



milton keynes

university of the third age



Dec
2016



Message from the Chairman

I just hope I don't suffer a bout of writer's block this month. So much to say and so little time to do it! The management team has a set of month end deadlines and with a big visit to London yesterday (Tuesday 23rd November) I only have today to complete this missive before the dreaded deadline. And there's an Open Meeting with Jean Yates this afternoon with the subject 'Pub Signs' which, of course, is how I identify my office!

1,000th U3A

Yesterday was a full day as Brian Baldwin and our respective spouses (spice?) went to the 1,000th U3A celebration at Friends' House (just opposite Euston Station exit). Mrs. W. and I made a day of it – and it went like this:

- 1 Morning - visit to the Wellcome Collection which is conveniently sited next door to Friends' House. (Hint – free entry, excellent catering and free 'facilities'). We pottered about the current winter exhibition on 'Bedlam' and the development of mental health care in England, and around some of the fascinating permanent exhibits on health care and the human body, and the art collection, upstairs. An excellent place for a stimulating visit for any individual or any U3A Group. And good simple lunch.
- 2 Afternoon - The 1,000th U3A celebration – excellent. The actual presentation of the certificate was rather let down by the revealing of the particular 'secret' U3A earlier in the week in 'Third Age Matters', released just two days earlier. (It was Churchdown U3A, near Gloucester). However, we had inspirational presentations from Baroness d'Souza (about the House of Lords, with a few indiscretions thrown in) and from Eric Midwinter (U3A co-founder and educationalist – about his aspirations for the movement), and also entertainment from Canterbury U3A choir (MK's is MUCH better) and talks from the Third Age Trust chairman Pam Jones and from our new C.E.O. Sam Mauger. I can't do justice to these presentations here, but I hope to get a résumé into 'The Third Way' at a later date, or perhaps articles will appear in another U3A journal.
- 3 Evening – after a wander around Seven Dials (all Christmas lights and expensive shopping) and a Thai dinner, we went to see the show 'Matilda'. Lots of fun and very noisy!

Third Age Matters

Even though Third Age Matters rather let the cat out of the bag about Churchdown, it continues to inspire with articles on all sorts of amazing projects run by U3As and their members. It's this wide range of brain-exciting activities that will keep us active into our senior years and help the current trend (apparently, so the news tells us this week) of a reduction of dementia cases. Sam, (see above) alluded strongly to this in her talk. Please note articles in the recent TAM on: co-operative efforts with Universities; running of U3A Radio programmes; U3A Summer Schools (BOOK NOW!!); U3A Science Network Seminars; A National U3A Pétanque Championship; it's all happening in U3A!

Archaeology

So, here's a thought from me. Mrs. W. and I (and a few other MK U3A members who found the small advert in the last 'Third Way') attended the 10th annual MK Archaeology Day at the Central MK Library. Three excellent, fully illustrated presentations on projects of importance, both locally (a Saxon graveyard near Wolverton Mill) and nationally (at Westgate, Oxford, and at the amazing Must Farm site in the East Anglian Fens, dubbed the 'Peterborough Pompeii').

Now I have a feeling that there's quite a few MK U3A members who would like to get down and dirty in a dig somewhere, if only we had a group. So, if there is anyone who might be interested in looking to see how an 'Mk U3a Dig Down On the Ground' (or MUDDOG for short) group might operate, please do contact me on (*chair@mku3a.org*).

New Groups

I attended MK U3A's newest functioning group at the end of October – 'Desert Island Discs Archive'. The subject was Princess Grace of Monaco. A group member had researched her biography and then this was compared with the 1981 edition of the programme. Interesting how little she gave away! The November meeting (tomorrow – Prof. Brian Cox) will be too early for your attention, but January might be of interest – Sir Derek Jules Gaspard Ulric Niven van den Bogaerde – otherwise known as Dirk Bogarde.

Whilst on New Groups, 'Exploring World Faiths' looks really interesting. Diary conflict means I won't be able to be a regular but I hope to be able to see the group off on its journey at its first meeting.

Open Meetings

After a few technical hitches, November's Open Meeting continued our trend of growing attendance – another full room! Our own Jean Yates delivered a fascinating, intriguing, interesting, full-speed look at Pub Signs around the country, indicating the historical significance of many. She took me back to many of my home county (Yorkshire) favourite haunts (did we miss out 'The Golden Slipper?') and we all expressed interest in joining in her research. Fortunately, the awfully named 'Bucket of Blood' did not appear.

Open Meetings Move

Personal congratulations to those who managed to attend the meeting above. The MK Christian Centre has been our venue for two or three years now and was a vast improvement on our previous location, but its difficult car parking arrangements have been a real barrier to attendance – this was almost at its worst in November. But the Good News is:

The new season starting in January sees us at **A New Venue** that, we trust, will be more car-user friendly. Details of **The Oak Tree Centre, Shenley Brook End**, can be found further on in this newsletter.

