



## The Third Way eNewsletter December 2024

### News from the Chair – Lesley Sparks

Dear Members,

Christmas is almost here with groups taking the opportunity to organise social gatherings for their members to celebrate another successful year of meetings.

Our newly formed social subcommittee has already arranged their first event 'Mince Pies, Mulled Wine, Christmas Quiz and more' on 18th December. It proved extremely popular, and the places were snapped up almost as soon as they were released. I am sure it will be a great success.

Over a year ago we were informed by Milton Keynes Community Foundation, our landlords, that we would have to move from our current office, initially the move was imminent but finding a suitable replacement has been troublesome. We now have been offered an office in Margaret Powell House in CMK and should make the move in January. You have been given our new phone number (07716 667348) to leave messages and as soon as we move, we will let you know the postal address.

I have been asked to let the keen knitters and crocheters amongst us know of two knitting projects, one for Age UK and the other for the Royal British Legion. Both appeals are in the body of the newsletter. They use up small amounts of left-over wool, so dust off your hooks and needles and make a start to raise funds for these worthy charities.

During 2024 we introduced square readers for group payments. They work in the same way as buying your shopping or coffee by 'pinging'

your card on the reader. With the demise of high street banks and with some Post Offices restricting the denominations and amounts of cash they allow to be paid in these practical payment takers have greatly reduced the workload for group coordinators. Diana, our Treasurer, who checks the monthly submissions of money received from your group against the reams of bank statements has found this method of payment easier to reconcile. If your group has one, please think about using this safe and secure way to make any payments.

On behalf of the management committee I would like to wish you all health and happiness over the Christmas period and for the coming year.

Best wishes to you all  
Lesley

## News from the Groups

Exploring World Faiths – Linda Morris [ewf@mku3a.org](mailto:ewf@mku3a.org).



If you have seen a very tall church to the north of Milton Keynes, it's very likely to be the Saint James the Great church at Hanslope. It's hard to believe, but it used to be even taller, years ago!

Should you wish to find out more about the church then please contact me to join the u3a group who are there on Wednesday 8th January, in the afternoon. More information is available on our group page. (Please note that we normally meet on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month.)

## Painters Progress – Sandra Oxley

### Charles Bezzina's visit to Painters Progress

Charles visited us to talk to us about perspective and composition in relation to landscape painting. He asked us to imagine we were standing in the middle of a road and to make a quick line drawing of the road with a house on the right and lampposts on the left. This was to establish where the horizon line was. It is always at eye level. He told us an interesting anecdote about when a family member sent photos from Indonesia on that fateful Boxing Day. As an artist he noticed people were pointing upwards at the sea, the horizon line was not at eye level due the phenomena of the tsunami. That fact will certainly help me remember that in normal situations, the horizon line I see is at my eye level. If it's low, it's a worm's eye view; high bird's eye view. All lines then meet at the vanishing point on the horizon line.

Other indicators of perspective are size and tone. The objects in the foreground are larger with greater detail and deeper colour than those objects in the background. We used a photograph Charles had taken of Hardwater Mill on the Nene near Great Doddington as our source material to construct a painting of our own. The photograph has little to focus on in the foreground to draw the eye into the composition, so a tree or maybe livestock or waterfowl could be in the meadow by the artist.



The first step in planning the composition was to make out a grid of nine equal rectangles arranged 3X3. Photographers will be well aware of the rule of thirds which we can have on the screen to help us line up a photograph. We began by constructing the low bridge and row of cottages as the focal point in the centre of the large sheet of paper and then planned along the horizon line before adding the middle and foreground details. Once planned we choose our preferred medium to paint with.

There is a video of the event on our Painters Progress page online.

### Reading Group – Margaret Newens

John – our Reading Group hero



Earlier this year, after more than twenty years of hosting the MKu3a Reading Group in their home, John and Molly Reardon decided with members that it was time to close the group. Recent members of the group joined together to express our appreciation, thanks and good wishes to Molly and John, now both in their nineties. Our thanks are not only for John's leadership of the group but for John and Molly's hospitality in welcoming

us into their home over all the years.

All those who came to the group over the years benefited hugely from John's leadership. We were enthused by his love of books and extensive knowledge of literature. He encouraged us all to suggest books to read and would compile a long list for us to vote on for the coming period. His research of authors before meetings, and his



sensitive facilitation of discussions made our times together enjoyable and stimulating. We were introduced to authors and books that we would not have found, or perhaps chosen, on our own.

