



May  
2021



Dear Members

MKu3a is getting ready to reopen following the lockdown recovery plan and the government guidelines and I am sure you are all looking forward to seeing your u3a friends again. However, we must remain vigilant and consider our own safety and the safety of others.

The Trustees continue to meet monthly using Zoom and at the last meeting we welcomed two new volunteers to our Trustee team, Marie Stanley and Susan Guiver. Both are contributing to our decision-making and 'learning the ropes'. We are hoping to meet face to face as soon as we can as Zoom cannot replace sitting round a table, looking through the inner workings of our website, talking through the roles and answering queries.

Brian Baldwin has fallen back into the role he held while he was a trustee as our TVN representative, and you will have received details from him giving information for the activities they organise. Many of our members support these events and I am sure you will continue to attend as summer approaches.

Peter Martin has been working towards the development of a 'new look' home page for our website. This project for rebranding the u3a organisation to make it more up to date was initiated by the Third Age Trust and is a work in progress.

Once we reopen, we are planning a further project, to help develop MKu3a. Frank Parisi, a further volunteer, will take control of this project.

Many thanks to all our volunteers who keep our organisation running, these include our hard-working finance, membership, and groups teams and we must not forget Eve who produces your newsletter monthly.

We would like to invite further volunteers to join us, especially as we had hoped to 'role share' the post of Groups Coordinator. Please let me know if you would like to join us.

## **Reopening MKu3a**

As MKu3a slowly begins to reopen and groups begin to meet our Group Leaders have been asked to complete a Risk Assessment Form for each meeting. For outdoor groups these should be completed shortly before the event and sent to group members, and for groups which meet in the same venue the Group Leaders should complete a Venue on the Day Risk Assessment to check there are no hazards or safety omission since the last meeting.

Initially all members were asked to complete a personal risk assessment form before attending and ensure the Group Leader had seen the document - this advice was in line with the advice suggested by the Third Age Trust, however on reflection the MKu3a trustees have concluded that this system would create an unnecessary amount of paperwork and additional work for your Group Leaders.

The Trustees propose that Group Leaders should continue to complete the relevant Risk Assessment documents as follows.

Outdoor group leaders will issue the completed risk assessment to their members in advance of the meeting. This risk assessment may include the meeting place, social distancing requirements and pinch points on the route for walking and cycling groups. Once you have read the issued document the decision to attend is yours and your attendance will be noted on the register and this will be taken as your acceptance of risk.

Indoor Group Leaders will complete their risk assessment on arrival at the venue to check items such as fire extinguishers are in place, emergency exits are clear and there are no tripping hazards, amongst others.

The venues may also have protocols in place, which may include increased ventilation, social distancing, and wiping down surfaces at the end of the session. As members, please follow the requirements and ensure you contribute to these protocols before you leave.

We do ask all members to please consider your personal situation, the health and wellbeing of others in your group and members of your household before you attend.

Also, as the virus is still with us and even though many of us will have been vaccinated, there is still the possibility of infection so if you have a cough or cold, please think about attending as you may make other members uncomfortable and place your group leader in the difficult position of having to ask you to leave for the safety of the rest of the group.

Best wishes to you all,  
**Lesley**

The Open University are running a series of talks about Ageing Well.

A recording of the recent talk entitled, 'Mindfulness and Ageing' held on 14<sup>th</sup> April can be accessed by clicking this link.

<http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/p'review.php?whichevent=3538&s=31>

All talks start at 11am and last for about an hour.

