



July
2021



Dear Members

I am sure we are all disappointed that it has been necessary and prudent to delay the full easing of lockdown until 19th July 2021 and additionally I am sure we are all noting the rise again in the numbers of Covid infection rates which the Government are reporting.

As a board of Trustees we have discussed how this impacts on our plans to reopen.

We have been contacting all of our venues and currently there is little information available about when they plan to fully reopen. We have also recognised that even in normal times many of our groups haven't met in August. After careful consideration the trustees of mku3a have concluded that we will be unable to reopen further groups which meet indoors until at least September 2021. Groups who meet outdoors can of course continue to meet providing the current Government guidelines are adhered to.

Although so many of our groups have shown great initiative to keep active and engaged with members during this time, for others this has not been possible and we all recognise how disappointing it is to have a further delay.

Some members have asked what mku3a are planning so this is perhaps a good opportunity to share with you some of these plans.

mku3a website: we have updated our website in line with u3a new branding guidelines, it looks so much fresher and appealing – look out for news about when this goes live.

Leaflets and posters: these too have been updated and will be ready for use once all of our groups have re-opened.

Membership: as with all u3as we have seen a drop in members during this long period of lockdown. Our Chair, Lesley, will be contacting, as soon as we are confident in re-opening options, all of those members who have not renewed membership over the last 15 months to encourage these members to return. We will also be launching a number of initiatives to reach out to new members so again look out for this information and perhaps we can all commit to supporting at least one of these initiatives.

Picnic: we have received a number of suggestions to have a picnic for members as a way of re-engaging again. This isn't too easy to organise as we do need to gain permission three months in advance from the Parks Trust, we are looking at other possibilities however.

Open meetings: we are hoping to resume our monthly meetings at the Oaktree Centre starting on Wednesday 22nd September.

Best of good wishes

Lynne Button, Vice Chair on behalf of Board of Trustees

Virtual Talks to Members

For the first time since we have started to have our talks to members via Zoom we have unfortunately had a couple of last minute cancellations from speakers – the joys of internet connectivity or more accurately the challenges. Luckily our only talk in June was superb and much enjoyed by our members.

Charles Garland delivered an entertaining and informative talk about his experiences working behind the scenes in the making of “Dad’s Army”. A well structured talk that gave us many insights, for example the original outline for the series gave all the main characters a fish based surname – um – of course just Pike remained. The warmth Charles felt for the people he met on the series shone through, a really good raconteur who I am sure could entertain for hours with his stories.

Talks in July:

Talk no 35: Wednesday 21st July “The Two Ronnies” a welcome return from Tricia Thompson who will delight us with her talk on the iconic duo and am sure will also have us laughing along the way.

Unfortunately I have been unable to confirm a booking for 7th July, if I am able to source a speaker I will advise by email. But have a look at the diary section on our website we do have some really interesting speakers lined up for the rest of the year.

As always talks can be booked directly by members by logging onto our website and going to the diary page or by emailing me at vicechair@mk3a.org.

Lynne Button

u3a Thames Valley Network Events **A REMINDER of events in July 2021**

Day/Date	Time	Event	Cost	Book By
Tues 6July	2,30pm	The Job of a Laughtime	£1	2 nd July
Mon12July	2.30pm	Art as Therapy	£1	8 th July
Tues 20July	10.30am	Wildlife on Your Doorstep	£1	16 th July

Please book electronically using the 'TICKET SOURCE' icon immediately below the event on the TVN website <http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk/> This is by far the best and easiest option. You will receive an acknowledgement immediately and the Zoom link two days before the event. More detailed flyers are available from the above website.

Always happy to hear from you about TVN events. Having these excellent opportunities via Zoom has been of great value to mku3a members. You can contact me at: tvn@mku3a.org

Brian Baldwin

Welcome to Netfest week 14th - 18th June 2021

NetFest 2021 was a week of events (see below) selected and designed with the theme of 'Celebrating, Connecting, Communicating'. Alongside Zoom sessions filled with useful information, this provided an opportunity for networks to come together in break out groups to discuss issues, exchange ideas and share solutions.

Hilary Jones the Network Link leader led the event covering 10 different topics, two every day from Monday to Friday and yes, there were a few very committed members who logged in for all 10 sessions. I dipped into 1,2,4 and 10.

The events set out below were all recorded and will be available on the Network Link pages of the [national website](#) where there is already plenty of information about networks across the country.

