



November
2021



Dear Members,

Finally, we have a modicum of normality within MKu3a. Many of our groups have started to meet face to face and the feedback I have received is that this is very welcome. Several group meetings remain via Zoom for a variety of reasons. Who could have predicted at the beginning of 2020 the benefit Zoom would be to many of us during the crisis?

We have had new members joining us. A warm welcome to you all. I hope you find an activity within our current portfolio to interest you but if you have a particular interest and would be willing to share this with other members. We are always happy to investigate the possibility of establishing a group but anyone suggesting a new group activity would be considered the proposer of the group with the expectation they will work with the team to progress and promote the idea to the wider membership.

The Open Meetings have resumed at the Oak Tree Centre in Shenley Brook End; as we expected our numbers for these meetings have fallen but we are hopeful they will slowly rise. In the meantime, we are still providing an online option once a month. Please check the Diary area for information. (If you login first you will see more than the headline and be able to sign in to receive the details for attending via Zoom.)

You will read later in this newsletter about the u3a initiative for a 40th Anniversary Woodland to be planted in the Brecon Beacons. The Trustees feel this is a worthy initiative and have created an 'event' on the website under the diary tab for you to agree to buy a tree. The cost will be £5.50. This is one small way we can contribute to the challenges of Climate Change.

There is also an open letter to all u3a members from Liz Thackery, the chair of the Third Age Trust, our national body. Interesting reading as we move on after the pandemic.

Once again there is an invitation to a Volunteers Coffee and Cake Drop In, to encourage new

and established members to consider volunteering to help run our organisation. Please come along. Details and Date later in the newsletter.

With very best wishes to you all,

Lesley Sparks on behalf of the Trustees

Would you be Interested in Volunteering with MKU3A?

Are you interested in volunteering to help keep our U3A running? Want to know more about what's involved? Did you know that not all Volunteers are Committee Members – you can help in other ways.



We will be holding a Coffee Morning on Friday 26th November 2021 from 10-30 – 1.00, in the meeting room at 11 Winchester Circle, Kingston (near the Tesco store) where you will have the opportunity to chat to some of our committee and find out exactly what's involved in volunteering with MKU3A. You will find answers to questions such as:

What can I do to help run MKu3a?

How much time will I need to give?

What will I have to do?

What skills or knowledge do I need?

Who are the committee members?

What's it like to be a committee member?

If your interest is sparked, please let us know that you would like to come along on the morning, have a coffee (or tea) and a chat and find out more about volunteering.

Contacts details. Lesley Sparks chair@mku3a.org 07850113449



Third Age Trust Initiative – 40th Anniversary Woodland

Each individual u3a has been informed of the 40th Anniversary Woodland project which will create a u3a woodland on the border between Wales and England in the Beacon Beacons. The woodland will be planted by volunteers before spring 2022, and it is envisaged that there will be 5,000 two-year-old native deciduous saplings which will contribute to the support of our environment, wildlife, and climate. The woodland will be maintained for a period of 12 years to ensure it becomes established.

The cost of each sapling (including planting) will be £5.50

If you would like to support this project either individually or as a group, we have opened an event on the website under the Diary tab for you to add your request. The 40th Anniversary Woodland event will remain in place until 30th November and we will then order the trees on your behalf. Payment please as you place your personal order by Bank Transfer, quoting your name and 40th, to Account Number **24979482** Sort Code **23-05-80**. If you decide to make a group purchase, please contact Diana Sears, our Treasurer, treasurer@mku3a.org and the amount can be deducted from your group finances.

We feel this is a worthy initiative and hope you do too.

Best wishes

Lesley on behalf of the Committee

An open letter to all u3a members from Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray

The past 18 months have been difficult for all of us as we have found ourselves living lives in ways we never expected. None of us could have foreseen a worldwide pandemic, lockdowns, and all the restrictions on our way of living. Although we are now moving towards a time when it is likely we need to learn to live with covid, many of us are still nervous about returning to what was our normal way of life, while others cannot wait to meet up again.

Whether we like it or not we have all been affected by the changes in our lifestyle and expectations over the past months. This is irrespective of whether or not we have ourselves suffered a covid infection or have experienced the suffering – and perhaps death – of close friends or family members. We have all made adaptations in our lifestyle as we have adopted technology or gone out of our way in different ways to ensure we keep in touch with our friends, especially those most vulnerable.

As u3a members, we have benefitted enormously from the work undertaken by our local committees, by the support provided by volunteers working directly with the Third Age Trust and the work undertaken by the staff team. Without the enormous amount of voluntary effort by so many people, our movement would not be continuing to thrive. However, unfortunately sometimes surviving through adversity can lead to us not always appreciating properly the support we receive.

