



The Third Way Newsletter

Autumn 2025

News from the Chair – Lesley Sparks

Dear Member,

Summer seems to be well and truly over, and Autumn is here! Christmas will be with us in a wink of an eye!!

You will have seen that MKu3a is embracing technology with the ongoing implementation of those small square readers, ready to take any group payments from your bank cards. This rollout has reduced our bank transactions, helped GCs submit their monthly returns and helped Diana, our treasurer, to easily agree group payments. In the first week of September over £2,500 was paid using this method. Fantastic and thank you to all who have paid their group payments by this method.

A further upgrade is in the pipeline with the updating of our Facebook presence – there are more details further on in the newsletter.

If you have had recourse to look at the website recently the eagle eyed amongst you might have noticed that we have updated the contact details at the bottom of the website to make it easier to get your message to the correct team, again this cuts down on the admin and possible delays in passing your message to the right person. Please

check this out if you need to contact the membership team, the finance team or the groups team. Our contact phone number is an answerphone so please leave a message so that we can deal with your query. There have been numerous erroneous scam messages where the caller has not left a message. We will not call any phone numbers who do not leave a message.

Our social team has been busy since May and have hosted two very different events, A Sea Shanty afternoon with refreshments and two performances of our own TAP group's Murder Mystery play. The social team were in attendance, dressed as trolley dollies, to deliver the four-course afternoon tea between scenes. Both events were a great success and there are others in the pipeline, so watch this space and book a place when the details are sent out.

Best wishes as always, Lesley

FACEBOOK LATEST

Dear Friends and Members,

After much thought, we've decided to **close our 'MKu3a Public' facebook group**. But don't worry—we're not going away! To serve you better and keep everything more organized, we are **starting a new Facebook Page, 'Milton Keynes u3a'**.

💡 Why the change?

- A Page will let us share updates more efficiently.
- You'll be able to easily see announcements, events, and top posts.
- It gives us more tools to grow and connect with the wider community.

👉 **Here's the link to our new Page:**

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61580662046456

We would love for you to **like and follow the Page** so you can continue being part of our community. Please also feel free to invite your friends to join us there.

Your **private Facebook** group **MKu3a** will still continue so that members and groups can keep in touch, share and chat.

Thank you again for your support—we're excited for this new chapter and look forward to seeing you on our Page! 💙

With gratitude,
Diana Sears / Facebook Admin Team

The Social Team need Volunteers

The Social Events Team are looking for some extra volunteers to help put on events for all the MKU3A members—this does involve the Team meeting up every other month or so to discuss and plan the next event, we enjoy a cuppa and a bit of a chat then it's down to the business of planning. Any small or large amount of time you can give is valuable, as the saying goes 'many hands make light work'. If you are interested in joining our small team, we would be happy to hear from you; drop me an email with your contact details and I will give you a ring/email reply. Deb Hodges at socialcommittee@mku3a.org

News From the Groups **Exploring World Faiths – Linda Morris**

On 1st October the Exploring World Faiths group will be visiting the **Quaker Centre** in Downhead Park. On November 5th we are visiting the **Sikh temple** in Kiln Farm and have been given the opportunity to arrive before the meeting for a free lunch. There is such a thing as a free lunch after all! If you would like to join the group, in October or November or both, please make contact via the group page. You will see lots of photos of our visits on our group page if you click on the arrows, and they are also to be found on the MKu3a Facebook group.

Family History Group – Peter Roake

The passing of Jeremy Green, our Group Leader, was a great loss to the MKU3A Family History Group. Jerry gave so much of his time and knowledge to help others in their research, and we remain extremely grateful for his contribution. He will be sadly missed by us all. To carry on his legacy a new Family History Group has now been formed, meeting on the second Monday of each month at Westcroft.

Our new group leader is Margaret Herbert with Secretary Peter Roake, both of whom are now running the group and trying to live up to Jerry's high standards of Family History research

We now have 7 members with a further 3 applying to join. Our first meeting was held on 8 September where lively debate was had, and some members shared that they had traced their families back over 500 years.

Information was given on how to use various websites such as Ancestry, Rootschat and Find my Past and their use was discussed in an effort to solve members' research problems.

We currently have a full membership, however if you are interested in joining the group please contact the U3A Group Coordinator to be added to the waiting list.

Choir - Vivienne Shaw

It was great to get back to Choir rehearsals on 2 September following our Summer break. I think some of us were getting a little rusty, but that was soon put to rights by our enthusiastic Musical Director, who quickly put us through our paces with plenty of warm-up exercises.