The events:

1. **What Networks Do?**
2. **Networks, Constitutions and Licence Agreements Made Simple**
3. **Peer Support Networks**
4. **Slow Ways Project**
5. **PR - Introduction for Networks**
6. **Alternative ways of running meetings - Hybrids and other options**
7. **Network Communication Challenges**
8. **Click and Save Scheme**
9. **Successful Networks**
10. **TGIF (Thank Goodness it's Friday)**

There are about 100 Networks and they come in various sizes and formats. The smaller informal ones have no constitution or bank account and the individual Chairs simply meet up infrequently for an exchange of views and problems. The middle group do have a constitution and bank account with a limited range of activity that is self-funding. The larger networks, such as Thames Valley, have a constitution, bank account, elected

committee and a significant range of activity and support to a large group of u3as ranging from Zoom events to creative study days and in some cases research projects with local universities.

Brian Baldwin – TVN Rep for mku3a

MKU3A CHOIR



During the lockdown we have continued to sing on Zoom every Tuesday at our usual time of 2pm. Although not ideal it has meant we see our choir friends and sing our hearts out albeit in the comfort of our own homes. Unfortunately we were hoping to meet up for our annual social event at the end of our Summer term but with restrictions extended, we are unable to do this, so our last Zoom session will be on Tuesday 6th July.

Hopefully we can meet face to face again for rehearsals in September and will meet at The Cross and Stable Church in Downs Barn at 2pm on Tuesday 7th September. Please come and give us a try if you want to join a friendly and welcoming group of singers. We hope to see you there as there will be no more Zoom sessions once face to face resumes.

Sheila Staincliffe
Joint Group Leader

Holidays and Short Breaks

Similar to Euro 2020 the short break to Somerset for June 2020 was postponed; given the option of a refund or to carry forward the deposit to 2021, some chose to cancel and obtain a refund, others to postpone.

In March 2021 we were given the news that providing all guidance from the Government, coach companies, hotels and venues were followed, the short break could go ahead. Twenty-three people decided to 'go with it'.

The number of people on a 52-seater coach would be reduced to 30 with social distancing between seats in

place. Face masks should be worn whilst on the coach, hand sanitiser would be available, couples, partners and people in a 'bubble' could sit next to each other, all other persons would be allocated individual seats.

10/6 We arrived around lunchtime and spent a couple of hours in Bath. Unfortunately, most of the places of interest such as the Roman Baths and similar were all pre-booking. Bath Abbey wasn't, had track and trace in place prior to free entry with donations accepted, masks being worn, a one-way system in place with social distancing. There is a current exhibition, 'Monuments, Empire and Slavery, revealing the links to colonialism and the slave trade through memorials. They had also found that the floor of the Abbey was sinking and they have had to remove the floor, underpin it and are in the process of relaying it so some areas are off limits that could normally be visited.

11/6 Tyntesfield – a N.T. property followed by Cheddar Gorge. Groups visits are not currently allowed at Tyntesfield however, the people went in as either individuals or groups of up to six. Test and Trace in place, masks to be worn and a one-way system, with no access to the first floor this meant areas were not accessible to some people. The church especially as you had to climb a steep spiral staircase to get into the church, although once this had been achieved it was on a level. We should have then gone onto Cheddar, however due to accidents on the M5 this was abandoned with the suggestion we visit on 14/6 after visiting Wells Cathedral.

12/6 The Royal Mint, temperatures taken, masks to be worn and social distancing for a tour in small groups that was interesting on how U.K. coinage is produced as well as coinage for 60 other countries, followed by the National Museum of Wales, St Fagan's. Since 1948 over 40 original buildings from different historical buildings have been re-erected in the 100-acre parkland again interesting and so much to see with free entry.

13/6 The West Somerset Railway They have had to reduce their timetable to two trips a day from Bishops Lydeard to Blue Anchor on a steam train with a stop at Blue Anchor for half an hour before the return journey. As we had a carriage all to ourselves masks were not required. People along the line and in the housing estates were out waving to the train. It felt like a scene from the Railway Children. On to Weston-super-Mare to see the sea, guess what - tide's out and on the hottest day of the year the place is heaving!!

14/6 Wells Cathedral - this had been swapped with Tyntesfield as we got late notice that Wells Cathedral would be closed for filming on 11/6. No guided tours, however, people could self-guide and as I know the Cathedral I noted the items such as the clock and Vicar's Close to look out for, test and trace in operation with masks being worn. Like Bath Abbey a one-way system was in place and areas cordoned off. Then onto Cheddar for cheese that is made in Cheddar and a visit to the cider shop before the journey home.

We stayed at the Aztec Hotel in Bristol which was very good and the staff could not do enough to make our stay a success. Whilst walking through the areas of the hotel, masks to be worn. On the Saturday night there was live music (how good to hear live music again). It was a little loud for some people however once the volume was reduced, enjoyed by many and bringing back memories of our youth with the songs from the sixties, some of us even knew all the words and sang along, quietly of course!!

