



## The Third Way eNewsletter

February 2024

### News from the Chair – Lesley Sparks

Dear Members,

We are near the end of the second month of 2024 and our groups are going from strength to strength. Our group coordinators are the life blood of our organisation and as a thank you from us all, and following guidance from the National u3a, they were invited to a lunch at The Barn. I am pleased to announce that 80 GCs attended and were able to meet up with others to exchange ideas and share experiences.

Later in this newsletter you will read how we are making changes to the way those who pay attendance fees may be asked to pay. Several groups have been trialling the changes so that we are confident that we have the most efficient and secure methods for both the group coordinators and the finance team. Please support us as we complete the changeover.

March is the month when we hold our annual general meeting, which we are obliged to hold by the charity commission. All documents relating to this meeting will shortly be available in the Members area on the website. This meeting will be held immediately before our March Open Meeting speaker and should take no longer than 20 minutes. We hope to see you there.

Best wishes as always

Lesley

## **Sad News – Mollie Plackett**

We have just received the news that one of our members, Mollie Plackett has passed away peacefully. Many will remember her as a regular on the registration desk at the Open Meetings alongside her friend Thelma.

I know that there will be some members who would like to attend her funeral and you will be notified as soon as we have any details

## **MKU3A 2024 AGM**

All members are invited to attend on  
Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Doors Open 2.00pm for 2.15pm start,  
at The Oak Tree Centre, Shenley Brook End MK5  
7GZ

Proxy Voting and Committee Nomination Forms will  
soon be available in the Members Area of the website.

2.30pm Lindsay McInnis DC,BS, Chiropractor  
The Fundamentals of Health and Vitality in Later Life

Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS**

### **HowWhatWhy? Suzanne Miles**

As a result of moving to new accommodation at Dexter House, Oldbrook, the HowWhatWhy group has more space to welcome new members. If you are curious about the how, what, and why of all kinds of things, then come and join us for a taster session. We meet monthly on the first Thursday from 10.30 to noon. Our March meeting will be focussing on Lighthouses. For more information please contact Suzanne [howwhatwhy@mku3a.org](mailto:howwhatwhy@mku3a.org)

## Exploring World Faiths – Linda Morris

I wonder if you ever went to or drove past The Plough at Water Eaton? If you did, you might be interested in coming along to our group meeting on Wednesday 6th March at 2 pm. We will be visiting that building but it's no longer a pub ... it's now a mosque! Please look at the group page for more details and contact the group coordinator if you are interested in joining the group for the visit. [ewf@mku3a.org](mailto:ewf@mku3a.org)



During the last meeting at the Open University Religious Studies Department, a lovely photo was taken of Betty Course, one of our life members. She was in the original group of first ever OU graduates. Here she is posing with the speakers. The photo was taken by her daughter who is also now retired and a member of the EWF group too.

## The Wellbeing Benefits of Knitting – Janet Maclean



Knitting can be highly beneficial for our mental health. When we're engaged in repetitive motion tasks, our body and mind settle. Our heart rate and breathing even out and we have lower blood pressure. What sets

knitting apart from other crafts is the rhythm of stitches and needles clicking. This can lead to a sensation known as flow state, a pleasurable

experience psychologically, when someone is so engaged by an activity that time disappears. Activities that are challenging but not overwhelming, stressful, or heavy are the path to flow. In flow, thoughts and movements should come naturally and feel pleasurable and joyful. Knitting is a powerful tool for processing grief and other challenging emotions. This is because the repetition of stitching absorbs part of your attention, while still allowing you to think deeply about other things. Sharing an activity with others can give people a much-needed sense of connection. Knitting can be done alone, but in a group everyone is doing their own thing and supporting each other in the same space while managing those social interactions in a little bit more of a relaxed, chilled kind of way.

The U3a knitting group meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays in the month from 10:00 am until 12:00 noon at Neath Hill. We do not meet on any Mondays that fall on a bank holiday. We welcome everyone from absolute beginners to experienced knitters; so please feel free to join the group if you want to learn to knit or share tips and ideas and encourage each other to learn new techniques. If you would like to join the group email [knitting@mku3a.org](mailto:knitting@mku3a.org)

### **Outings Group – Chris Behrendt**

Meetings are held the **SECOND** Thursday of the month. Meeting dates: 14 March, 11 April, 9 May, 13 June, 11 July, 8 August, 12 September, 10 October, 14 November 2024.

