



milton keynes

university of the third age



October
2020



Dear Members,

Once again, the news concerning Covid-19 is not good and the latest restrictions have made it impossible to reopen our indoor groups and we must limit our outdoor meetings to 6.

I have re-read the latest guidelines from the government, the recommendations from the National U3A and listened to the weekly bulletin from the council leader of Milton Keynes; all urge caution as we enter the autumn/winter. The guidelines change frequently, and it is tricky to keep up to date but the government advice states that “Certain groups of people are at increased risk of severe disease from coronavirus (COVID-19), including all people aged 70 or over. Such individuals are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household.”

Link to the Council briefing 25th September – well worth a listen!!

https://www.facebook.com/MKCouncil1/videos/1598121333693943/?_so=_permalink&_rv=_related_videos

Before these latest guidelines were issued the trustees had contacted our venues to see which were accepting group hire and any Covid-19 requirements they had in place if they were open – unfortunately most were still closed. We were also trying to decide how we could support groups to meet either using Zoom or perhaps a combination of members attending in person and others joining in using Zoom. The second option has now had to be put on hold but if you would like your group to try to get together using Zoom and are unsure how to go about it we can help you – just ask.

Our twice monthly Open Meetings using Zoom are extremely popular and cover a variety of subjects, the last one was by a duo called Fools Gold from the North East. They performed several folk songs and told us the background story for each rendition. It was most enjoyable and by the power of technology we could see some of our members singing along from the comfort of their armchair, even though they were muted!! These online meetings allow us to

put dates in the diary to look forward to. There is no charge for these meetings so why not join us.

Lynne sends out the information by email for each month giving the next two meetings so if you would like a place please respond to the email and claim one. Dave is happy to help you if you are unsure how to access the meetings on your computer or tablet.

We think these meetings will become more important now the weather has changed and more restrictions are put in place to curb the transmission of the virus. We are exploring how we can let attendees stay online after the speaker has finished to chat to friends using 'breakout rooms' and more information about this will be sent out as soon as we have established the process.

Our own Third Age Players have offered to perform for us via Zoom as they have been meeting online and miss performing to an audience. Date to be advised.

AGM March 2021 – We were planning to hold this important meeting using both attendance in person, socially distanced, and with further members joining in using technology. Unfortunately this now can only happen if the rule of six is relaxed, so we will have to plan for both and use the most appropriate when the time comes. It is a learning curve for us all so once again we will keep you informed once we know.

We still need members to offer to come on board the committee as we will be losing valuable committee members after the AGM and we are obliged by our constitution to fill the vacancies to remain legal. If you think you could help, please let me know – time is flying by! I know this is a difficult time for us all, but the committee members are continuing to do the best for all our members during the crisis.

The Trustees wish you all well and hope to see you all very soon

Best wishes

Lesley Sparks on behalf of the Trustees

Virtual Talks for Members

In September we were very fortunate to have two excellent but very different talks.

Firstly AnnaMaria D'Allense gave a well structured and balanced talk about London Street Art focusing on the Brick Lane Area. Lots of photographs of the artwork but I think what impressed us all was the depth and breadth of AnnaMaria's knowledge and the clear enthusiasm she had for the topic. I received lots of very positive comments about her talk and one to highlight was

from a member who said “I am a big fan of art but had never thought much about street art before. This has certainly changed my understanding.”

Our second talk was more of a performance than a talk from an acoustic duo “Fools Gold”. They delivered to us a number of songs – some their own and some well known to us all, the latter we could sing along to as we were all muted. What I think made the performance quite special was the background stories to the songs which Steve and Carol provided – who knew before the link between “You are my sunshine” and a certain Louisiana Governor and the romantic sadness surrounding Grace Darling.

I am really pleased to confirm both these speakers have already been rebooked for different talks/performances next year.