Group Leaders Critical Bit!

Meanwhile, November saw a Group Leaders' Meeting. Yet again, we saw a rise in representation of groups, up from 70% to 75%. There is no doubt that this event is an excellent way of communicating between administration and membership. Also, nice to have a chance to chat with those who brought along their sandwiches for a lunchtime natter.

Apologies to anyone who found some repetition this time, but Datum has reached a crucial stage in its development and input from Groups into the membership management system is now critical and to get this message across was, and remains, essential. One GL who had not previously attended and was – er – coerced into attending found the information startlingly useful and interesting, whilst another, doubtful of Datum, indicated afterwards to be now 'nearly convinced' of its benefits. Whatever doubts are expressed, however, December sees a critical point in the implementation of Datum. All Leaders must get final Group Returns for 2016 in immediately after the last meeting of the year, or no later than 6th January. The finance package will kick in new for 2017 and the closing 2016 figures must be available as its starting point.

There are still some individuals and groups who need help with data entry into the system – in the first instance with letting us know who members of each group are. The Datum team is bending over backwards to help – please do not hesitate to ask for this.

The Season

It seems very early with, at the time of writing, a week of November still to pass. But it is my last 2016 message, so, with cheery soul, inquisitive mind and rather clicky hips, here's to a successful 2017. In Dorset, they know how to have a good time. As the local poet William Barnes put it:

We played at Forfeits, an' we spun
The trencher roun', an' meade such fun!
An' had a geame o' dree-ceard loo,
An' then begun to hunt the shoe.
An' all the wold vo'k zitten near,
A-chatten roun' the vier pleace,
Did smile in woone another's feace,
An' sheake right hands wi' hearty cheer.
An' let their left hands spill their beer,
A-keppen up o' Chris'mas.



MERRY CHRISTMAS ONE AND ALL

Message from the Communications Co-ordinator

I would like to thank everyone who has sent in contributions for the newsletter this year. It is only possible to produce a varied and interesting edition each month with your help. There will be no issue in January due to the festive period. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2017.

THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

Glimpses of the Social

History of the Thames Valley

STUDY DAY

The River & Rowing Museum, Henley-on-Thames

Wednesday, 22nd March 2017

£17.50 for TVN members. £19.50 non TVN members.

A link to a Booking Form can be found on the relevant page of the Latest News area of the MK U3A website

This event takes place in the stunning setting of the Thames Room of the River & Rowing Museum, Henley, looking out across the river. The intention of the study day is to shed light on different aspects of the lives of people in past centuries, in the towns and villages of the Thames Valley where we all live now. We are very fortunate in our panel of knowledgeable and enthusiastic speakers who will open these windows on the landscape of the past for us.

Judy Dewey, curator of Wallingford Museum, needs no introduction to many of us. She has an amazingly wide knowledge of the history of Wallingford, and also the ability to hold her audience spellbound.

Avis Furness, formerly Chairman of Reading U3A, has taken a deep interest in the history of the Civil War in Reading. The citizens of the town felt the impact not only of battles, but also of the siege and the depredations of soldiers of both sides.

Dr Matthew Smith of Royal Holloway College is the creator of the Citizens 800 Project, which features men and women of the past who fought for their rights and liberties. He will be joined by two U3A researchers who will describe what they have discovered of local heroes.

Tony Cullen of the English Civil War Society brings drama and excitement to his talks, as well as sharing his wide knowledge with us. No wonder he is such a popular speaker!

PROGRAMME

10:00	Registration and refreshments
10.30	Welcome and Introduction - Patsy Thornton
10.40	'Life in Medieval Wallingford' - Judy Dewey
11.25	BREAK
11.35	'The Impact of the Civil War on the Citizens of Reading' - Avis Furness, Chairman, Reading U3A
12.20	LUNCH
13:50	Citizens 800 Project - Dr. Matthew Smith and two U3A researchers.
14:25	'Crime and Punishment in the 17 th Century' - Tony Cullen
15.10	PANEL DISCUSSION
15.30	CLOSE

For further information, please contact Patsy Thornton, patsy@thorntac.co.uk, 01344 774812

A Message from Chris Behrendt, Current Groups Coordinator

Group 48 Latin Group

Thank you to those who have expressed an interest or wished this group well on continuing. The revival of this group is being progressed.

Use of External Tutors within MKU3A

After much discussion and taking advice from National U3A as to the requirements of using external tutors with regard HMRC, Insurance including Public Liability and Professional Qualifications we have concluded that the only groups that should be required to have external tutors are the 'fitness groups' on the understanding that the external tutor meets the guidance laid down. A policy regarding this will be on the website shortly. For all other groups, such as languages alternative methods of providing such groups are being considered.