The next meeting will be on **14 March 2024 from 2.15pm for a 2.30pm start** for the people attending. The venue for the meetings is: **Herons Lodge Guide Centre, Bradwell Road, Loughton Lodge MK8 9AA.**

*All members of MKu3a are welcome on any of the outings* and the Outings Group monthly meeting and will be able to 'sign up' for the outings also at the monthly open meetings, postal application or by paying by bank transfer, further information on the flyers. Flyers for each outing will be circulated to all members through the website, with details in the monthly newsletter and hard copies available for those without e-mail access at the monthly meetings.

The Committee members who organise and lead the outing on the day are Anne Davis, Ray Cockram, Prudence Davies, Jennie Savage, 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)

**Insurance** – new guidance on who would be insured at a u3a group has been received from National. Basically non members are no longer allowed on Outings as they would not be insured, we have to accept this guidance as should said person have an accident the Lead of the particular Outing could be held liable. Fully paid up members of other u3a who occasionally accompany an MK member on an Outing are covered by the insurance.

### **The Barn Celebratory Lunch 25 January**

35 people attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebratory lunch at the Barn CMK. The food was excellent, the staff so helpful and obliging. A thank you card has been sent on behalf of all those who attended and a tip was given after querying whether staff received this.

### **Imperial War Museum London – Spies Lies and Deceptions**

**22 February – Fully Booked**

**Depart:** Milton Keynes 9.00am (09.00hours)

**Arrive:** Imperial War Museum 11.00am (11.00hours)

**Depart:** Imperial war Museum 4.00pm (16.00hours)

**Arrive:** Milton Keynes: 5.55pm (17.55hours)

**Cost: £19.00** Including donation to Imperial War Museum as entry is f.o.c., drivers tip and coach hire.

All food and drink on the day at own cost( the café takes card payment only)

**Contact on the day:** Chris Behrendt 07766 026357

### **28 March MK Theatre Pretty Women**

Start Time 2.30pm

Finish Time approx. 5.00pm

Tickets prices from £53.50 to £62.00 dependent on location

We have probably all seen the film why not come and enjoy the live performance of the musical as the Outings Group dips it toe in the water of theatre outings.

After a successful London season the show is now touring.

**Lead on the Day:** Deb Hodges

**25 April French Brothers Windsor, River Cruise with lunch then a visit to Bekonscot Model Village with cream tea.**

**Cost: £50 Pick up Point:** Milton Keynes Coachway, Coachway Road MK16 OAA **8.30am**

**Coach Company:** Marshalls Coaches

**Arrive:** The Clewer Boat House Windsor approx. 10.30am. **Depart:** Bekonscot 17.00 hours **Arrive:** Milton Keynes 19.00 hrs. approx.

Drop off at Clewer Boat House for a 2-hour cruise with live commentary and a Ploughman's Lunch. Then board the coach and travel 30 min to the Bekonscot Model Village with a voucher for a cream Tea.

For many years, groups have chosen to combine a river trip with French Brothers and visit the nearby Bekonscot model Village. Both are half day attractions that complement each other. Start the day with a relaxing 2-hour cruise from Windsor during which you will be served a delicious Ham & Cheese ploughman's lunch. On the cruise we will pass Windsor Castle, and Eton College. After passing the Windsor Racecourse, the boat goes through Boveney Lock and past Sutherland Grange. The Willows and Bray Film Studios then to Monkey Island where the boat turns round for the journey back to Windsor. Re-join the coach and head off to spend the afternoon at the world's oldest model village. Become a giant in a miniature world and wonder at the buildings portraying rural England as it was in the 1930's. A cream tea will be provided.

**Contact on the Day:** Anne Davis 07703 190904

Around 50 people attended the Outings meeting on 8 February, we ran out of flyers for the Boat Trip and Model village, with Deb dashing off to print more. About 25 people have already signed up – those attending the Outings meeting will always have the first opportunity to sign up for an Outing.

**How we Agree on Outings for each month.** At the January meeting and at the Barn lunch several people queried the Outings we are intending to book this year. Most are still in the planning stage with suggestions, such as a garden, craft fair, transport museum, factory tour, lavender farm, theatre visits, river cruise. The Lead for each is working to provide the details of the Outing to allow costs to be identified and the coach costs requested from Bills Coaches. It may be useful to explain how we reached these decisions.