Move it and breathe - May 19th 2021

(presenters: Jitka Vseteckova and Declan Ryan)

Live streaming <http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=3539&s=31>

Standing tall - June 16th 2021

(presenters: Jitka Vseteckova and Jason Gibb)

Live streaming at <http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=3540&s=31>

The things we don't talk about - Intimacy and ageing - July 14th 2021

(presenter: Andreas Vossler)

Live streaming at <http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=3541&s=31>

The programme of public talks for the next academic year is shown below

**Ageing Well series of Public Talks - topics**



• <i>Are we prepared to live longer?</i> (Jitka Vseteckova) <b>September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021</b>	• <i>Pharmacotherapy while ageing</i> (Jitka Vseteckova & Sonal Mehta) <b>March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022</b>
• <i>Advanced care planning</i> (Barbara Gale & Erica Borgstrom) <b>October 20<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>	• <i>Mindfulness and ageing</i> (Abi Methley) <b>April 20<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>
• <i>Ageing brain</i> (Jitka Vseteckova) <b>November 17<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>	• <i>Move it and breathe</i> (Jitka Vseteckova & Declan Ryan) <b>May 18<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>
• <i>Learning languages and digital technologies in older age</i> (Ursula Stickler) <b>December 15<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>	• <i>Standing tall</i> (Jitka Vseteckova) <b>June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022</b>
• <i>Disenfranchising of caring while ageing</i> (Kerry Jones) <b>January 19<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>	• <i>The things we don't talk about – Intimacy and ageing</i> (Andreas Vossler) <b>July 20<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>
• <i>Nutritional needs while ageing</i> (Jitka Vseteckova & Alan Hastings) <b>February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022</b>	

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Useful resources:

[https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing\\_Well\\_Public\\_Talks\\_2020-21/5122166](https://ordo.open.ac.uk/collections/Ageing_Well_Public_Talks_2020-21/5122166)

## Lesley Sparks

In April we certainly had a variety of speakers for members within our usual Wednesday afternoon slot via ZOOM. As always we were very privileged to listen to some very accomplished speakers.

## Virtual Talks to Members

Firstly, we had an enthralling and well structured talk on Joe Byerle, what an absolutely fascinating life with the speaker sharing with us a number of contemporary news clips to really bring the time and tension of the times to our homes. Not only did we have an insight to his career and exploits but it also touched on war torn Europe, the challenges people had living there with a very well deserved mention of the only Russian female commanding a tank battalion.

A difference to our next talk, a charity much closer to home, a most interesting talk on "Medical Detection Dogs". Not only were we given an insight into the opportunities dogs may have in early diagnosis of some diseases but we also had very moving stories shared with us of people whose lives have been enhanced by having a detection dog helping them manage different illnesses, such as diabetes, which had been life limiting for them, and their families.

Our next talk shared with us experiences and some amazing photographs from living in Africa for over 16 years. Inspired as a child by the film Born Free, Alison has dedicated her adult life supporting wildlife and communities in Africa, a real insight into living in this beautiful continent.

We finished the month with a welcome return from Ian Keable and his talk on Charles Dickens the Magician. A well researched and interesting talk on this little known aspect of Dickens life which even included Ian demonstrating a number of his magic tricks.

In May, we are again able to offer a talk on each Wednesday afternoon starting at 2.30pm. These can be booked directly by members or through emailing me at [vicechair@mku3a.org](mailto:vicechair@mku3a.org).

Talks in May:

Talk no 29: Wednesday May 5<sup>th</sup>, "The Life of Agatha Christie"

Talk no 30: Wednesday May 12<sup>th</sup>, "The 1923 General Election" - a fascinating moment of British Political History

Talk no 31: Wednesday May 19<sup>th</sup>, "Hadrians Wall" - its location and history

Talk no 32: Wednesday May 26<sup>th</sup> "Working with the ghosts of Hampton Court Palace

**Lynne Button**

So, what did I see "over the wall"?

As your Thames Valley Network Representative, I am allowed to take a peek over the MKu3a boundary wall and keep in touch with what is going on in the rest of this amazing organisation. By coincidence, during my first month back on the team there has been a TVN AGM/Reps meeting and the Spring Gathering of the South East Region, both useful opportunities to

refresh my perspective. So, what did I see “over the wall”?