September is the time we begin rehearsals for our Christmas Concert, as time goes so quickly once Autumn is upon us.

Please put this date in your diaries now:

Christmas Concert: Sunday 14 December at 2.30pm

Venue: Newport Pagnell Parish Church

I do hope many of you will be able to join us there.

At our Summer Concert in June, we raised a total of £805.54, which we donated to Willen Hospice.

Although we have recently started a waiting list for prospective Choir members, we do hope to be able to offer a few more places soon. My number is: 07958 796515 should you wish to contact me.

Keep Fit 2 Has Vacancies! – Cheryl Young

Our Keep Fit 2 Group has a few vacancies and we would love to welcome some new members. We do our thing at Fitness First Gym at MK1 in Milton Keynes, 9.15am every Wednesday morning. The session is an hour long and is tailored to the needs of the mature person, no floor work (no need to try to get up off the floor if you didn't get down there in the first place), Cas, our lovely instructor, incorporates balance control and stretch into the exercises, and we exercise to a well chosen, singalong (in your head preferably) playlist of tunes from the 60s, 70s and later. You do not need to be a member of Fitness First to join our group, we hire one of their upstairs Studios. Parking is free, you just need to sign in at reception and input your car reg. They have a lovely café serving a good range of beverages and yummy cakes, some of our members get together after class for a coffee morning chat. As with all the other groups, you can come along for a taster session for £4.50 and if you enjoy yourself and want to join us, then we take payment for the month in advance. If you are interested, please find our group details in the Interest Groups tab and email Cheryl Young on keepfit2@mku3a.org who is the Group Co-Ordinator. We look forward to meeting some of you.

TAP Murder Mystery Play Reviews and Thanks

Lady Fenella Keans – the Lady of the Manor

Fenella Keans and The Third Age Players thank all the guests who came to celebrate her 80th Birthday party with High Tea at Ten Bob Manor recently. The party was a collaboration with the MKU3A.

This collaboration was suggested by MKU3A as a change from the usual 'Thank You' event they arrange each year, and Lady Keans hopes you all had fun. The food was excellent, and the staff carried out their duties to her Ladyship's pleasure

It is regretted that guests had to witness the deaths of two of Lady Keans close friends, Ventura Spleen and Harold Hyde and our sympathies go out to their families. Thanks go to the MKU3A guest who came closest to detecting the villains who perpetrated these evil

deeds which lead to their arrests – even if they unfortunately escaped in the end.

Watch out for what TAP (The Third Players) gets up to next.



[The Third Age Players latest venture – The Cast](#)

[Douglas Morgan](#)

I would just like to say what a joy it was to attend the murder mystery performance and 'high tea' at Wavendon Community Centre on 30th August.

I was in awe of the performance and the organisation it must have taken to bring everything together.

Everything about the afternoon was superb.

Congratulations to all involved

Well, what a pleasant afternoon in Wavendon, entertained and fed, by a selection of Groups from within the MKU3A.

A laugh all the way, and upon entry, we were greeted by a lady receptionist, who took my booking number, and offered me a choice of soft drinks and advised me of my table number, where I found a seating place card.

I was seated next to a gent and a couple also. The atmosphere was fun and anticipation too, with members who knew each other exchanging news and views.

Then the curtain rose, and we were off. Who Done It Mystery with Afternoon Tea.

Applause was genuine throughout the show and richly deserved.

At set intervals, we were treated to several courses, of food. All assembled, with delight for the audience.

The Waiting Staff looked wonderful, with trollies, U3A Trolly Dollies top all comers here. Take A Bow Ladies.

The main acts of the play with lights and sound, filled the silence after lights dimmed. And this punctured with suitable laughter at punch lines and other amusing items.

All word perfect, and I wish to thank all the Cast, who must have spent hours a week, learning lines and preparing all the props, support senses, like music, lighting and costumes.

Thank you to all involved, and how nice to learn the show was a sellout, for the following 2 nights. A wonderful achievement in itself.

Also, I must thank the MKU3A and the Catering Team, who supported this production. (And any other groups that helped.)

[Adele Wilson](#)

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Short Breaks and Holidays

Although these trips are not organised by MKu3a, Chris Behrendt from the Outings team liaises with a travel company to bring these short breaks to our members. Details of the last trip are detailed below:

MKU3A – KYNREN AN EPIC TALE OF ENGLAND

THURSDAY 11th – MONDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2025

THURSDAY 11th – Milton Keynes/Wentworth Woodhouse/Washington
45 people set out on this journey.