Suggested New Groups

We now have an agreed policy with regard the setting up of suggested new groups. A copy of the policy is available on the website

Cribbage Group

The first meeting of this group will be at 10.30am on Monday 28 November. If you are interested please contact Chris Behrendt on 07766 026 357 newgroups@mku3a.org

Suggested New Groups – December

Current Affairs

Would anyone be interested in meeting together to discuss current affairs one afternoon a fortnight, possibly on a Tuesday or a Thursday? I am sure there must be others like me who cannot make it to the existing morning groups. Meeting would be held at my house in West Bletchley – near the No4 bus route. It is hoped to get together a small group of 4-8 people to begin with to discuss topics in the news over a cup of tea/coffee and a biscuit. Contact Chris Behrendt or newgroups@mku3a.org

Pilates 3

We have been given an opportunity to start a third Pilates group at Kents Hill Community Centre on a Wednesday morning with the tutor from the group that already meets there.

The group can have maximum of 14 members with costs around £5 a session paid in advance, usually on a monthly basis.

Interested: contact newgroups@mku3a.org or Chris Behrendt 07766 026 3567

Proposed New Course

Denise Messenger is interested in running a one day workshop on **“Coping with Stress in your Changing World”**. Denise has professional experience of working in this area and an outline of the potential course is shown below.

The workshop aims to provide a basic understanding of the causes of stress. It provides participants with the opportunity to identify the source of their own personal stressors. As a group, you can learn how to recognise, manage and prevent stress. Participants then learn practical techniques to relax and reduce stress and will have the opportunity to try out some of these methods of relaxation.

Techniques for relaxation to include – music; breathing; self-hypnosis; meditation; laughter; yoga; aromatherapy; colour therapy; reflexology; visualisation.

The suggestion is to initially hold a one day workshop, for which a nominal charge would be made, and if enough people are interested in continuing then Denise is willing to start a relaxation group that would meet monthly to explore and experience more of the relaxation techniques that are available for coping with stress.

If you think this could be of interest to you, please contact newgroups@mku3a.org or Denise Messenger telephone: 01234 585215 (*leave a message & I will get back to you asap*)

FaceGym is an anti-ageing, workout routine, using your own hands. The FaceGym workout consists of basic and advanced facial exercises and shiatsu specially designed for face and neck. The Face Gym works on the muscles of your face and neck, exactly as a regular gym where a specific routine of exercises, work for your body, strengthening, firming, tonic your muscles, for keeping you fit, healthy and full of vital energy. Any movement especially the specific gym ones have many general benefits for health and well-being, but the FaceGym gives you extra, a youthful sensation of rejuvenation, and the real feeling of your face and neck being lifted almost instantly.

Facegym is the latest trend in UK, and the newspapers and health and beauty magazines rave about its benefit, and recommend to be practised instead or alongside usual expensive facial treatments. FaceGym is suitable for anyone, regardless age or gender, and is a must, for people's face, who are thinking or are in the process of losing weight.

I believe FaceGym is the only truly natural face lifting method that can provide anybody interested to prevent or delay the appearance of lines and wrinkles or those who want to smooth and eradicate the existing lines and wrinkles, with with a low cost, pain free, permanently youthful appearance. FaceGym is part of my practice as a Body-Mind therapist and Self-Help practitioner, for the last 25 years and all the secrets, of how to keep that fresh, youthful look with the exercises, home-made creams and lotions and positive thinking, are included in my manual, called 'Natural face lift, Minding the body, Mending the mind'.

I am now happy to share those secrets with you. I am looking forward to see you at this new group, enjoying the exercises. I hope that you will find the entire FaceGym workout easy and enjoyable, while having a good time, making new friends and having fun as some exercises will make you giggle and laugh and laugh. All in the name of feeling good, healthy, happy and eternally young. Looking forward to see you at this new group.

Mira Bucur-Bar Tel. 0758 7708806 email newgroups@mku3a.org

News from the Groups

The Christmas Concert by our MKU3A Choir will be held in **Lovat Hall, Silver Street, Newport Pagnell**



on **Friday 16th December at 7.30pm**. The tickets are £7 which include refreshments and are available by phoning either Janice Miles on 07762178379 or Sylvia Tyler on 01908 520586. Proceeds from the concert will be divided between the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service at Thomas Edward Mitton House and the Eclipse Counselling Services.

Suzanne Miles would like to make the following offer to **Group Leaders**.

Following a discussion on Copyright with Susan Radford, the Head Librarian of Sources at TAT, during the recent Group Leaders meeting I was assured that material from the Great Courses Company could be used in the U3A educational setting. I have a growing collection of these 1st Year University Level Courses covering Sciences, Classics, History and Religion and would be happy to loan to any group leaders for use by their groups.

She can be contacted through the U3A website cross-stitch1@mku3a.org

Watercolour Workshop – John Beazley, Group Leader

With the invaluable help of Chris Behrendt (Groups Coordinator), and Dave Barratt (iPads and Webmaster), the Watercolour Workshop is now up and running. We have a membership of 20 with a usual attendance of 17-18.