The majority of the 450,000 members desperate to get back to activities ranging from Art to Zoology and everything in between. The organisers of 12 Regions, dozens of Networks and 1,056 individual u3as working like little beavers to keep the organisation going during the Pandemic. The Thames Valley Network is one of the largest and strongest networks with over 50 u3as and the South East Region the largest Region with 194 u3as, covering an area of 8 Counties from Dover to Banbury.

Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> u3a Day. The u3a movement is embracing the opportunity to celebrate all that u3a stands for and raise awareness of our activity and learning with our first u3a Day. This will be an annual event as part of Volunteer week. Whilst our u3a is postponing a major event at this time, the appeal is to try to do something. Let the Trust know so national PR can be achieved. Town Criers, Bunting, Local Radio, Craft groups making sashes are all examples. A new model constitution – making virtual AGMs legal.

A national online version of a u3a with 1100 members, many of them also belonging to their local u3a. <https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/welcome>.

Hybrid u3as running on both face to face and virtual fuels. It seems clear that our traditional face to face organisations, not just the u3a, are having to adjust how they operate when they “return to a new normal”. A poll at the Network AGM this morning recorded over 70% of u3as prefer a future with hybrid meeting arrangements for all sorts of meetings from AGMs down to one person not being able to attend their favourite group for whatever reason.

Beacon. A shrug of resignation emerges when this word is heard. There are quite a lot of serious contractual and operating problems surrounding the national u3a management system. As one of the original Datum team here in MK, I just smile.

**Brian Baldwin**

TVN Rep.

## **u3a Thames Valley Network Events**

### **A summary of events in May 2021**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Book By</b>
7 <sup>th</sup> May	10.30am	The Sweetest Thing – a History of Sugar	3 <sup>rd</sup> May
14 <sup>th</sup> May	10.30am	History of Gardening – Part 1	10 <sup>th</sup> May
18 <sup>th</sup> May	10.30am	Gershwin and His Music	11 <sup>th</sup> May
21 <sup>st</sup> May	10.30am	History of Gardening – Part 2	10 <sup>th</sup> May

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. I will be monitoring the situation as the transition beyond Lockdown takes place. Having these excellent opportunities via Zoom has been of great value to mku3a members. You can contact me at: [tvn@mku3a.org](mailto:tvn@mku3a.org)*

**Brian Baldwin**

### New Members Induction Meeting

We are holding an Induction meeting on Monday 24 May for our new members. It will be a Zoom meeting starting at 2.00 pm and will be about an hour.

The session will briefly outline the background to the u3a movement, explain how to get the best out of your membership with MKu3a, and show you how to navigate around the website and join interest groups. You will also 'meet' other members. If you have not used Zoom before this will be a good opportunity to gain some experience.

If you joined in the last few months and want to find out more about your MKu3a and 'meet' some fellow members at the meeting please send an email to Yvonne Ashmore, Membership Secretary, using the email address: [membersec@mku3a.org](mailto:membersec@mku3a.org). You will receive further information nearer the time.

**Yvonne Ashmore**

# Quiz Time



The Quiz Group is now running the normal monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of the month at 2 pm on line using zoom. Members prepare a number of questions and take it in turn to read out their questions for other participants to try and answer. The topics we have used so far is the Colour Green, Food and Drink and the Natural World. Next month's topic is Art & Literature. The sessions have lasted for almost two hours and we have been fortunate to have been given extensions by Zoom to not require resetting. The sessions have provided an opportunity for members to meet fellow U3A members and we welcome others joining us.

**Stewart Pye**  
Group Leader

## Music Appreciation Group

Most of us like listening to music, and we all have our own preferences, whether we like classical, jazz or pop, but how many of us listen to music from other countries, or songs sung in different languages?

Does the language barrier matter in music? Just because we cannot understand the words being sung, doesn't mean we can't still enjoy the music, because music is about the pitch, rhythm and tempo, not just about the words!

Poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, "Music is the universal language of all mankind."

So, I put that to the test at our second Zoom meeting held in March, when our entire playlist was a selection of music from different countries, sung in different languages.