Wentworth Woodhouse, a hidden treasure with some remarkable stories. With the longest façade of any stately home in the UK, grand state rooms and 50 acres of gardens, with guided tours by knowledgeable volunteer guides we learnt so much about the family and the history of the house.

FRIDAY 12th – Beamish Open Air Museum

Today we enjoyed a full day at the award-winning **Beamish Open Air Museum** which brings the history of Northeast England to life at the turn of the century and now including a 1950's village and shops where all that could be heard was 'we had one of them' and a fish and chip shop serving great fish and chips.. Attractions include Pockerley Old Hall, the Pit Village and Colliery, Rowley Station, a typical 1940s farm, the Welfare Hall, Rowley Station, and the town itself where you can take a tram ride and visit the shops

SATURDAY 13th – Auckland Project & Kynren Spectacular with pre-show dinner

Depart for **Bishop Auckland**, to discover the remarkable achievements of the Auckland Project and its founder Jonathan Rutter, the entrepreneur who had a vision to bring life back to this former mining town. All-inclusive ticket allows entry to **Auckland Castle**, former seat of the powerful Prince Bishops, where a guided tour includes the famous Zurburan paintings of 'Jacob and his Twelve Sons' in the Long Dining Room. Other attractions include the Mining Museum, the Spanish Gallery, the Faith Museum and the Auckland Tower.

We then re-joined coach to transfer to Kynren and the Eleven Arches Restaurant for the pre-show meal.

The first year that Kynren has provided a 3-course dinner with a glass of wine prior to the show and enjoyed by all.

Kynren – how do you explain the experience, ‘The history of England in an hour and a half’ is my interpretation. The whole performance by over a 1000 volunteers. Incredible and if you get the opportunity to visit well worth it with more experiences opening during the day from 2026.

SUNDAY 14th – Cragside (National Trust)



Photograph – Jennie Savage

The journey to Cragside included a short stop at the Angel of the North for photo opportunities. **Cragside**, Britain's original 'smart home', one of the first to have electricity powered by hydroelectricity set in the midst of a grand fantasy garden that sits on a rocky outcrop with grounds made up of huge rhododendrons, towering conifers, tumbling water and open lakes.

MONDAY 15th – Washington/Malton/Milton Keynes

The weather that had been kind to us, took a change with wind and rain and although we spent time at **Eden Camp Modern History Museum** which recounts the social and military history of World War II in a series of exhibition huts, all within the grounds of an original Prisoner of War Camp unfortunately spoilt by the rain, an interesting and enlightening experience. The intention was to take lunch and visit the shops in Malton, known was the Foodie Capital of the North. Pouring with rain and some shops shut, consensus – no stop.

Comment from all travellers was how much we had seen, done and enjoyed and where are going in 2026 Chris?

Items Which May Be of Interest **Friends of Bletchley Station (FOBS)**



"Lovely flowers! Thank you for what you are doing!", "You are doing a great job, thanks!". Volunteers tending the planters filled with flowers or affixing posters in Bletchley station regularly receive such compliments from passers-by, travellers and railway staff alike. Faced with a functional but mundane 1960s station, FOBS has a clear aim: "Working with London Northwestern Railway to ensure Bletchley Station offers a green, informative and welcoming gateway to Bletchley

and its surrounds."

For the past three years, the small band of volunteers has worked tirelessly to make the station a more cheerful and convivial place. However, to keep up the good work and build on its success, the group needs a few more people to join in its activities. Many of the current volunteers help out with gardening, but others are involved in tasks

such as liaising with our railway hosts, fundraising, communicating with members of the local community, running our social media or promoting local history – there is something for everyone. Railway enthusiasts have the added bonus of being able to keep an eye out for trains of interest as they carry out their gardening duties!



FOBS inherited a small garden near the main station building and some planters. We soon installed more planters around the station and collaborated with the Bee-Friendly Society which provided two large containers, now filled with lavender and other plants attractive to pollinating insects. The group is keen to involve the community in all its activities. Volunteers from railway companies on their Volunteering Day as well as children from a local school and from a Scouts group on occasion help with gardening. FOBS cooperates with MK College Group, whose students will be working on the website; there is also a Facebook page.