So far, with much fun and laughter, we have explored the use of three brushes, the various ways of applying paint to paper, and as important how to remove it! Each session begins with a short practice piece based on a previous class, followed by considering and undertaking the next aspect of the craft.

We take a break for 'half time' and the group has splendidly organised itself to ensure a regular supply of tea and scrumptious biscuits. (The treasurer, meanwhile, gently and painlessly helps us all to keep the necessary finances in good order!). After the break, we attempt to apply what we just learned to a simple watercolour painting.

The enthusiasm of the group is infectious and, although we all are at different stages of experience, it is delightful not only to share in the friendship, but also to have the chance to work with people who are keen to try, interested to learn and who, truly, are making real progress.

Feedback Avril Tsappis would like to express her thanks to John for his help and encouragement. 'Loving your group' and has sent in the following photos.



Groups Looking to Increase their Membership

CALLING ALL MUSIC LOVERS

Let's hear your music tastes!

We are a group that meets twice a month (2nd and 4th Thursday morning) in Two Mile Ash.

We take it in turns to decide our own "playlist" for the meeting (not compulsory) and it's a chance to discover different types of music and artists.

So whether you are a jazz lover, an opera or classical buff or whether you just enjoy relaxing to different genres of music, we'd love to know you.

Give us a call or email us and we can tell you all about our group.

Contact: Sally Saunders 07948366778

Or email us at: a.saunders319@btinternet.com



An Invitation from the Garden and Environment Group

Why not join our friendly group in January 2017? We meet at 2pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the lounge of Hungerford House which is just across the road from Emerson Valley Local Centre Car Park. You do not have to be a 'Hands On' Gardener, just have an appreciation for gardens, plants and the whole wider environment.

The first two meetings for 2017 are as follows - January 11th. Photo Presentation (Wild Flora & Fauna) 'Wild Britain Diary' February 8th. Presentation 'Hospital Dogs'.

To join us just phone Mike on [01908 210310](tel:01908210310) or if you do not get an answer in a day or two phone Monica on [01908 377796](tel:01908377796). Mike Jenner, Group Leader



All 12 members of the **Painters Progress** group were greatly inspired by Sonia Bacchus' visit to their first session in November. Sonia is a very local artist living and working in Stony Stratford and took part in this year's Bucks Open Studios. Sonia paints a range of subjects in various media. Today she demonstrated still life using mostly water colour and pastel with a little use of gouache.



Sonia firstly talked us through her choice of objects for the still life, the use of different shades and tones of similar colours with a contrasting colour. She described her choice of composition, using a textile backdrop and base with creases and folds. Her preference is to have the light source (daylight if possible) from the side.

The next step was to make a simple construction sketch reducing the objects to their geometric forms; a cylinder for the bottle, a cone for the pot, then adding the shoulders and neck to the bottle ensuring they were symmetrical. She had made a grid using thread in a card mount to

check the symmetry.

Sonia taped a sheet of mixed media paper which needs less preparation than water colour paper to her easel. She used water colour pencils which could be easily modified using a damp sponge to construct her sketch. She began with the dark bottle which had been placed just off centre and located indication markers to place the pot beside it, also using the pencil at arm's length technique to check proportions.

Once she was happy that the sketch accurately represented the display she quickly shaded in the textile background with ink-tense block (like pastel). She applied a little masking fluid with a rubber brush to the highlights on the bottle, also explaining that masking fluid is unkind to hair brushes but the application of washing up liquid can help although this makes the solution thicker, alternately a palette knife could be used for a very fine line. With a damp natural sponge at the ready Sonia used a wet brush over the ink-tense block. Using the wet on wet technique she used cobalt blue water colour in vertical and diagonal strokes to create the folds and shadows in the textile drape.



The next step was to concentrate on the bottle. She used burnt sienna for the centre, lifting some colour with a sponge whilst still wet. Payne's grey was used for the bottle base. She used both the full width and narrow edge of a flat brush. The shadows were warm, so magenta and cobalt were used. The shadows at the bases of the objects held them in place instead of floating in space. She added lines of definition in ultramarine and red.

She explained how the artist takes control by giving more detail to the important objects to lead the eye on the journey you want it to make. The enamel pot needed dulling down so she used white gouache for this as it is more opaque than water colour, using viridian water colour mixed with white gouache. This is not cheating! Turner used white gouache in his work. It is useful to remember water colour dries paler, dark gouache colour dries brighter but bright gouache colours can appear darker when dry.

After applying magenta and cobalt shadows to the base textile, Sonia returned to the now dry bottle and painted a golden green wash over it. She explained that when using mixed media you need to begin with the thinner medium, so water colour before pastel, unless you wish to achieve the effect of painting water over wax pastel. Sonia finally used oil pastel for the highlights, white which could be toned down with grey if it was too harsh and yellow toned down with ochre for reflections, using all sides of the pastel not just the tip.