We started with 3 songs sung in Hindi from the 2006 Bollywood film ***Gangster – A love story*** - **Tu Hi Meri Shab Hai**, **Bheegi Bheegi** and **Mujhe Mat Roko**.

The next selection was from Africa, and included **Ultro Horas** by Orchestra Baobab -a Senegalese band, **Vuka Vuka** (Get up, Get up!) by the Manhattan Brothers, **Oya** by Sally Nyolo, (who's from Cameroon) from her album *Zaigne*, **M'Bifo** by Rokia Traore (who's from Mali) from the *Bowmboi* album, and **Fanta** by Taffetas, an African fusion band which combines the Kora with guitar and double bass.

We then listened to 3 tracks from a Columbian musician, ***Juanes*** from his album ***Mi Sangre*** (My Blood), **Para Tu Amor**, **La Camisa Negra**, and **Tu Guardian**.

From Columbia to China, and 2 instrumental tracks from an album called ***Sapphire Dream*** showcasing the 2- stringed ERHU (or Chinese Violin).

The last 2 tracks were sung by ***El Divo*** from their 2<sup>nd</sup> album titled ***Ancora*** and were **Si tu me amas** (If you love me) and **Hasta mi final** (Until the day) sung in Spanish.

Music can elicit the same physiological responses from people from different cultures. Even though we may not understand what is being sung, humans share the same emotions and can recognise them just from pitch, rhythm and tempo. When we hear certain chords or melodies, just because we do not understand the lyrics, does not stop us feeling the same emotions as somebody who does understand them. A slow song in a minor key will most likely make us feel sad, whereas a faster song in a major key is more positive, and more likely to make us feel happy.

Having listened to the playlist, I think it became apparent that there is one language which we all understand, regardless of our native tongue, and that is music, so it appears Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was indeed correct when he said "Music is the universal language of all mankind."

**Tina Griffiths**

### Food4Thought Group

At our most recent zoom meeting, members of the Food4Thought group once again rose to the challenge of creating a 3-course menu using 3 specific ingredients, namely mushrooms in the starter, mince in the main course, and meringue in the dessert.

Here are some of the dishes our members included in their menus.



### Starters:

Stuffed Mushrooms (shown below), Mushroom Pate, Mushrooms in Port, Cream of Mushroom Soup, Devilled Mushrooms, Garlic Mushrooms, Shitake Mushroom Soup and Creamed Mushrooms (shown below).



### Main courses:

Harrisa Minced Pork, Turkey Burgers, Minced Beef Stroganoff, Spicy Steamed Meatballs (shown below), Mincey Mess, Braised Meatballs with Peppers & Tomatoes, Surprise Bomb Surprise, and Crunchy Peanut Beef



### Desserts:

Lemon Meringue, Mary Berry Meringues, Jacqui's Eton Mess (shown below), Strawberry Pavlova, Blackberry & Pear Meringue, Gingered Coffee Meringues (shown below), Hazelnut Meringue Roulade and Caramel Meringues.



If you are interested in food and would like to join our group, please email me at [foodforthought@mku3a.org](mailto:foodforthought@mku3a.org). We meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 10am.

**Tina Griffiths – Group Leader**

### Cycling Group

Our group has now started back. We have had our first meeting and the next ride is on 4 May. There are some vacancies to join.

**Jessie Wilkinson – Group Leader**

### Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Group

The Milton Keynes MSTG Centre has been established for 28 years and offers much needed Hyper-baric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) and other therapies to its members - who have MS and other medical conditions such as ME, Fibromyalgia, Arthritis and Cancer. MKMSTG has been successfully running, primarily by a team of dedicated volunteers. However with recent developments at the Centre, especially over the last year during these unprecedented times, we are looking for new volunteers to be trained and join our team.

Previously, the Centre has welcomed volunteers who have contacted us from U3A - I am therefore reaching out to ask for volunteers who may have some time on their hands to be trained and join our team. Email [info@mkmstherapygroup.co.uk](mailto:info@mkmstherapygroup.co.uk). For further information see the website <https://mkmstherapygroup.co.uk>.