Thank you and good wishes to John and Molly.

### Redway Walkers – Richard Barrett

The Redway Walkers have had another successful year in 2024 with over 60 members, walking every Tuesday for about 5 miles over a couple of hours. As a group we have walked a combined total of 5,500 miles so far in 2024 with 4 more walks still to be counted. We have



survived all that the weather had to throw at us and diverted around the flooded paths.

We had an influx of new members after our Walkers

Introduction programme in January and February 2024, 35 new members started the course and 16 graduated and moved into the group.

Walking is very good for you and prolongs your active life (sounds like an advert for dog food) however with the passage of time we tend to slow down and take shorter walks. To this end in 2025 the Redway Walkers group will begin a second walk every week on a Friday where we will walk for an hour, 10:30 – 11:30 with venues chosen so that we can go for a coffee afterwards if possible.

Have a look at the Redway Walkers page on the MKu3a website and email [redways@mku3a.org](mailto:redways@mku3a.org) to sign up.

## Third Age Players – Greta Langdale

The Third Age Players are excited to announce a collaborative event with mku3a in 2025.

As most of you will know, we put on an annual production and last September it was *Secrets, Scandals and Gossip* at Wavendon Community Centre (picture attached of Henry VIII, Catherine Parr and the manservant).

This year, our production will be a Murder Mystery, entitled *High Tea, Laced with Murder*. There will be five performances in total, over two weekends – two performances exclusively for u3a members, and three performances for friends, family and supporters of TAP.



Set in the 1920's, The event will include a 4 course High Tea, served between the nefarious goings-on. (We promise not to serve any Arsenic)! The performances themselves will not be interactive, but the audience will be invited to guess the culprit(s).

In the meantime, I am appealing for some items/costumes which we might be able to borrow?

- A toolbelt and old-fashioned tools
- A fair isle or plain wool sleeveless pullover; tweed or tartan plus-fours or trousers, knee length patterned socks – all men's medium size (waist approx. 38")
- Women's twin set – medium-large
- Old fashioned tea trolley

If you think you might be able to help in any way or would like to get involved with the staging of the event, please contact me on 07905 247870 /01908 501 563.

## MK U3A Choir – Vivienne Shaw

Rehearsals are coming to an end in preparation for our Christmas concert, which this year will be held in the Parish Church, Newport Pagnell at 2.30pm on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December, with all the proceeds going to our two charities.

Tickets are going well, but there is plenty of room there, so please come along if you can, and welcome in Christmas.

This is Jennifer's and my last concert after 12 years, and we want to say a huge thank you to all members of the choir, past and present for 12 years of enjoyment of making music with the friendliest, most loyal and committed group of people you could wish to meet. It has been a very difficult decision to 'retire', but I'd like to wish all the best to the two people who are hopefully taking over from us.

Pat Mountford MD

## Outings Group – Chris Behrendt

Meetings are held the SECOND Thursday of the month.

The next meeting:

*13 February 2025* from 2.15pm for a 2.30pm start for the people attending.

The first meeting of the year for the Group.

Herons Lodge Guide Centre, Bradwell Road, Loughton Lodge MK8 9AA

*As of the February meeting there will be a £1 cost for attending the outings meeting to help cover the cost of hire of the hall and refreshments.*

*All members of MKU3A are welcome on any of the outings and the Outings monthly meeting will be the first opportunity to 'sign up' for the Outings. Information will also be available at the monthly Open meetings and sent to all members by e-mail. Postal applications are accepted, please contact Diana, [outingsmku3a@gmail.com](mailto:outingsmku3a@gmail.com)*

Payment can be made by contactless Card Reader, cheque and cash at the Outings meeting and Open meeting. Bank transfer is also available, details on the second page of the flyer.

Bookings: Unless paying at the Outings and Open meeting please contact the Outings group on 07354 493998 (please note the new mobile number from January 2025) by e-mailing [outings@mku3a.org](mailto:outings@mku3a.org) to ensure there are places available before sending your form and cheque or making any bank transfer payment. This will secure your reservation dependent on availability.

The Team members (yes, we have decided that 'Team' is more appropriate as it is how we work to produce the Outings during the year) are Anne Davis, Ray Cockram, Deb Hodges, Jennie Savage, Anni Cowmeadow and Chris Behrendt who is also the Group Coordinator, e-mail [outings@mku3a.org](mailto:outings@mku3a.org).