At the end of 2 hours Sonia had completed a vibrant still life whilst giving a lively referenced commentary with explanations for her choices. If you have been inspired by this why not join our group?



The Biology Group meet monthly in Furzton and would welcome new members. The discussions are varied but always informative and thought provoking. Why don't you come along?

The first two topics to be discussed are:

- Thursday January 5th - Liz will extend our understanding of the role of mitochondria in heredity and inheritance
- Thursday February 2nd - Peter will talk about the Administration of anti-cancer drugs

For more information please contact the Group Leader, Liz Padfield. Tel 01908 282375

Personal Recommendations by Members

Sylvia Poole would like to recommend her plumber, Steve Montague, who has given her good service for many years. He is qualified and if possible he will respond quickly. He can be contacted on 01908 561696. He does not advertise and relies on word of mouth recommendations.

Sheila Maclean has sent in this recommendation. There is a great need for tea. I mean proper Afternoon Tea, Duchess of Bedford-type Tea, where ladies gather to chat and where gentlemen might like to treat ladies to fancies with Earl Grey. Now, it is indeed very special to go to Woburn Abbey and have tea, but do be prepared to shed an arm and a leg for two people, ie at the rate of £30 per arm and £30 per leg. However, on our doorsteps in Stony Stratford, we have Miss Havisham's Tea Room. She does not charge even half an arm per person www.havishamsofstony.co.uk

How can I recommend a place I have never taken tea in? Because I have never yet got further than just inside the door, although once I did get to the top of the stairs. I can recommend it because it is clearly a very popular place to go, and I have twice ended up commiserating on the pavement outside with other disappointed parties of ladies, who arrived at 3.30 p.m. She closes at four p.m. Go at 2.30 p.m. Or make a booking. I'll try to be there before you.

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Upcoming Theatre Trips

Date	Show	Pay by
Sat 7 th Jan '17	Ice Hockey	4 th Jan
Thurs 12th Jan '17	Dick Whittington	Passed
Wed 25th Jan '17	Thoroughly Modern Millie	Passed
Thurs 16th Feb '17	The Red Shoes	Sold Out*
Wed 1st March '17	Funny Girl	4th Jan
Sun 9th April '17	Lord of the Dance	30th Jan
Fri 28th April '17	Dirty Dancing	10th Oct

Wed 10th May '1	Mamma Mia	13th March
Wed 9th July '17	Wonderland	30th Jan
Wed 6th Sept '17	The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night	3rd April

* If you would like to see this show please contact Hilary to be added to a waiting list. Tickets sometimes become available and she will need to know who to contact to offer the returned tickets.

Why not try something different and bring the family and friends to see **Ice Hockey at MK Planet Ice.**

On Saturday 7th January at 7pm, MK Lightening will take on Telford Tigers. Ticket prices Adults £8.50 Child £4.00

Good family entertainment. For a booking form please visit the Theatre Group page on the MKU3A website



Please refer to the website for further details or contact the organiser on theatre@mku3a.org

Milton Keynes Theatre Group



Please note the Theatre Group is open to you as a MKU3A member.

You can, as a member, bring along family and friends to any performance if there is availability. The more seats we book the cheaper they will be. The minimum booking is usually 10.

I will endeavour to be at the Open Meetings to take bookings or you can email or call me to book a place.

It works like this.

A post-dated cheque (pay by date on sheet) payment with booking form. I will hold your cheque and bank it just before I collect the tickets. If for whatever reason the show does not run, I will either destroy or return the cheque to you. I can post tickets to you if you include an SAE.

I will send you an email asap to say your cheque has arrived and then notify you when your ticket is posted or available for collection

Theatre Contact: Hilary Beckett, 107 Lakes Lane, Newport Pagnell, Bucks MK16 8HT

Mobile 07867978585. Email theatre107@gmail.com or Theatre@mku3a.org

Cheques to be made payable to MKU3A.

Upcoming Outings

Date	Venue	Last B'king Date
Thurs 16 th Feb	Rugby School and Coventry Cathedral	Thurs 12 th January*

* **Outing to Rugby School and Coventry Cathedral**

Cost £25 to include driver's tip, both tours and refreshments at Rugby School. Lunch in Coventry at own cost. Booking forms are available

Rugby School – Refreshments and Tour lasting around 90 minutes, cost included

Steeped in fascinating history and positively crammed with old world charm, a tour of Rugby School and its museum is not to be missed. The impressive school buildings and hallowed rugby ground alone never fail to

impress. In fact, there's so much to see, a tour of the school's highlights takes an hour and-a half with one of their knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides.

Wander around the charming museum, home to a wealth of carefully displayed Rugby School artefacts and information. Step inside the former coach house and experience the nostalgia of school days dating back to the 18th century, complete with top hats, birching stool and cane. Discover the lives of famous past pupils, from poet Rupert Brooke to the author Lewis Carroll, whose Alice in Wonderland adventures are still entralling the pupils of today.

