



Dear members

You will have received an email from me a few days ago but I would like to share the link from Milton Keynes Council. Peter Marland, the council leader, gives a weekly update about Covid-19 in our area. It is highly informative and well worth listening to.

<https://www.facebook.com/MKCouncil1/videos/630779131179589/>

Best wishes

**Lesley Sparks**

### **Virtual Talks for Members**

At the start of the year who would have predicted, having never heard of Zoom, that we would now have a dedicated group of MKU3A Zoomers - our members who book immediately for our now fortnightly speakers' talks via Zoom. But what is good to see is that we also have many other members who pick and choose what to watch, which is a bit of a relief as trying to obtain a spread of topics to interest our members is high on the list of objectives when booking talks.

So what happened in August?

Firstly, on a rather hot August day, we had a talk from Michael Brown about "Death in the Garden". A summary of some of the more common poisonous plants, history and stories relating to them. As one of our members said afterwards "I didn't know I had so many in my garden!" If you want to know more then the link to his associated book is provided below:

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/36903031-death-in-the-garden>

The Second talk was by Simon Gregor – the topic "D Day Landings". Again, a very engaging talk giving a different perspective on a well-covered subject matter with some more obscure information emerging – I now know the link between Jellyfish and Juno!

I don't specifically ask for feedback following the talks but it is lovely when it is received. For both talks the feedback was positive in the extreme and I am really pleased to confirm that both speakers are now rebooked for future talks – and who knows we may one day actually meet them!

In September we again have two talks booked. The first "London Street Art" on 2<sup>nd</sup> September is now fully booked with a waiting list – our Zoom licence limits us to 100 log ins I am afraid. The second talk on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September "Fools Gold", an acoustic musical duo, is booking up fast but there are still some places available.

### **MKU3A Facebook Page**

We are now approaching nearly 200 members for this page and many thanks to the dedicated members who regularly post – sharing with us tales of trekking across Scotland, visits to favourite National Trust sites, wonderful flowers from the garden and so on. It has certainly provided a lovely window into different worlds in what can sometimes feel like a very restricted time.

A reminder to those who may consider joining this group but are concerned about privacy. It is a private group for MKU3A members only and we check on membership before accepting people to the group.

### **Lynne Button**

From **Karen Noon**

We have been carrying on yoga on Zoom since before lockdown was official in March.

Instead of once a week, either Mondays or Fridays, people have been able to do both sessions if they wanted and many people have benefited greatly through connecting and health wise.

We have made the most of the summer by Zooming live from outdoors at the lakeside to a limited few that like to meet live. But most have wanted to stay on Zoom and enjoy the yoga session from the comfort and safety of their own home.

The cost is £6 a week for 2 yoga classes on Zoom, Monday and Fridays 9.30am-10.30 am, payable term time.

We now have a couple of vacancies. The first week is free (2 classes) and we start back on Friday September 4th.

Some testimonials:

'It's working great Karen. Feel I had a really good practice and nice to feel part of a group rather than just following a random video.

Thank you!'

Sue

'Well done, Karen.

Brilliant yoga session.

Great to be able to see and chat to all the class too!

Cheers'

Keith

'Thank you so much for continuing yoga classes during Lockdown. I believe that I am not the only one to have found the classes invaluable in getting through the present virus situation and they have given me a way of managing my personal situation by "getting out" and doing something very positive, beneficial and rewarding and I thank you from the bottom of my heart - you are so kind.'

Anne

From **Peter Summerell**

You may remember that I told you about the free opera broadcasts every night from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York (available at [metopera.org](http://metopera.org)).

The National Theatre here are also doing some online broadcasts. One is a Quiz show hosted by various celebrities, Helen Mirren, for example. Viewers can take part in the quiz by going to [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJQ160k\\_VN4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJQ160k_VN4)

You can also watch some of the National Theatre productions every Thursday night by going to [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k\\_HhFCFMNr4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_HhFCFMNr4)

Lastly, You can watch Cirque du Soleil shows for free online at <https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/cirqueconnect>

From **Margaret Newens**  
**Still Green Cohousing**

If you are thinking about a move in the next two to three years and would be looking for good neighbours and being a good neighbour in return, perhaps cohousing is an option you would like to consider. It enables us to keep our independence while preventing the risk of isolation as we grow older, living in a mutually supportive, small, self-managed housing development and benefiting from some shared facilities. Still Green Cohousing welcomes people over 50 and will be part of the Love Wolverton regeneration scheme for Wolverton town centre. Now is an exciting time as we work with our developer, TOWN, and Mole Architects on the design of our part of the scheme.