Diana Sears manages the booking for Outings and any finance queries, [outingsmku3a@gmail.com](mailto:outingsmku3a@gmail.com)

#### Brockley's Pie Experience Thursday 24 October

A new, very hands on experience, learning some of the history of Melton Mowbray and the pies, and after donning hairnets and aprons, we were talked through each step to then make our own individual pork pie.

So much laughter and photos taken as we kneaded, shaped with the pie dolly the pastry, filled with the meat, crimped and shaped the



edges to produce the pie for baking at home. All received 20% discount vouchers for future experience (bread making, sausage making) and a business card for complimentary purchase.

My pie caught a rainbow as the sun streamed through the window.



Country Living Christmas Craft Fair in conjunction with Good Housekeeping.

Only 28 tickets booked of the 40 pre purchased thus a loss. This is why consideration of future events where payment is upfront has to be considered more carefully by the Team, such as whether we can purchase less tickets and then purchase additional if required.

The day itself was most enjoyable, plenty of stands with gifts that are probably not on the High Street. Beauty makeovers, free samples to try of cremes and potions. The speakers were excellent, I managed to see Kelly Hoppen, Lucy Worsley – brilliant – and Caroline Quentin – another excellent talk about her life and the book she has recently released – signed and bought as a present for a friend who is as avid a gardener as Caroline.



I saw others from our group in the talks and getting signed books by Lucy Worsley and Caroline Quentin. Plus, each received a 'goody bag' as we left the event. Jennie getting her book signed by Lucy Worsley.

2025

The Barn Lunch – a Paper Anniversary to celebrate two years of the reinvigorated group

23 January 12 noon for 12.30pm

Cost: £22 for a choice of main meal, starter or pudding followed by tea/coffee – all other refreshments at own cost.

Places still available, closing date 3 January, e-mail [outings@mku3a.org](mailto:outings@mku3a.org) for a booking form

Lead on the day: Chris Behrendt 07766 026357

Cirque du Soleil

21 February – Royal Albert Hall

Sold out with a waiting list

Lead on the day: Chris Behrendt 07766 026357

The Outings for the remainder of the year are being progressed with the March outing being launched to those who attended the November Outings meeting two months prior to the date of the outing, before being circulated in the usual manner.

Thank you on behalf of the Team for the support we have had during 2024 and the thanks received for producing such interesting outings.

#### HOLIDAYS AND SHORT BREAKS

*By now most will know that my title for this is Tour Organiser and whilst able to promote the short breaks to MKu3a members, relatives and friends who may not be members, no monies for these short breaks will go through MKu3a accounts.*

Warner's Gunton Hall Suffolk 17 February 4 Nights 5 days

Low seasons offer

£319 3 course dinner, bed and breakfast, 6 doubles for sole use rooms available at a cost of £80 for the 4 nights, twin and double rooms also available.

Booking now closed with 31 people signed up.

September 2025 – Kynren and Northumbria

27 people have expressed an interest in this short break – Thank you, Kynren is an experience never to be forgotten and so many places in Northumbria to explore plus new adventures on the travel up/down through so many of our English counties.

The flyer for this short break should be available early in 2025.

Quiz Group – Pat Hodges

## Christmas Coffee Morning

St Thomas Church, Simpson  
Saturday 14th December 10.30 - 1pm

Hot drinks, mulled wine,  
bacon rolls plus veggie savouries  
homemade cakes  
Christmas crafts & Raffle



Proceeds towards  
St Mark's Meals & St Thomas's Church Funds



CHARITY QUIZZES WITH SUPPER 2025. MUST be booked – please contact [missquiz@sky.com](mailto:missquiz@sky.com)

£15.00 with food or £7.50 without food. Teas at half time. Simpson Village Hall or Church. 7.00pm start

Sat 11<sup>th</sup> January for National Animal Welfare Trust (HULA)

Sat Jan 25<sup>th</sup> for Community Voices Water Eaton

Sat Feb 8<sup>th</sup> for St Thomas's Church Funds

Sat Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> for Motor Neurone Disease Association

Sat Mar 8<sup>th</sup> for Community Larder

Also please note we have one at the end of December Sat 28<sup>th</sup> for Camphill Communities with Lasagne Supper.

