritime strike that broke out on 15 August and ended on 2 November 1890 with the workers defeated. Against his vote on the Labor Defence Council the shearers were partially involved in September for one week.

Spence's ineptitude resulted in part from his heavy work load. In September at a critical stage of the strike he gave valuable evidence in Melbourne to the royal commission on gold-mining, but essentially his great success with bushworkers had limited his industrial understanding and enlarged his populist longings. Some of his pastoralist opponents shared his mysticism; they believed their own propaganda that somewhere in the outback 'Spence's station', allegedly acquired by levies on the workers, was the ultimate in luxury and wealth.



His unique mixture of inspirational socialism and hard-headed unionism evoked a confused vision of all employees in one big union but produced little understanding of the problems of city workers. He emphasized the primacy of the ASU in Labor political action, and broke with the AMA in Victoria in 1891-92 when it drew up its own programme in opposition to that of the Progressive Political League; in 1892 he ran for the league at the by-election for the seat of Dundas in the Victorian Legislative Assembly but lost narrowly.

At the seventh Intercolonial Trades and Labor Congress of Australasia in Ballarat in 1891, he backed the scheme for the Australasian Federation of Labour, which envisaged a firm link between industrial and political organization. Spence took no part in the determined work of the Trades and Labor Council in Sydney in 1890-91 that produced the Labor Electoral League and spectacular success at the 1891 general elections.

More than most of his contemporaries, he was muddled about the connexion between the 'New Unionism' and the old. In Sydney on 12 June 1892 his lecture on 'The Ethics of the New Unionism' (published 1892) confused its relationship with political action, but revealed his own millennialism: "It is useless", he said, "to go on preaching from Sabbath to Sabbath asking men to be better but ... the New Unionism is to deal with those evils in a practical manner."

During the 1891-93 conflicts in the Labor Party in New South Wales he used the Federation of Labour to oppose the 'solidarities'; when they triumphed in 1894-95 his prospects of assuming a leading political role had evaporated and he was lampooned by the bright young city Labor men, especially William Holman and Billy Hughes, in the radical newspaper the New Order.

Spence's industrial success continued. In 1894 he helped to combine several small bush unions with the ASU and to found the Australian Workers' Union. As its secretary in 1894-98 and president 1898-1917, he saw the union as the industrial wing of the Labor Party.

He held the mining-pastoralist seat of Cobar in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in 1898-1901, but made little impression in parliament though he was accorded the deference merited by past achievement.

A supporter of Federation, he pointed to the successful organization of the AWU. He was elected to the first Federal parliament in 1901 as member for Darling in

far-west New South Wales. In Sydney in 1909, helped by his son-in-law Hector Lamond, he published *Australia's Awakening*, which stated that the organisation of the bushworkers and the 1890 strike marked the foundations of industrial trade unionism in Australia. The book was an effort both to disarm growing opposition in the A.W.U. to his presidency and to defend the union from the Industrial Workers of the World, who were organizing the 'One Big Union'.

In 1911 in Sydney he published the History of the AWU; he wrote several pamphlets and also contributed to and helped to edit the *Australian Worker*. In the 1900s he worked hard for a Labor daily under the control of the AWU. In 1914-15 Spence was Commonwealth postmaster-general and in 1916-17 vice-president of the Executive Council; as a minister he was 'largely the voice of the permanent heads'.

During the Labor Party crisis in 1916-17 he was ill and, according to AWU officials, was tricked by Hughes and Lamond into voting for conscription. He was the one member of the union allowed to resign instead of being expelled for his action.

Rejected by the Labor Party he lost his seat in 1917, but at a by-election the same year he won Darwin (Tasmania) as a Nationalist candidate. He ran for Batman (Victoria) in 1919 but lost.

He died of pulmonary oedema in his son's home at Terang on 13 December 1926, survived by his wife, four daughters and three of his five sons. Buried in Coburg cemetery, he left an estate valued for probate at £1200.

From the Australian Dictionary of Biography.



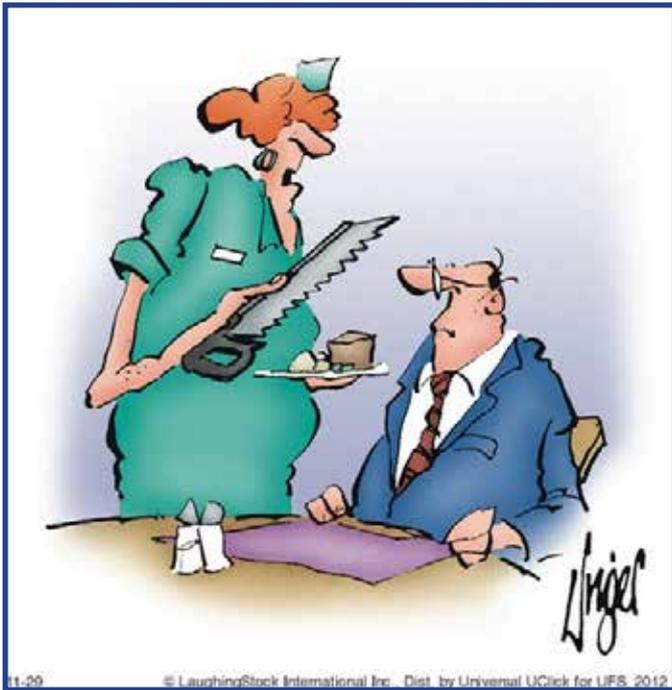
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- A couple living near a busy road were fed up because every time a bus rumbled by, the wardrobe door swung open. The wife decided to get a joiner in to fix the wardrobe.
- The joiner checked it over and couldn't find a fault so got inside the wardrobe. Just then, the husband came home and went into the bedroom. "What's going on?" he asks, as he opens the wardrobe doors.
- The joiner replied, "You won't believe me, but I'm waiting for a bus!"