FOBS has adorned the station with artworks: a specially commissioned mural celebrating Bletchley's heritage, photographs of Marston Vale destinations on the Bedford train platform, placards illustrating local history (with material from the Milton Keynes Living Archive), and

posters displaying regularly updated artwork from schools and a community art group.

FOBS is a part of the community rail movement which comprises 75 Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and 1300 volunteer groups that help communities get the most from their railway. Marston Vale CRP covering the Bletchley – Bedford line hosts FOBS – for more information contact marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk.

Recipient of two rail industry awards in 2025, FOBS is keen to recruit more volunteers to continue enhancing Bletchley station within a friendly community team., Please contact us at info@friendsofbletchleystation.org if you are interested in finding out more about us or in joining our activities.

[Why not join The Open Film Society?](#)



The society was founded in 1969 and has a history of screening the best quality films from around the world

The films are shown on Wednesdays in the Berrill Theatre on the Open University campus in Milton Keynes. They usually start at 6.30

A PDF of the full programme is on our website

<https://openfilmsociety.co.uk/>

[Charity Quiz Nights](#) – MUST be booked with missquiz@sky.com – Pat Hodges

£15 p.p. with supper. £7.50 without the supper. Simpson Village Hall K6 3AD. 7.00pm start

Sat Oct 11th proceeds to R.N.L.I.

Sat Oct 25th proceeds to RSPCA

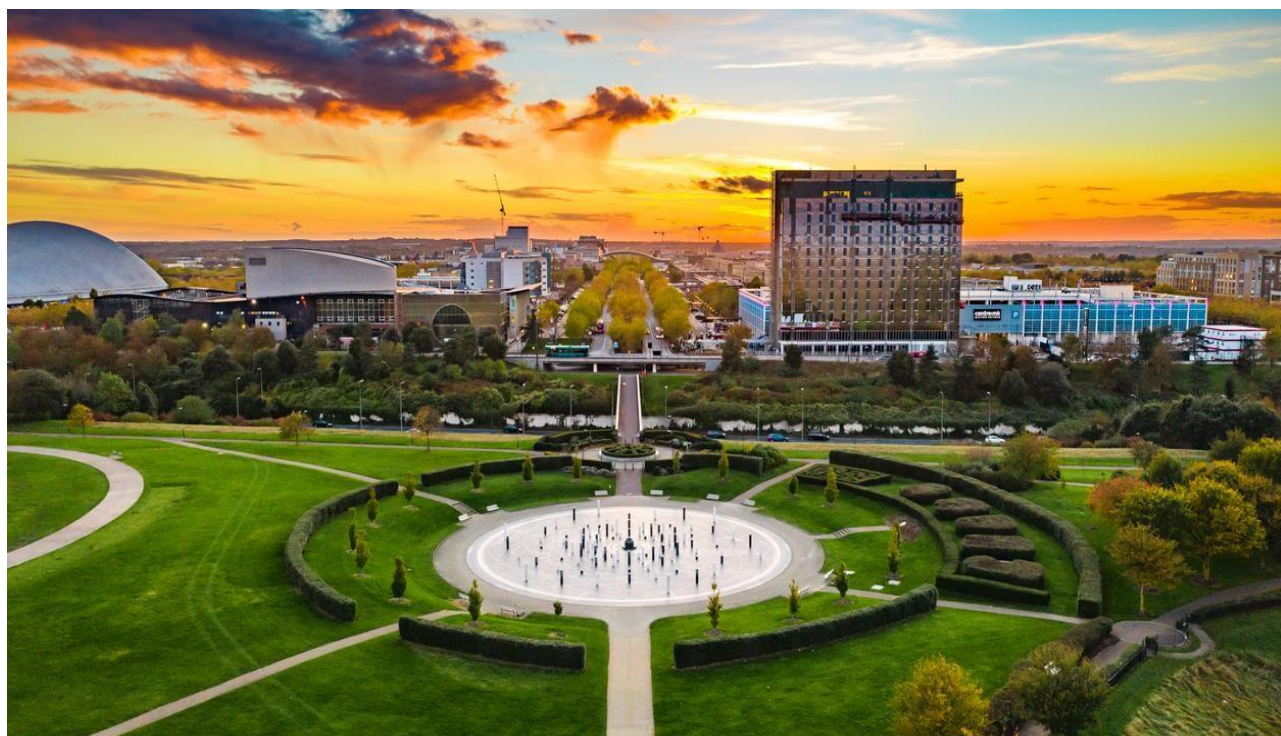
Sat 15th Nov proceeds to Tinker's Bridge Community Fridge

Sat 29th Nov proceeds to Healing Hands

["Autumn Leaves are Falling" Concert](#) on Saturday 18th October at 7.00p.m In St Thomas's Church, Simpson

United Nations International Day of Older Persons.