Sporting memorabilia features ancient rugby balls, an original 'death cart' used to trundle away injured players, and the very first 'caps' from the game's beginnings. Rugby enthusiasts just can't wait for a glimpse of The Close, the ground on which the sport was first played with William Webb Ellis's fine disregard for the rules of football in 1823.

But there's far more. Step inside the Butterfield-designed Main Chapel and marvel at the splendid décor and exquisite stained glass windows. Experience the heady atmosphere of Old Big School, at almost 200-years-old, where the pupils' original carvings remain on the wood panelling. In a setting, reminiscent of Tom Brown's School Days, the heady 'birching tower' is a sobering sight, and in the atmospheric, arched Old Quad stands the pump under which Mr Brown was ducked.

Scale the winding stone stairs to Upper Bench to experience a room worthy of a scene from Harry Potter's Hogwarts. With its balcony library crammed with ancient books and old carved desk lids covering the walls, it's a fitting end to this unique tour.

Coventry Cathedral – Free time on arrival for lunch at own cost and to explore Coventry. Cafe in Cathedral and restaurants nearby.

Tour of Coventry Cathedral at 2.30 pm for 60 mins Meet at Guides Meeting Point - Cost included

Celebrated as the **UK's favourite 20th Century building**, Coventry Cathedral is known all over the world as an icon of peace, and a truly stunning venue.

Designed by architect Sir Basil Spence following the bombing of the city in 1940, the New Cathedral was opened in 1962, and contains some of the finest examples of 1950's and 60's Art and Architecture in the UK.

Cathedral Tower Climb - Climb the Cathedral Tower for the best view in Coventry! Open 7 days a week except during bell ringing sessions. *(Subject to staff availability and events taking place which may mean that the tower is not accessible)*. The Cathedral Tower Climb costs an additional **£2.50** each per adult.

Blitz Experience Museum (normally open from mid-February to early November)

In the Blitz Experience (when available) volunteers tell the story of what Coventry was like before the Blitz and how the people of this extraordinary city coped with its aftermath.

Please refer to the website for further details or contact the organiser on outings@mku3a.org 01908 506706

Booking Forms for both these groups can be found on the relevant pages of the website or on the individual postings in the Diary

Open Meetings

There will be no Open Meeting in December

As there will be no newsletter in January here is the advanced notice for the January Open Meeting.

Please note the change of venue and time.



**The Oak Tree Centre, Wallinger Drive, Shenley Brook End, Milton Keynes,
MK5 7GZ at 2.30 pm**

There is a café on site which serves beverages and light snacks including jacket potatoes, pizzas and sandwiches

Onsite car parking available and bus routes 8, 24 and 25 run nearby.

25th January Spies, Lies and Double Cross Agents

During World War II every single German spy that was sent to Britain was captured. This completely brilliant story can now be told, but you will have to disengage your disbelief!

Date for Your Diary

Advance Notice - MKU3A 2017 AGM

All members are invited to attend 2.30 p.m. Wednesday 22 March 2017

The afternoon will finish by 4.30 p.m.

If you would like to put a motion to the meeting or you have a question to ask about the business of the meeting, please send it to the Secretary by email [secretary@mku3a.org] or by post to the Office to arrive no later than 25 February 2017. Motions received after 25 February will be deemed invalid. Meeting papers will be available on the website by 6 March 2017.

After the formal business, there will be a talk from Peter Waterman who came to Milton Keynes as the Bishop of Oxford's Planning Officer in 1968 and will talk to us about the social experience of new towns and what was done in the first 20 years of MK to meet newcomers' needs

Items of Interest

U3A National Summer Schools: why not try one? Contributed by **Mirabelle Walker**

In each of the last two Augusts I have been to a U3A national summer school, a 4-day event hosted on a university campus. Both were very enjoyable experiences, yet these summer schools don't seem to be well known in the Milton Keynes U3A. So, let me see if I can encourage you to consider attending by telling you a little about my experience.

In both years, I chose an Italian course, not just because I'm group leader for one of MKU3A's three Italian groups, but also because the descriptions sounded interesting. The other course members in both years were from a variety of U3As across the country, and one valuable aspect of the course was finding out what other U3A Italian groups do and bringing good ideas back to the MKU3A group. I suspect something similar would apply to all the courses – they offer a useful way of exchanging good ideas as well as being interesting in themselves. And talking with people studying other courses – from garden history to cryptic crosswords, from singing to Shakespeare – indicated that those were good courses too.

If your picture of university accommodation includes ablutions blocks at the end of draughty corridors, think again. The study bedrooms allocated to U3A students are en-suite, and are rather like simple hotel rooms, even to the tea and coffee making facilities. As for the food, it was plentiful and wholesome, but I was so busy

chatting to other U3A members that I can't remember much else about it! Mealtimes are a good opportunity for a very pleasant aspect of the summer schools, which is meeting other U3A members. They are all such nice people.