**Sharn Nandra**  
**Centre Manager**

## Calling all Veterans

Are there any Veterans (ex service men & women, including reservists) amongst our U3A membership?

I have recently got involved with Veterans Community Network (VCN), a local charity who are holding weekly on-line (Zoom) social activity afternoons for Veterans every Thursday at 2.30pm.

If you're a Veteran with nothing to do on a Thursday afternoon, and you would like the opportunity to meet new people, join in a quiz or game, and have a natter over a cuppa, in the comfort of your own home, please email me for more details. [tinaatvcn@gmail.com](mailto:tinaatvcn@gmail.com).

**Tina Griffiths**

## Bucks Art Weeks – 12 to 27 June



Bucks Art Weeks is the annual celebration of the county's artists and makers. Postponed in 2020 we are guided by the plans to open up the country and are expecting the freedom and pleasure of visiting artists to view and discuss their work from 12 – 27 June 2021.

All the necessary information will be contained this year in our website ([www.bucksartweeks.org.uk](http://www.bucksartweeks.org.uk)) though there is also a Special Edition Brochure as a keepsake. All the information you will need is there; an interactive map with location and contact details, the

art types, opening dates and times and general facilities. Drivers are guided by local yellow signs.

There will be more than 250 artists exhibiting in hundreds of locations. The art covers the complete range, so if it is ceramics, glass, leather work, metal work, painting, printing, sculpture, textiles or wood that you like, there will be plenty of choice. You can expect a warm (and safe) welcome. After all we are glad of someone to talk to. The event is also a selling opportunity for artists so if you see something that takes your fancy...

In the Milton Keynes area you will find artists in Olney, Woburn Sands, the Brickhills, Pottersbury, Westbury Art Centre to mention some. And if you have watched the Great Pottery Throwdown, two of the recent contestants live and are exhibiting locally. Further

afield there are locations in and around Buckingham, Aylesbury Vale and beyond. My exhibition is with a lovely group of artists in Rowsham, between Wing and Aylesbury. You can collect the brochure in Milton Keynes libraries & other locations and the website will be fully live from the middle of May.



We look forward to meeting you. There will be indoor and outdoor locations, enough to hopefully satisfy your personal circumstances.

**Laurie Keck** (MK U3A member and committee member of Bucks Art Weeks)

### DREAMLAND

To keep me safe, to my house I'm confined  
With books and jigsaws to stretch my mind  
But I can escape to the world of my dreams  
Where nothing is ever quite what it seems.  
I wear a crown and share a throne  
With the king who pulled a sword from a stone.  
I fly with my dragon beyond the stars,  
Then visit with John and Dejah Thoris on Mars.  
Slide on a moonbeam and dance with the sun,  
Hitch a ride with Apollo on his daily run.  
Run up to Olympus, with the Gods I shall dine  
With ambrosia and nectar and maybe some wine.  
Run races with Paris to win the prize  
Of the beautiful Helen with amethyst eyes.  
Glide on a barge on the great golden Nile,  
With Cleo and Tony, I travel in style.  
With Marco I venture to far Cathay,  
Meet elephants and tigers along the way.  
Tramp through the snow with Lucy and Tumnus the faun,  
Tea with the beavers, we talk until dawn.  
Then off to the wild wood to help out a friend



With ratty and mole, we've a toad to defend.  
Dressed in velvet and lace and an ermine robe,  
I'm off to see Will's new play at the globe.  
With Elizabeth and Darcy I learn country dances  
And hear all about the Bennetts' romances.  
Hold Jane's hand as the flames burn higher,  
And jump with joy as Edward walks from the fire.  
Swim in a sea of crystal clear waters.  
Spin round a maypole with all of my daughters.  
With Caspian I sail to the end of the world  
Fall over the edge, into the darkness I'm hurled.  
I wake to a day all shining and bright,  
My dreams fade away – until tonight.

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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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