The Committee meets once/twice a year and talks through the suggestions from members and magazines plus e-mail from venues. We try to give a varied choice considering the time of year and known busy holiday times. The Lead for each outing will contact the venue, identify costs, payment methods, travel plans, amongst other details – not forgetting refreshments. Once all these have been finalised, flyers will be produced and the Outing will be launched (about two months before the event), initially at the Outings Meetings to allow attendees to have priority, and then it will then be advertised via the website, newsletter, and email.

Bookings are taken and recorded with the ability of members to check they have booked onto the Outing using the Outings tab in Datum. We, as the Lead for an outing pay like everyone else.

**Update on How to Pay:** *The Outings Group now has access to a card reader for people to pay at the Outings meeting and Open Meeting. Page 2 of the flyer for an Outing will be updated to reflect this.*

### **Help Required**

The Outings Committee would welcome an additional member to join and take the Lead on at least two Outings a year. For more information please contact Chris Behrendt at [outingsmku3a.org](http://outingsmku3a.org) or by telephone on 07766 026357



## HOLIDAYS AND SHORT BREAKS

A group that came out of the original Outings group and has taken 5 holidays to date.

The next is to Potters resort, Hopton-on-Sea from 18 March to 22 March. The response has been overwhelming. City and Village tours currently have 47 people signed up.

Those travelling, please note that in compliance with the Package Travelling Regulations, every penny of your money is paid into an independent trust account and will stay there until after you come home.

### Second Short Break of the Year

Chris B is currently working with *Just for Groups* for a second short break in either September or October to South East of England. A visit to Canterbury Cathedral will be part of the itinerary, with so many places in the south east to visit, we have given suggestions to *Just for Groups* and they are planning an itinerary – watch this space. Once the flyer has been produced it will be circulated to all members. Between 13-14 double room for single use will be available on a first come first served availability. Costs are yet to be confirmed.

## MKu3a TAKES ANOTHER STEP FORWARD Making it easier for members to pay their group fees.

The trustees are happy to announce that after some testing we are rolling out the use of Square card readers for groups that collect money.

By the time you read this we will have 8 groups regularly using their Square card reader to collect members group fees. This means that our GC's do not have to handle so much cash, which is becoming a problem with some banks refusing to accept cash or, like ours, now charging for depositing it. The GC's also do not have to make that 'trip to the bank' to deposit cheques, freeing up their time. All that is needed from you is a simple tap to pay your fees, just like in the supermarkets or at that favourite coffee shop.

This also includes our Outings events who have their own reader, so you are now able to pay for your outing at their regular monthly meet or at the monthly Open Meeting by a simple tap.



We also have one group using a mobile phone app called 'Collective', which does not need the use of a card reader, so this could be another option for your group.

We do hope that members will be happy to make use of these ways of paying so that it might cut down not only on the number of transactions that now go through our bank accounts, but will also cut down on the number of hours the finance team have to spend to keep our accounts up to date and will also cut back on the time your group coordinator has to spend on keeping your group expenses correct.

If you are a GC and would like to talk about having your own card reader please contact the treasurer at [treasurer:mku3a.org](mailto:treasurer:mku3a.org)

### **Pétanque in Milton Keynes –Jennifer Light**

Did you know that there is special area (a piste) for playing pétanque (or boules!) ? It's on Parks Trust Land in Bancroft Park and clearly marked on the MK map and by a sign as you arrive. It's an area open to anyone to play – you just need the metal boules that the game is played with. Perhaps you've played or watched on the continent.

Did you also know that Milton Keynes has its own Pétanque Club based in Bancroft Park? If you come along to one of our sessions you can borrow boules if you don't have any and be guided as to how the game is played. Young and old can enjoy playing together. We meet near Roman Park Residents Club on Constantine Way on Sundays at 11 am and on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2.00 pm all through the year. Just turn up or contact us at [bancroftparkpetanqueclub@gmail.com](mailto:bancroftparkpetanqueclub@gmail.com) .

## OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

### THE ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION (ESU) OUSE VALLEY BRANCH

Sir Evelyn Wrench founded the English-Speaking Union Charity in 1918. The ESU believes every child should be able to make their voice heard and that the ability to progress and to thrive in life relies on speaking and listening skills, something which may have greater prominence in the school curriculum in future years.

The local ESU Ouse Valley Branch, covering Bedford and Milton Keynes, has two main functions:

1. We work as volunteers alongside the ESU Education Team to support some local primary and secondary schools with speaking and listening skills and running local and national Public Speaking and Debate Competitions. This is to help with the development of the young people's self-confidence, critical thinking skills and the ability to work effectively as a team member.