As u3a members, we belong to a movement built on principles of mutual aid and self-help. Although we may join the u3a in order to learn a new skill or to enjoy meeting new people, we also join a movement where we are all volunteers with something to contribute – and that is our greatest strength! However, we also recognise that the mantra 'by the members, for the

members' is not always sufficient. Changes in legislation over the past 40 years have led to all voluntary organisations needing to develop new procedures in order to stay legal – and never has this been more true than in the past months of pandemic.

The u3a is fortunate in that we have a small group of staff employed to support our movement. However, at times we need to remember that there are fewer than 20 staff members, not all full-time, supporting a movement of well over a thousand u3as and over 400,000 u3a members. Those staff have suffered the same restrictions and pressures as the rest of us through the past months, but many of them have worked far more than their contracted hours in order to provide us with information, advice and support.

Sometimes we all get impatient when we do not receive answers to queries as speedily as we would wish. Sometimes we do not like the advice we receive. Sometimes we want to argue and complain that information or advice is inaccurate. I would urge us all, including me, to remember the staff team are only human. When we feel like complaining about not receiving a response to a query or difficulty accessing a named member of staff or getting the telephone answered or not being able to find information on the website, we all need to remember we are dealing with human beings who are doing their best under difficult circumstances.

At this time, we all need to be even more kind and considerate to those around us than we might have been previously. We are all feeling the challenges of covid and we need each other even more as we continue to live, laugh and learn together.

Liz Thackray.

Members Meeting and Talks

Firstly a thank you to the volunteers supporting our talks now being delivered live at the Oaktree Centre, much valued and appreciated.

Our first talk in October was via ZOOM and from Jim Holmes. Jim has had an amazing career as a professional photographer working to support humanitarian work in some of the most challenging countries in the world. Jim tries and succeeds in capturing the uplifting spirit of humanity in sometimes the most difficult of conditions. A moving but also inspiring talk, illuminated by wonderful photographs.

Our second talk, which I sadly missed, was from Mervyn Edwards who shared with members some of the tales from over 30 years of working for Thames Valley Police. Mervyn was there for some of the headline grabbing events which we all remember, such as the Brighton bombing, and members were fascinated by his insight. It is always a good sign when a talk runs over time due to so many questions coming from the floor, a good and engaging speaker with many a fascinating story to share with us.

Our final talks for 2021 all starting at 2.30pm are as follows:

Talk 43 Wednesday 10th November: "The End of the Roman Empire" by Peter Carney, who has previously delivered a talk to us about Hadrians Wall. This talk is via ZOOM.

Talk 44 Wednesday 24th November: "Iconic Film Posters" by Graham Twemlow: this talk is again live at the Oaktree Centre, Shenley Brook End. Doors open at 2.00pm for a 2.30 pm start. Please book a place for this talk as numbers are restricted. There will be a charge of £1 for members, £2 guests and coffee, tea and biscuits will be available afterwards.

Talk 1 (The first of the Charities next financial year) Wednesday 15th December: "Festive Verse" shared with us and delivered by Simon Gregor. This talk is via ZOOM.

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@mku3a.org. Please remember that if you book for a talk on ZOOM, I send out the codes on the Tuesday evening, if you book later then please let me know so I can send codes through to you.

Lynne Button
Vice Chair

Bletchley Blues Club

I'm a MK U3A member and also help run the Bletchley Blues Club in Milton Keynes.
www.bletchleybluesclub.uk.

The Club objective was to build a community to help promote blues music, in all its forms, to a wider audience and provide Milton Keynes with a not-for-profit club that would attract high quality acts.

We are not doing so bad, though Covid had affected us a little. We have engaged with schools to see how we can promote the music we love, but obviously we could do more. The music lends itself to the demographic of the U3A.

We would like to promote the club by offering U3A Members, who attend for the first time, a half-price ticket for the events that we put on in October and November.

Members would need to contact us at hello@bletchleybluesclub.uk to book their seat or table and let us know that it is through the U3A that they would like to attend.

Date: 9th November 2021

Band: Hugh Budden & The Blue Chords

Fronted by award-winning Harmonica player/singer Hugh Budden, he has shared the bill or the stage with many top musicians/bands in the last 30+ years.

Joined by Joe Curtis (Guitar) Harvey Hark (Bass) & Steve Faithfull (Drums) they play a wide variety of blues-based songs across many different genres, from the 1920's to the 1970's Guaranteed toe tapping music for “grown-ups”!!

Band website: [Hugh Budden Blues harmonica player vocalist Bournemouth \(wixsite.com\) www.highbudden.wixsite.com/hugh-budden](http://www.highbudden.wixsite.com/hugh-budden)

Cost: £10 (£5 to U3A members who attend for the first time).