1pm - Wednesday 1 October 2025 MK Rose, MK9 4AJ



Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor James Lancaster and Older Persons' Champion, Councillor Ansar Hussain invite you to join them to celebrate International Day of Older Persons.

The event will include presentations on:

- Healthy and Inclusive Ageing by Jay Virgo, Communications and Engagement Manager, QAlliance
- Health Benefits of Walking and Cycling by Hayley Roche, Senior Transport Planner (Walking, Cycling and Smart Travel), Milton Keynes City Council

Organisations and individuals with an interest in social connection or wellbeing for older persons are welcome to attend.

Danesborough Chorus – Verdi's *Requiem*



Danesborough Chorus Autumn Concert

Saturday 29th November at 7.30pm
St Mary's Parish Church, Woburn



TICKETS
£25, £20, £10,
students £5
(all unreserved).
To book, phone
01908 583460
or scan the QR
code below to
book online.



Giuseppe Verdi's **REQUIEM**

Katy Crompton Sian Menna
Peter Hoare James Oldfield
Alina Orchestra Conducted by Ian Smith

Danesborough Chorus reg. Charity no 1188026 Website: www.danesborough.org.uk

It was at the Royal Albert Hall, 150 years' ago, when the first London performance of Verdi's *Requiem* took place on 12 May 1875. Since then, Verdi's *Requiem* has become one of the staples of the repertoire for choral societies. The work is theatrical in style with intensely dramatic sections – powerful choruses and vivid depictions of the Day of Wrath ('Dies Irae', which is often heard on Classic FM) – and passages of great tenderness and simplicity such as the joyful praise resounds in the 'Sanctus'.

Come and join Danesborough Chorus for an evening of glorious music on Saturday 29 November at 7.30 pm, St Mary's Parish Church, Woburn (Park Street, MK17 9PG).

Tickets are £25, £20, £10 and £5 for students. They can be order online from <https://wegottickets.com/event/667188>.

The Open University Orchestra's Autumn concert,

'Music from the Isles', is on Friday 17 October, 1–2 pm in the Hub Theatre on the Open University campus at Walton Hall. The concert features music in a range of different styles inspired by the different countries of Great Britain and Ireland, with some familiar pieces and some lovely music deserving to be better known. The programme comprises Grace Williams – Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes, Ralph Vaughan Williams – Fantasia on Greensleeves, Malcolm Arnold – Four Scottish Dances and Charles Villiers Stanford – Irish Rhapsody No. 4.

Admission is free and all are welcome, but it is highly recommended to reserve your place by pre-booking a ticket via www.ticketsource.co.uk/ouorchestra as we have enjoyed full houses for our recent concerts. As usual, the University restaurant and (newly refurbished) coffee bar are next to the theatre for pre and post refreshment.

The poster is blue with a faint map of the British Isles in the background. It contains the following text:

OPEN UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA
Paul Truman *Conductor* Steve Kent *Leader*

Music from the Isles

Grace Williams - *Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes*
Ralph Vaughan Williams - *Fantasia on Greensleeves*
Malcolm Arnold - *Four Scottish Dances*
Charles Villiers Stanford - *Irish Rhapsody No. 4*

Friday 17 October 2025 1–2 pm
Hub Theatre, The Open University, MK7 6AA

Admission free – all welcome. Please pre-book via www.ticketsource.co.uk/ouorchestra or the QR code. If there are any unbooked tickets these will be available on the door.

Retiring collection to support OU Orchestra's schools' outreach concerts
www.open.ac.uk/wikis/ouocmc/OU_Orchestra



Chair – Lesley Sparks email: chair@mku3a.org

Vice Chair – Wendy Barrett email vicechair@mku3a.org

Secretary – Deb Hodges email: secretary@mku3a.org

Treasurer – Diana Sears email: treasurer@mku3a.org

Groups Team – Tina Griffiths/Hazel Spencer email
groups@mku3a.org

Webmaster – Dave Barratt email webmaster@mku3a.org

Membership Secretary – Tim Hadden email
membersec@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.

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Membership and Renewal Queries, email membersec@mku3a.org

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Group Queries email groups@mku3a.org

Miscellaneous queries email: info@mku3a.org

Registered charity number: 298693