We shall have twenty-nine 1 to 3-bed flats, each with its own balcony or patio. A 'common house' will have a guest bedroom, small laundry, tools store and a south-facing living, dining and kitchen area for shared meals and activities. This will open out on to a large terrace and a south-facing courtyard garden. We are working closely with the landscape consultant on the design for the garden and with a specialist, accessibility consultant. Our homes will be built to high sustainability and benefit from being part of a scheme-wide community-owned energy system. There is a great choice of sizes of flats with different layouts and with the opportunity for some further customization for those involved at an early stage.

You can contact us at [stillgreenweb@gmail.com](mailto:stillgreenweb@gmail.com) and we'll tell you how you could join our next virtual meeting on Saturday 19 September from 11.00-13.00. More information about us can be found on our website: <https://stillgreenweb.org/>.

From **Neill Dewar**

**TVN Quiz Study Day – September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020 at 2.30 pm**

I have received the following email from Avis Furness, Chairman of the U3A Thames Valley Network:

You may recall that one of the events for this autumn was to be a Quiz Study Day – a talk about the history of quizzes and quizzing and a discussion on how to run a quiz for your U3A, to be followed by a quiz for all the participants, illustrating the points made in the earlier discussion.

Well, of course that now cannot happen in its original format, but we have been discussing how to make this available to you via Zoom. The date of September 2<sup>nd</sup> was mentioned at the Reps' Meeting; however, the Events Team were not able to get together to discuss the practicalities of holding study days via Zoom until yesterday, which makes that very short notice.

However, what we have decided is to go ahead on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and treat the event as a “trial run” – to see how it will work in practice and to iron out any difficulties that might arise.

The event will start at 2.30 pm with the discussion about running a quiz, how to find questions, sources of pictures, PowerPoint presentations, problems and pitfalls. After a short break, we will hold the quiz itself at 3.30 pm.

If all goes well, I will give the History of Quizzes talk the following week, at 2.30 pm on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Please could you pass this information on to anyone in your U3A who might be interested in helping us with this trial run, and ask people to email me to say:

1. If they wish to participate in the discussion and quiz on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, and
  2. If they would be interested in the talk on the History of Quizzes on 9<sup>th</sup> September.
- I will then reply with further information, and the Zoom link.

We do realise that this is very short notice, but if our trial run works well, we will be offering this study day again at a later date.

Thank you for your help, it is appreciated.

Avis Furness

Chairman U3A Thames Valley Network

[akfurness@aol.com](mailto:akfurness@aol.com)

## **PlayPals on Zoom**

As amateur musicians, many of us play woodwind instruments and there is no prospect of us playing together face to face for who knows how long. Although the risks of all those droplets circulating is subject to wildly varying estimates, it is hard to know how dangerous it would be for us to play together in a room. But, like choirs, we know our place as the most restricted of the social activities we might do together. Meanwhile, we have adapted to meeting on Zoom since lockdown started. Here is a screenshot of some of us with our instruments:





As well as players and their instruments, we have regular four-legged guests who accompany their owners, sometimes literally. It was very exciting to watch the progress of Rosey's (flute) English Springer Spaniels from tiny puppies from the time when they fitted into her hand to full-grown dogs in the space of a couple of months. Checkout the MKU3A Facebook page to see Rosey attempting to line up all 7 on 16 May this year. We also have a regular cat, Treacle (bass), who is not screen-shy. Freddie (clarinet and alto sax) avoids the camera, as does Ada (alto sax), however Ada has her own Facebook page in her other persona as the Westcroft cat, where she spends much of her day. She is easy to find on Facebook and well worth a look. Then there is Misty (tenor sax) the cocker spaniel who vocalises on occasion. One day we were chatting in between playing and heard an authoritative voice say 'Stop it!' so we all went quiet for a few seconds until we realised that Paul, Misty's owner, was talking to her rather than the rest of us.

Using Zoom has given us new skills and it has been a lifeline to keep us all in touch. At first, we mostly did quizzes and other games, but we found ways of playing our

music with our own backing tracks. This has been great fun and means that we wouldn't take long to get a performance together as and when we get the opportunity.