Date: 23rd November 2021

Band: Krissy Matthews Band

Krissy Matthews is bringing his show to Bletchley Blues Club on a rare show in the UK. He has just released his brand new record "Pizza Man Blues" with the very well respected Ruf Records, and will be performing music from this album.

A night of great blues, rock and funk is guaranteed!

Krissy Matthews - Guitar/Vocals. Kev Hickman – Drums Josh Rigal - Bass

Band website: [Krissy Matthews www.krissymatthews.com](http://www.krissymatthews.com)

Cost: £10 (£5 to U3A members who attend for the first time).

Jonathan Townsend

TAP GET STARTED AGAIN

Yes TAP are on 'the boards' again after two gloomy years.
The audience were laughing, we even heard some cheers!
Then afterwards we wondered – had we really done that well?
Were the audience just being kind, it's difficult to tell!
Well folks, I think that we were great, and should be feeling proud.
We made a stage, set up lights, with props and scenery as well.
And though the odd line got missed out, our folks and friends were wowed!
We achieved so much in that short time, a veritable fun filled feast,
And the review we got was fair and good, well to me at least!
So no reason to be gloomy for the future seems quite bright.
We have a brand new venue which is full of space and light,
We've proved we can do shows again within our scope and age,
And oh what joy to be once more acting upon the stage.
We may be in our dotage but by God we're full of life,
We don't sit at home and fester; no we get up and go!
The news may be downbeat, and the world still full of strife,
But it's folk like us that help to put the smiles back on you know.

We know we're getting ancient, but the alternative is worse!!
So I for one would like a script and fellow cast as well,
Perhaps a nice director who promises not to yell,
When lines are not just perfect; 'cos old brains are such a curse.
So let's get up and running, grab a play, and just **rehearse!**

Heather Harris

Third Age Players

Like most of you, we kept busy during lockdown, reading new material and meeting regularly by zoom. But we are a drama group and doing things in front of a real live audience is what we crave. As soon as restrictions were relaxed, we started meeting in the smart new Marsh Drive Community Hall, Great Linford. In just a couple of months we put together an entertainment for family and friends, to find out how we got on in the new place, and whether we could still learn lines. Encouraged by the fun we had and the audience response, we are going to perform **An Almost Correct Christmas Story** to the MK Parkinson's Support Group at their regular monthly meeting at Centrecom in November. We are pleased to be able to offer this entertainment to bring pleasure to a group supporting those affected by Parkinson's.

We are also keen to offer short entertainments to other groups - retirement homes/society meetings etc. The programme could be geared to the group or the time of year and the length etc could be decided. To take this idea further, we are proposing to perform the above "Nativity" for a second time on

TUESDAY MORNING 7TH DECEMBER at 11am

At Marsh Drive Community Centre, MK 14 5HH

(By the Sports Ground, Great Linford)

... followed by mince pies and non-alcoholic mulled wine, so that we can meet anyone who would like to take up the suggestion. Or, we would be delighted if you would just like to come along as an individual. The audience will be socially distanced and numbers will be strictly limited, but so that we can arrange catering, please email us on tap@mku3a.org so that we can confirm your place.

Equally, if you are unable to come, but know of a group who might be interested, please contact TAP on the same email address.

We would love to entertain you

Would you like to star in our shows?

The star is vital in a nativity play! But so are all the parts, small or large. Because we write a lot



of our own material, we can find something that suits you, whether you're a beginner or experienced.



As you see from our rehearsals in 2018 you can have a lot of fun if you just learn a few lines



and like joining in creatively. We are looking for new members. To find out more about us, email tap@mku3a.org or come along on 7th December.

Judy Martin

Choir

We have reluctantly taken the decision that the choir concert will not take place this year in the usual format because infection rates are still very high in Milton Keynes. We are still looking into alternatives, so watch this space for news.

Sheila Staincliffe

Badminton

Although a lot of members were interested in joining the Badminton Group, unfortunately none wanted to act as Group Co-ordinator;; we needed at least two as it would have been a very large group. So we were not able to get this group up and running.

For your information:-

Bletchley Leisure Centre have started a generation + badminton group for over 55's on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9.30 – 11.30am. £3.50 pay as you go.

There are four courts available and any standard of player are welcome.

Chris Costello

Tuesday Bridge Club is held at Flintergill Court in Heelands. We are a friendly group who meet at 1.30 every Tuesday afternoon at Flintergill Court Residential Centre at Heelands and play medium bridge until 4pm. We would welcome all players who want to play bridge and have a natter! Please contact Judith Exter on 01908 976058 if you would like any further information.