The first round of the 2023-24 Public Speaking Competition took place online last term; six teams made it through to the branch final, which took place as a live event on Tuesday 6th February at Bedford School: two teams from Bedford Free School and Bedford School were successful in making it through to the regional final on **Wednesday March 13th** - venue to be confirmed. There was also a debating competition for students in years 7 and 8 which took place at Glebe Farm School on Friday February 9th, involving students from six Milton Keynes Schools. If you are interested in seeing all that is best in education with some talented and committed young people in action, then please come along to be part of the audience for future events. If you wish to find out more, please contact Steve Gray on [stephen.gray@esu.org](mailto:stephen.gray@esu.org).

2. We arrange a programme of stimulating speakers talking on a variety of topics at Ouse Valley Branch lunches. These meetings are open to local branch members and their guests, as well as to other members of the ESU and a portion of the amount paid goes towards supporting these local schools. We welcome new members and would look forward to seeing new faces at our next lunch in March.

## **The Bedfordshire Golf Club, Spring Lane, Stagsden, Bedford MK43 8SR**

**Tuesday March 12th**

**Cromwell, The World Turned Upside Down – Stuart Orme**

“The world turned upside down” – the experiences of the English Civil Wars. We tend to think of the English civil wars as being rather romantic – with dashing stories of Cavaliers and Roundheads, but was it really like this for those who lived through this turbulent period?

This talk looks at the experience of ordinary people, soldiers and civilians, of one of the bloodiest and most important times in our history, including the real birth of “fake news” and the origins of some of our modern sayings.

The cost for a two course lunch, plus the talk, is £29. Doors open at 11.30, the talk is at 12.00 and lunch is served at 1.00. If you are interested in attending either of the lunch events, please contact Glenys Stirk at [glenys.stirk@esu.org](mailto:glenys.stirk@esu.org). Payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer.

### **Quiz & Curry Supper**

St Thomas’s Church, Simpson on Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Feb at 7.00pm

Proceeds to Devon Air Ambulance Trust.

For more details, please contact Pat Hodges at [missquiz@sky.com](mailto:missquiz@sky.com)

### **Concert at St Thomas’s Church**

on Sat March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm

MAD MARCH MERRIMENT

Bring & Share Buffet. Collection for Church funds

No need to book. All Welcome

More enquiries [missquiz@sky.com](mailto:missquiz@sky.com)

## Lit Fest Springs Back - Again!



We're back - and hosting events  
at Central Milton Keynes Library  
and Waterstones Midsummer Place  
between Wednesday 3 and Saturday 6 April,

We have author events, book signings,  
writing workshops, and children's sessions.  
All the events are detailed below, and the Box Office is open!

[Visit the website for more information - and to book your tickets!](#)

### Open Film Society.

The Open Film Society meet in a theatre at The Open University every Wednesday at 6.30pm: Films of diverse genre, many sub-titled from around the world. No adverts, trailers, or huge ticket fees!

Check the programme here,

<https://openfilmsociety.co.uk/season-2023-24/>

## Volunteers Needed – Electra MK Community Canal Boat.

Do you know about Electra? The Milton Keynes Community Canal Boat. We are always keen to recruit new volunteers to help out – especially for some of our shore-based roles (although a couple have already been filled) – and to welcome guests booking cruises on the boat. This season's cruises begin on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April. If you would be interested in finding out more information about volunteering, please email [James.Clifton@bmkwaterway.org](mailto:James.Clifton@bmkwaterway.org)

To see what we offer by way of canal trips please open the following link [Electra – Milton Keynes Community Canal Boat | Book A Trip \(bmkwaterway.org\)](http://bmkwaterway.org)

## Danesborough Chorus Spring Concert – Bach St John Passion

Saturday 23rd March 2024 at 7.30pm St Mary's Parish Church, Woburn

First performed on Good Friday in 1724 in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach's St John Passion is a powerful masterpiece of sacred music. Widely viewed as the more expressive of his two surviving Passion settings, the St John Passion shows Bach at his most operatic. The setting is an intensely human story – a drama of turmoil and betrayal, suffering and redemption, and profoundly moving.

Full of dramatic contrasts, the St John Passion perfectly balances the theatrical with the devotional, from the baying mob crying out for Jesus's blood to the hope of redemption in the final chorale.

Perhaps the biggest surprise here is that, despite the deep sorrow of the Good Friday story, the work is at the end firmly optimistic in tone.

Danesborough Chorus with their conductor Ian Smith, is joined by Alina Orchestra and young soloists from the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music.