Summer schools run from Monday afternoon to Thursday lunchtime, and the timetable includes social events as well as classes. The 2017 dates and venues, along with brief lists of courses on offer, are on pages 8–9 of the latest *Third Age Matters* (Winter 2016), and in January more details will be available on the national U3A website. I'd suggest it's worth looking – you may find it leads you to a very enjoyable experience.

Age UK Milton Keynes has sent the following reminders

Remember, you can do all your on-line shopping **and** donate to Age UK Milton Keynes if you use this search facility: ageukmiltonkeynes.easyssearch.org.uk . Every time you click through to a shop, we will get a few pennies. Every time you make a purchase we will get more – but **it won't cost you a penny extra!**

If you would like to donate to Age UK Milton Keynes this Christmas – there is still money in the Match Funding pot so if you click on the link to localgiving.com below, any donation of up to £10 will be matched – and if you are a UK tax payer and tick the 'Gift Aid' box, we will get a little bit more!

In February 2016, **The Milton Keynes Bereavement Service** is starting its next 'Introduction to Bereavement Counselling' course for anyone interested in becoming a bereavement support volunteer, or for those wanting to enhance their understanding of grief to use in their own workplace. **The cost for this course is £150.** Please email mk.bs@virgin.net for further details.

The Bow Brickhill Women's Institute are meeting on 8th December 2016 at 7.30 pm. The theme is Art for Christmas and we will be serving Christmas refreshments. For further details please contact Stephanie Warren. Tel 01908 671394

Upcoming Events at St Mary and St Giles Church, Stony Stratford

Saturday 3rd December, 10am – 12 noon Coffee morning in the Parish Hall to help raise funds to keep our newly restored Willis pipe organ sounding wonderful. Take a break from the shopping - come and be warm and cosy while you are fed and watered and enjoy a chat in good company.

Thursday 15th December, 12.30 Jacob Collins returns from his first term at university to play our Willis organ again at our final free lunchtime concert of the year ...a treat not to be missed! Bring your lunch and stay as long as you can. All ages welcome.

Saturday 10th December, MK Youth Choir 3pm A feast of young voices – book the date now!

Saturday 17th December 5pm. We welcome back **MK Chorale** for a late afternoon concert of a Christmassy nature.

A warm welcome awaits you - we look forward to seeing you at St Mary & St Giles Stony Stratford (MK11 1BD).

Libby Culshaw has sent in this this. For many years, I have been greatly bothered by tom cats spraying in my porch. It is revolting. Over the years I have tried everything known to man, including chopped garlic, red hot chilli peppers and orange peel - Nothing has worked until I hit on the idea of placing a simple and cheap air freshener in the corner of my porch - cunningly obscured behind a pot plant!

I have been cat free for several months now.

Janet Brinsmead has a suggestion - As the long, dark evenings draw on ...

Oh, yes, I'd read about MOOCs ... those Massive Open Online Courses ... great for everyone ... no educational restrictions ... free, too ... well, maybe one day ...!

Unexpectedly confined to the home with health problems for an extended period earlier this year, I was desperate for "something" ... "anything" to do ... ah well, I thought, without much enthusiasm, perhaps now might be the time to try a MOOC.

Now for the **Disclaimer and Health Warning** ... these Course can be addictive ... oh yes! All my preconceptions of on-line learning were shattered with the very first Course I ventured to try.

Run by Warwick University, it was entitled: "*Literature and Mental Health: Reading for Well-being*" and what an eye-opener it turned out to be. Over the six-week Course (which you can do at your own pace although I found it useful to set specific time aside) contributions came from the likes of Stephen Fry, Melvyn Bragg and Ian McKellen as well as the two highly approachable Tutors, Professor Sir Jonathan Bate and Dr. Paula Byrne who were always ready to respond to or comment on Learners' observations.

Interaction with other Learners was one of the most surprising of discoveries ... the Courses can be picked up almost worldwide and there were participants from all corners of the globe so the discussion and comment ranged widely reflecting so many different and differing cultural aspects. Being house-bound, I appreciated this aspect of the MOOC and I "met" so many interesting people ... retired people who were also other U3A'ers, people interested from a professional point of view, younger people looking forward to further study – you name it, we were all there.

The Course covered difficulties like Stress, Heartbreak, Bereavement, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression and Bi-Polar, ending with Ageing and Dementia and how reading poetry, prose and drama might help in understanding and helping with some of these things which we might come across in our lives at one time or another. All the written material was supplied and there were some fascinating videos, interviews and readings, too.

There was, surprisingly, a huge sense of sadness when the Course came to an end ... but there wasn't to be an end ... as I mentioned earlier, MOOCs can be addictive ... I wanted another ... and another ... and so far, have taken part in Courses where topics range wildly away from Literature ... through Archaeology ... History ... Crime and Justice ... and that's only a start ... there are literally hundreds of Courses to choose from on so many, many different subjects.