A different type of short break with much guidance to be followed. However people were already asking what are we doing in 2022?



1. Tyntesfield
2. Gromit at the Royal mint made from £1 coins
3. West Somerset Railways
4. Concrete cows cousin on holiday at Tyntesfield

Chris Behrendt
Group Leader

Photography for Fun Group

After many months of lockdown, the Photography for Fun Group were able to meet on the 20th May for an outdoor photo shoot and Campbell Park was the chosen venue. Despite the adverse weather nine members attended and ventured out even though the skies were dark and there were occasional rain showers. Campbell Park provided many photo opportunities and this was reflected when members submitted their pictures. It was interesting to see the many interpretations of the scenes around the Park, each photographer seeing things in a different way. The submitted pictures were reviewed in a Zoom meeting on the 10th June and constructive criticism led to further discussion. It was an enjoyable afternoon and we look forward to the next outdoor shoot on the 1st July when we visit Linford Manor Park.







Marilyn Hearn

The Third Age Players (TAP) – an update

Finally, we feel that the end is in sight and we can resume live contact with our friends and family again.

So, we are beginning to plan our next major stage presentation – and have booked the theatre for next April. Also, we will be presenting some smaller scale performances before then.

This could not be a better moment to get involved and we welcome actors experienced or those who just want to have a go. Especially welcome would be anyone interested in backstage or front of house. Lighting, sound, props, wardrobe and stage management are essential to any performance. We are happy to give all support and encouragement.

We have been lucky enough to find a new venue where we can rehearse and perform. The new venue allows us to maintain full Covid restrictions whilst necessary as there is space and ventilation in a large outside area – if the sun shines!

Please contact me, Barbara on tap@mku3a.org for full details.

Barbara Baker



Checkmate

We have had an enquiry about starting a CHESS group.

If you are interested in being involved, please contact Marie Stanley at groups@mku3a.org or Tel 01908 501360.

Marie Stanley

World Faiths

Exploring World Faiths group will visit Bradwell Abbey on 7th July at 2pm. Please contact me via our group page if you are interested in attending.

Thank you.

Linda Morris

Women's Zumba Gold (60+)

If you enjoy moving to music, this could be for you. Tailored to the over 60's, this is a low intensity exercise class to music that features Latin steps and world rhythms. The teacher is very easy to follow and keeps to the same routines each week so the steps become familiar. And don't let joint problems put you off – most people in the class have them in one form or another!

Sessions are on Mondays at 11 am in Bletchley.

For a free trial session email info@safarihealthhub.com or telephone 01908 299299.

Eve Tigano

Take your 1st Step with Kamaljit Saggu

"Whether you're rehabilitating from an illness or injury, adapting to a life-changing, long-term health condition, or just want to keep active in your later years, my individually tailored **low impact** exercise classes and programmes will soon have you on the move and achieving more than you ever thought possible."

If you would like to know more contact me through www.1ststeprfs.com

Recommended by Janice Miles.

Marie Stanley

Bow Brickhill WI

We are always looking for new members as we are only 14 in number. We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month normally in Bow Brickhill Pavilion at 7.30 pm. Currently we are meeting on Zoom. Our next meeting has a very interesting talk by the Parks Department about Linford Manor. Visitors contribute £4 per meeting.

Further details can be had by contacting me at swarren3@sky.com.

Stephanie Warren

Free Kindle

At the start of the 2020 lockdown I purchased a Kindle. As a fairly avid reader it gave me more flexibility in reading. Not having a garden (I live in a third floor apartment block) but within a ten minute walk I could be in a park, lakeside or canalside.

The recent U3A offer of a free Kindle was very welcome. "The Convent" by local author Sarah Sheridan introduced a more unusual subject matter with some reviewers saying how they enjoyed the antics from "that feisty old nun". I thoroughly enjoyed this title and am now reading the follow-up "The Disciple".

Brian Graves

Key Contact Details—more on the web site

Chair: Lesley Sparks email chair@mku3a.org

Vice Chair: Lynne Button openmtgs@mku3a.org

Secretary: Fred Bass email secretary@mku3a.org

Treasurer: Diana Sears: email treasurer@mku3a.org

Groups Co-ordinator: Marie Stanley email: groups@mku3a.org

Web Master: Dave Barratt email: webmaster@mku3a.org

Membership Secretary: Yvonne Ashmore email: membersec@mku3a.org

Communications Co-ordinator: Simon Wong email comms@mku3a.org

Thames Valley Network Coordinator: Brian Baldwin email: tvn@mku3a.org

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

Office: 11 Winchester Circle, Kingston, Milton Keynes MK10 0BA.

Telephone: 01908 281717. **E-mail:** info@mku3a.org

Registered charity number **298693**.