Tickets priced at £25, £20, £10, under 18's £5 can be purchased by phoning 01908 583460 or online at [www.wegottickets.com](http://www.wegottickets.com)

For further information visit [www.danesborough.org.uk](http://www.danesborough.org.uk)

## Brandenburg Choral Festival of London

The concerts below are all in London. I have no further information. The details were sent to me to pass on to you.

For the past couple of years, we have been offered free and/or discounted tickets for the Traditional Christmas Concerts due to the generous financial support of a very special lady who loves Brandenburg and u3a equally.

While she wishes to remain anonymous, she was so delighted with the resultant joy she observed at the concerts that she has pledged to continue to support the partnership.

The next group of concerts in this scheme form the **Spring Series** – coming up all too quickly!

Booking instructions are further down the page

### Take a look!

**The Southern Spirit Singers perform at [St Mary Moorgate](#) on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 7.30pm**

Regina Caeli – Cecilia McDowall

Winds – Mia Makaroff

A Birds Lullaby – Sarah Quartel

A Farewell – Elaine Hagenberg

Gartenlieder – Fanny Hensel

Sing to the Moon – Laura Mvula

**The Harvard–Westlake Choirs perform at [St Katharine Cree](#) on 24<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30pm in a wonderfully varied programme titled- I'll Follow the Sun.**

The repertoire will include Sweelink, Tallis, Coleridge Taylor, Duruffle, Rutter, the Beatles, Jerome Kern and Sage Bond

**The Cherry Pie Choir and Sing Together Chamber Choir join forces to perform at [St Katharine Cree](#) on 24<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm**

The Cherry Pie Choir contribution titled The Sound of Salzburg will include the delicious mixture of

Mozart: Ave Verum Corpus, Lacrimosa (Requiem), Laudate Dominum and Edelweiss the Lonely Goatherd Climb Ev'ry Mountain from The Sound of Music



**Sing Together Chamber Choir** under the title **Gaudeamus** will present

O nata lux – Kerry Andrew

Gaudeamus –

Soualle –

Sub Venite – Gnuss

Tebe – Dobri

The Humming Chorus – Puccini

Barcarolle – Offenbach –

Brindisi –Verdi

Poor Wayfaring Stranger – Trad

Vem Kan Segla – Trad

Stars – Friedman

**The Brandenburg Camino Singers perform at [St Margaret Pattens](#) on  
13<sup>th</sup> April at 5.30pm**

The programme will include,

Purcell Remember not, Lord our offences

Tallis Thou Wast O God

Tallis If Ye Love Me

Handel Largo

Mozart Ave Verum

Franck Panis Angelicus

Vivaldi Gloria

**Schola Cantorum of Oxford perform at [St Margaret Pattens](#) on  
13<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm**

They will present,

JS Bach – Komm, Jesu, komm;

Alberto Ginastera – The Lamentations of Jeremiah

Schoenberg – Friede auf Erden

The booking system is the same as before

There are two discount codes for u3a members and their friends.

One for a small allocation of free tickets and one for a larger, albeit limited number of discounted tickets.



The first code is for free (100% discount) tickets and the second for half price (50% discount) tickets.

Try the first but if you are too late, by all means try the second. If all fails, just blow the post-Christmas budget and buy a regular ticket.

If the allocations go quickly the Box Office shows as Sold Out.

#### How to do it:

Highlight and copy the two discount codes (only the part in bold black)

100% discount code **BETTY100**

50% discount code **BETTY50**

Go through the regular online booking process by clicking [HERE](#)  
Choose your concert and select the discounted ticket (if it not showing sold out) and enter the number of tickets you need.  
Enter (paste) the corresponding code - **BETTY100** and click on "next" (at the bottom)

If they are sold out, try the second - **BETTY50**

You can, of course, type in the codes but you need to get the capitalisation right.

Proceed to the second page but don't panic, you won't be charged at this point

In either case, if there is still an allocation left the price will be magically reduced!

But you do need to click on a delivery method – Etickets are free.

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

**Vice Chair** – Diana Sears email [vicechair@mku3a.org](mailto:vicechair@mku3a.org)

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

**Treasurer** – David Hall email: [treasurer@mku3a.org](mailto:treasurer@mku3a.org)

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

**Webmaster** – Dave Barratt; email [webmaster@mku3a.org](mailto:webmaster@mku3a.org)

**Membership Secretary** – Tim Hadden email [membersec@mku3a.org](mailto:membersec@mku3a.org)

**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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