[Other items of Interest](#)

[Report on Summer School 2024 – Colin Williams](#)

In September 2024 John Walsh and Colin Williams from Philosophy is Phun attended the u3a Southeast Region Summer School for four days at Chichester University.



If we discount an unruly sat nav this adventure was well worth participating in.

We were in student accommodation, which needed a refurbishment, but it was safe, warm and very close to food and teaching rooms. Only a short amble in the pouring rain.

The food was excellent, catering for all the varied diets that prevail these days. This was served by buffet in refectory style seating adding to the joy of sitting next to new people at each meal. One could easily put on weight.

There was not a lounge area nor a bar for evening get togethers although each night there was some form of entertainment provided. I might add that I was a member of the winning quiz team.

The teaching rooms included decent tech and daylight.

We chose Philosophy to study, and our tutor Shri was the subject expert for the u3a. His career was/is in science teaching and he has a passion for Philosophy that was clear throughout the week. As we know this subject is not one that can be learnt in a short time. We covered some basic concepts at the speed of light with an input from Shri plus small group discussions .

The range of subjects covered in the summer school was very wide and as an introduction to or consolidation of a subject there are lots of benefits in attending for any of us.

The additional benefit of meeting new people was also great. John and I made friends with a couple of ladies and a chap that we spent a few meals with.

## Knitting or Crochet Projects for you – Age UK – The Big Knit 2024

Please help us reach our target of 20.00 little hats by the end of May 2025.

The National Fundraiser, organised by Age UK and Innocent, is back for 2024. It's time to get out those needles and hooks and started! Once again, we are joining in the Big Knit and we're asking you to help us raise vital funds.

Every little hat you send to us is worth 30p. If we reach our target and end off 20.000 little woolly marvels, Innocent will donate a whopping £6.000 to Age UK Milton Keynes, money that will be spent improving later life in our community.

Why not dig out all those scraps of spare wool, or unravel the not-quite-finished jumper, and knit a few little hats. We can also provide you with wool that has been donated to us. Hats can be as straightforward or as difficult as you wish and patterns can be found on our website at [www.ageukmiltonkeynes.org.uk](http://www.ageukmiltonkeynes.org.uk) or [www.innocentdrinks.co.uk](http://www.innocentdrinks.co.uk). We can also send some patterns out to you if you contact us. Knitting is a great way to keep busy and you can help local older people at the same time.

Please call us on 01908 550700 if you are getting involved. You can post the little hats to us at The Peartree Centre, 1 Chadds Lane, Peartree Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3EB or drop them into any of our charity shops. We may also be able to collect bags of knotted hats. Send an email [events@ageukmiltonkeynes.org.uk](mailto:events@ageukmiltonkeynes.org.uk)

Every Hat is valuable to us – we count them, bag them and post them off to Innocent so that they can be put on smoothie bottles later in 2025!

Money raised in Milton Keynes stays in Milton Keynes.



## Knit or Crochet a Poppy – Support the Royal British Legion.



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Thousands of people around the world knit or crochet their own poppies all year round, not only during Remembrance. Some make them to wear as brooches, while others craft them to decorate their homes or community spaces or to raise funds. While the RBL is not

holding a knit/crochet a poppy fundraising initiative, many individuals and community groups choose to do something on our behalf.

You can find instructions on how to make two different poppies by following this link.

[https://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1346/~/knit-or-crochet-a-poppy](https://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/1346/~/knit-or-crochet-a-poppy)

**Chair – Lesley Sparks email: [chair@mku3a.org](mailto:chair@mku3a.org)**

**Vice Chair Wendy Barrett; email: [vicechair@mku3a.org](mailto:vicechair@mku3a.org)**

**Secretary Deb Hodges; email: [secretary@mku3a.org](mailto:secretary@mku3a.org)**

**Treasurer Diana Sears; email: [treasurer@mku3a.org](mailto:treasurer@mku3a.org)**

**Groups Team Chris Costello/Hazel Spencer; email: [groups@mku3a.org](mailto:groups@mku3a.org)**

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**Communications Coordinator Martin Woodman; email: [comms@mku3a.org](mailto:comms@mku3a.org)**

**Thames Valley Network Coordinator Frank Parisi; email: [tvn@mku3a.org](mailto:tvn@mku3a.org)**

**Please refer to the website: [www.mku3a.org](http://www.mku3a.org) for statements concerning MKu3a Policies and Guidance, on all aspects of our administration including Data Privacy, Disclaimers and Copyright.**

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