I began with a reminder (as if we need one) about how long and draggy some of our dark winter evenings can feel, especially if we live alone ... you only need very basic computer skills to join in ... perhaps, like me, you might "Have a Go!" this winter at a MOOC ... you might be as surprised as I was!

WEA – Workers' Educational Association

The WEA has two new courses starting in January 2017.

In 'From the Scientific Revolution to the Modern Age' Paul Ranford will give learners an understanding of the development of science from the time immediately after the Scientific Revolution (about 1800) to the present day. This course will be held at the Summerlin Centre, 138 Station Road, Woburn Sands, MK17 8SG, on Mondays from 9 January to 27 February 2017, excluding 13 February, 2.30pm to 4.30pm. Cost £57.40.

You can enrol online for this course

at: <https://enrolonline.wea.org.uk/Online/2016/CourseInfo.aspx?r=C3740192>

In contrast, Karen Hewitt will deliver a 10-week literature course on 'Families - Love, War and Secrets'. Participants will read, examine and enjoy novels and stories where families are used to explore human dilemmas and the consequences of intense family attachment. This course will be held at the Methodist Church Hall, Silver Street, Stony Stratford, MK11 1JS, on Thursdays from 12 January - 23 March 2017, excluding 16 February, 10.30am - 12.30pm. It is run in cooperation with The University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education (OUDCE) and carries 10 CATS points. Cost £170.

To register for this course and for further information, please contact Jeannine Golding on: 01908 567869 or email: jeannine.golding@btinternet.com

Roy Chapman one of our members has artwork exhibited alongside other paintings from members of his watercolour group in A Painting Exhibition entitled 'Class Art' in The Cornerstone Gallery, Christ the Cornerstone Church, Milton Keynes from November 19th to December 14th. The gallery is open from 8am to 8pm every day. Entrance is free.

Celia Hart would like to recommend a small, light, voice recorder, for help with remembering things to do or buy. Easy to use, play back and carry in a pocket as a memory aid. The helpful Sony Centre at MK City Centre have a choice of voice recorders and some with PC connectors.

STILL GREEN Third Age Cohousing, Milton Keynes www.stillgreenweb.org

In or entering the 'third age' and wondering about your housing options?

Interested in sustainable living? Want friendly, like-minded neighbours?

Still Green is a lively and diverse mix of people, with a spread of ages. Mostly Milton Keynes residents, we share a commitment to good neighbourliness and to living more sustainably. We think there has to be something better than the housing currently available – and we have seen cohousing work elsewhere, in Holland, Scandinavia and North America.

Cohousing is where residents live in their own separate and self-contained units and also enjoy some shared facilities, with occasional activities and meals together. Cohousing provides a safe, close-knit neighbourhood. Living in comfortable, healthy homes designed to minimise energy usage and maximise comfort. Sharing and pooling resources makes social, environmental and economic sense.

We are working together to create and run a neighbourhood that will give us a healthy balance of privacy and involvement, youth and age, quiet retreat and continuing engagement in society.

Come and meet us on Saturday 21st January - you may feel at home.



Everything you (or your parents) need to know about cohousing

If you are interested in neighbourliness and sustainable living, join us for *talk, tea, and a tantalising prospect* with MARIA BRENTON
UKCN Ambassador for Senior Cohousing

14.00 - 16.00, Saturday 21st January

The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park MK15 9BH

More information: <http://cohousing.org.uk/> or <http://stillgreenweb.org> rsvp stillgreenweb@gmail.com

News of Members

In September, we reported that **Joyce Wiffen** had moved out of the area to be near her son and now it is with sadness that we have to report her death. Joyce was a long-standing member of the choir both as an alto, a conductor and a pianist. She also took over as musical director for a time. Alto singers still in the choir have said she had a beautiful singing voice. Her friendliness towards new members to put them at ease was one of her strengths. Our condolences and best wishes go to her family and friends.

Key Contact Details—more on the web site

Chair: Nigel Wright email: chair@mku3a.org Tel: 01908 667007

Secretary: Janice Miles email: secretary@mku3a.org Tel: 01908 397944

Groups Co-ordinator: Christine Behrendt email: currentgroups@mku3a.org

Datum Project: Dave Barratt email: datum@mku3a.org

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

Assistant Webmaster: Len Barrows email: asntwebmaster@mku3a.org

Acting Treasurer: Brian Baldwin email: treasurer@mku3a.org Tel: 01908 670579

Groups Finance Administration: Geraldine Cannell email: groupsadmin@mku3a.org

Membership Secretary: Denise Messenger email: membersec@mku3a.org

Communications Co-ordinator: Lesley Sparks email: comms@mku3a.org

Halls Administration: Sue Giordano email: Hallsadmin@mku3a.org

Please refer to the website: www.mku3a.org for statements concerning **MKU3A Policies and Guidance** on all aspects of our administration **including Data Privacy, Disclaimers and Copyright**

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

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

Registered charity number **298693**.