**Marilyn Ridsdale** (group leader)

From **Sam Martin**

## **LOCKDOWN**

Open my eyes  
seven am  
another day  
Just like before  
go to kitchen  
kettle boiling  
Make tea. Grab pad;  
in bed; e mails;  
facebook; read news.  
Bloody virus  
still here spread more  
everywhere.  
Lay there. Get up.  
Zoom on. Yoga  
by self, one hour.  
Now what?  
Old jobs, list jobs  
new jobs, same jobs,  
mundane day jobs.  
Look out, grey sky,  
Blackbird, Sparrow,  
Blue tit, great tit.  
Shall we walk now?  
Outside. Relief.  
Same streets, few cars,  
small things have changed.  
Same fields, new scenes.  
Other people  
also walking.  
Must keep away.  
Social distance.  
Two hours gone by,

short lived freedom.  
Kettle again,  
late lunch, long snooze,  
Short read. Now what?  
Afternoon work  
In the garden.  
Cutting, planting,  
pruning, picking.  
Pity all those  
with no garden.  
What do they do?  
TV update.  
More ill, more dead,  
more graphs, more science,  
more politics.  
There's no remorse  
only excuse.  
Dinner to cook  
Quick drink real ale  
dinner to eat  
TV on now  
Few good programs  
I player on  
box set series  
Netflix? read book  
ten pm time  
for bed. Lights out.  
This is almost  
like solitary  
confinement. Snore

Open my eyes  
seven am  
another day  
Just like before.....



From **Chris Lay**

Amusing Expressions and Sayings.

You come from dust, you will return to dust. That's why I don't dust. It could be someone I know.

One day, you will be able to tell your grandkids, "I survived the Great Toilet Paper Shortage of 2020."

Not in jail, not in a mental hospital, not in a grave - I say I'm having a very good day.

I started out with nothing. I still have most of it.

This 'killing them with kindness' is taking way longer than I expected.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket.

The problem with stealing quotes off the Internet is you never know if they are genuine.

They say marriages are made in Heaven. But so is thunder and lightning.

When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President. I'm beginning to believe it.

Few women admit their age. Few men act it.

We live in an era of smart phones and stupid people.

A man who correctly guesses a woman's age may be smart, but he's not very bright.

I wouldn't say he's very old, but when he was a boy, the Dead Sea was only sick.

The last thing I need is a burial plot.

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

I wondered why the cricket ball was getting bigger, then it hit me.

God gave us our relatives; thank God we can choose our friends.

Never doubt the courage of the French. They were the ones that discovered that snails were edible.

When science finally locates the centre of the universe, some people will be surprised to

learn that they're not it.

They laugh at me because I'm different. I laugh at them because they're all the same.

When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading.

Ninety-nine percent of lawyers give the rest a bad name.

I've just written a song about Tortillas; actually, it's more of a rap.

I think it's wrong that only one company makes the game Monopoly.

Whenever I feel the need to exercise, I lie down until it goes away.

A day without sunshine is like night.

On the other hand, you have different fingers.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Wise men talk because they have something to say. Fools talk because they have to say something.

One day you're the best thing since sliced bread. The next, you're toast.

The trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off.

Laughter is like a windshield wiper. It doesn't stop the rain but allows us to keep going.

People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day. And whoever said that nothing is impossible obviously never tried to slam a revolving door.

PS and to those I've not been in touch with recently, I trust you are all surviving healthily and have been spared the sad losses that so many have had to deal with.

From **Rob Lowe**

I am wondering whether any members would be interested in an online Poetry Appreciation Group, probably not using Zoom, but with discussions by email thread. Am thinking of looking at one poem by one named poet every fortnight, the choice of poem and poet made by group members on a rotation basis. I am also a member of another U3A, and this format works quite well for them (I don't lead that group, however).

Anyone interested can email me at [lowe.rob29@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lowe.rob29@yahoo.co.uk).

From **Judy Howson**

For sale: Artist's easel, beech wood, used by amateur artist. In very good condition. Buyer to collect. Price £50 but will consider sensible offers. Folds down easily.



Email: [jm.howson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jm.howson@tiscali.co.uk)

Mobile: 07392 572481

From **Shona Hall**

### **KNITTING HATS FOR THE HOMELESS**

We haven't stopped asking for knitted hats as yet so if anyone has hats they have finished and would like them picked up, I am happy to arrange to do this. I can pick them up from your doorstep if you put them in a carrier bag and we arrange a time to collect them. My phone no. is 01908 616465. I can also arrange to send you the pattern by email or put it through your letter box.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Shona

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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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