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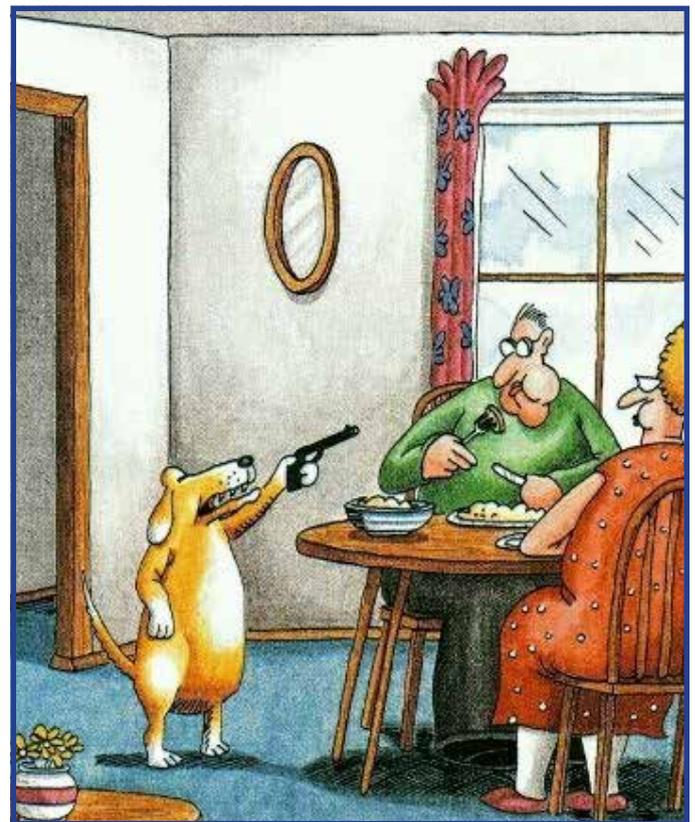
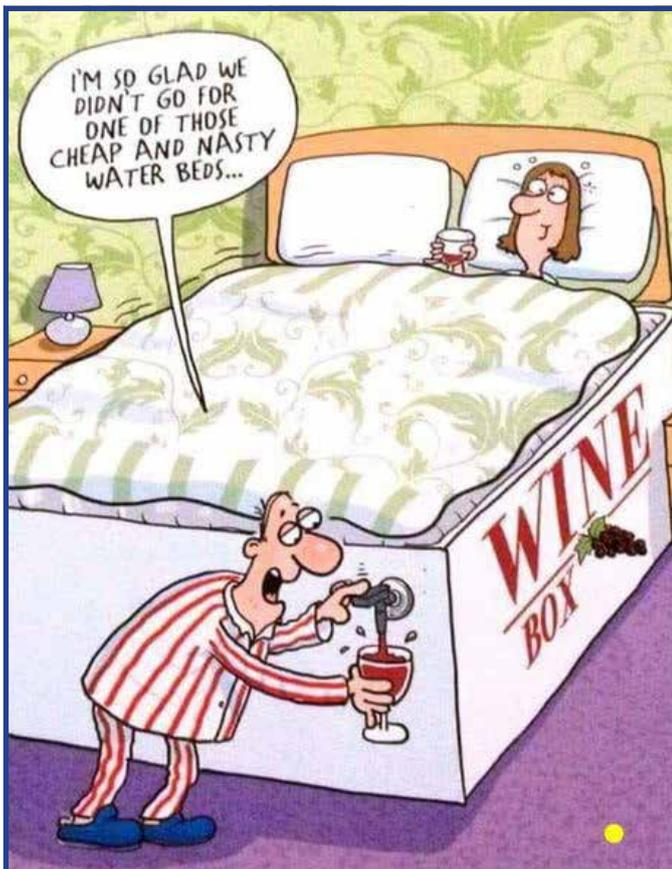
To make you smile...



"You'll need this for the steak and kidney pie."



"Will you turn that fan down!"



"Hey, bucko... I'm through begging."