Judith Exeter

Bow Brickhill Women's Institute meet every fourth Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm at the Pavilion in Rushmere Close in Bow Brickhill with a varied programme. New members are welcome.

Further details from swarren3@sky.com or call 01908 671394.

Stephanie Warren

Simpson Village Hall Open Day 13th November 11 - 3

Come and help us celebrate the reopening of our village hall. We will be serving soup and rolls for lunch as well as tea and home-made cakes and there will be a small local history exhibition. All welcome but if you can't make it but are interested in hiring our lovely village hall for a class or an event please contact simpsonashlandhalls@gmail.com or 07957304054.

Gill Needham

Keepfit Friday morning 9.30-10.30

Newport Pagnell United Reform Church Hall

We have vacancies.....

They say life begins at 50, so make the most of your free time by taking up a hobby that inspires and challenges you, like tennis, dancing or keep fit. It is vital to maintain suppleness and flexibility, refine joint movement and build muscle memory. Keep fit will do that.

You may not think you need to focus too much on strength training in your sixties, but the opposite is true. Studies have shown that physical activity can prevent a decline in the brain's white matter, warding off strokes as well as conditions such as dementia and Alzheimers.

We will be using the New Mead Centre in the new year; the new hall is very large and we will therefore be able to accommodate more members. Please come and join us - it is a friendly group and is tailored to suit our needs.

Contact **Anne Davis** 07703 190904 for more information.

Remembrance Day Concert at St Thomas's Church Simpson, MK6 3AD
On Saturday 13th November at 7.00 p.m.

Bring & Share Buffet – please put some food on the table
Collection for Church funds

More details missquiz@sky.com

Pat Hodges

Cycling – Up to 10 Miles

We have welcomed several new members to the group and had some very enjoyable rides during October, especially with the mild weather and coffee stops.

Two rides in the North of Milton Keynes starting at Willen and two in the South covering Furzton, Loughton, the Shenleys and Tattenhoe Park, mainly on Redways.

The group has agreed to continue with weekly rides on Tuesdays. The first and third Tuesdays will start and end at Willen, while the other Tuesdays will start from various locations around Milton Keynes. This will provide a variety of rides and increase the area we can cover, while still only cycling up to 10 miles. It's good to be out in the fresh air again and getting fit.

Martin Woodman

The Arts Society

Since March 2020, during the Covid19 pandemic, members of The Arts Society North Bucks (TASNB) have enjoyed viewing their monthly lectures on various topics related to the arts, in the form of webinars on Zoom. Our November meeting will again be on Zoom but we are planning to return to our usual 'live' meetings at Lovat Hall, Newport Pagnell in December.

On **November 11th** Christopher Garibaldi will give a lecture entitled 'Fashion, Form and Function; a History of English Silver'. He will present a broad survey of the changing role of silver in society through different styles and fashion. He will focus on leading figures in the history of the silver trade and the role of the Goldsmiths Company in promoting and protecting the silversmiths' craft.

The lecture will begin at 11.02am to allow time for a Remembrance Day silence and members are invited to join the Webinar from 10.50am.

If you would like to view this lecture as a guest, please contact our Membership Secretary, Elaine Roberts: email membershipnorthbucks@theartsociety.org.

For more information about our activities go to theartsociety.org/north-bucks.

Felicity Head

Exploring World faiths Group

Forthcoming Talks:-

Willen Hospice – Chaplaincy speakers at Willen Church 3 November at 2pm.

Interfaith MK – Speaker at the Quaker Centre 1 December at 2pm. Refreshments served from 1.30pm.

Please see our web page for further information. If you are not already a member of this group, please let me know if you are planning to attend these meetings. Thank you.

Linda Morris

Welcome Back Concert

The Danesborough Chorus (which includes several members of mku3a) will be presenting a "Welcome Back' concert on Saturday 13th November, at 7.30 pm, at St Mary's Church Woburn, which will include lovely baroque works by Vivaldi and Telemann, and a modern piece by Cecilia McDowall. This will be our first live performance since 2019.

Tickets are £20, £15, £10 under 18s £5 available by phone on 01908 583460 or online at www.wegotickets.com.

Helen Richards

A Recommendation

The star of all electricians is Dave Sorrel. He has solved a huge problem which defied other electricians. He is on time, works professionally and his charges are fair and reasonable. Fantastic man, wish I'd known about him years ago. 07973 782008

Lavinia Culshaw

Key Contact Details—more on the web site

Chair: Lesley Sparks: email chair@mku3a.org

Vice Chair: Lynne Button: email openmtgs@mku3a.org

Secretary: Fred Bass: email secretary@mku3a.org

Treasurer: Diana Sears: email treasurer@mku3a.org

Groups Facilitators: Chris Costello/Hazel Spencer: 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

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