In October we again have two talks booked. The first a welcome early return from Simon Gregor, this time his talk will take us on a virtual walk from Covent Garden to Bloomsbury. We currently have over 100 members booked for this talk but we are now able to expand our licence (at a cost) if this high level of interest is maintained. Our second talk is from Philip Crane who will share with us his experiences, which seem amazing, on his journey from Barrow to Baghdad.

If you haven't booked yet but are interested, then please email vicechair@mku3a.org

MKU3A Facebook Page

This remains a very popular page with lots of interesting and varied contributions from members, membership continues to grow but still not quite hitting the 200 mark. Maybe in October? One of our members is posting a picture of artwork with background information on a daily basis, really interesting but can I just say picture no 51 is not to my taste! Want to know more? Then if you have a Facebook account sign up to our page!

A reminder to those who may consider joining this group but are concerned about privacy. It is a private group for MKU3A members only and we check on membership before accepting people to the group.

Lynne Button

A couple of diversions:

(1) Andrew Lloyd Webber is restarting streaming of his shows on his YouTube channel 'The Shows Must Go On'.

(2) I'm in the amdram group 'Tread The Boards' and we are now on YouTube. A number of us have recorded short (6-10 mins) monologue pieces specially written by a member of the

group. In YouTube, search Treadtheboards (no spaces) and find us as Treadtheboards Treadtheboards (yes, twice). My piece is 'Ken' and they're all in the Videos tab. Enjoy, and feel free to tap the thumbs up button!

Steve Allen

Is anyone of you interested in a tea/cake get together? I wonder if you would like a walk in the woods for 45 mins to one hour, then meet up for tea in my garden. There is enough space for social distancing. I suggest a Tuesday walk from 13:30 pm in Aspley Woods , Aspley Guise MK17 8EJ then tea in my garden next door to the Woods . Due to the current guidelines, we can only have six people at a time at the moment, but if you are interested, do email me on julgn@btinternet.com and I will take the first six.

You would be most welcome.

Julie Gibson

Eileen Brotzman says:

I recommend an interesting app <http://zooniverse.projects> of which there are many and often keep me occupied. There are lots of projects to choose from and I would recommend this heartily to members as it is something to help our planet in the here and now, and I want the whole planet to join in as citizen scientists. It is helping the scientists to cover projects of great importance and it will get it done a lot quicker if they have our help.

My thanks to Pat Brenchley as she recommended me to U3A and I am grateful for the lifeline.

From Darren Lewey:

I have some very useful online learning materials for photography which include free tutorials and courses for developing local projects - especially useful now of course. Please see the link below.

<https://creativecamera.online/>

September 3rd to 5th, 2020 Third Age Players (TAP) should have been presenting their latest play 'Murder Unlimited'. Sadly, Covid has made this impossible. But one of our players, Heather Harris, has written the following which sums up what all our group of Thespians are feeling.

This week should have been our play week
We should have been treading the boards
Rushing around with final rehearsals
Checking set, costumes, props and of course words!
Instead we are still here in 'lockdown',
With certainly no end in sight,
With only the weekly Zoom meetings
To alleviate our plight!
It didn't seem too bad at first
So many tasks got done
The sun was shining brightly
And at times it seemed quite fun!
I sorted out our photos going back at least 5 years,
And worked hard in the garden till backache brought on tears!
I completed lots of jigsaws usually kept for Xmas time,
And made a lot of recipes, too much they were sublime!
'Cos then I found my waist had grown so cut that out 'tout' suite,
I didn't want to emerge from Covid with an even larger seat!
With messages on Whatsapp to make us laugh and smile,
Even though the news was sometimes scary
We felt safe for quite a while.
But now with still no end in sight I think I've had enough!
I'm missing all my groups and friends,
The 'goings' getting tough.
Humans are social beings,
It's really what makes us 'tick'.
And yes, it was our play week, so I for one feel sick,
I miss the hassle and banter, the excitement I miss like mad!
I know if things were normal, I wouldn't feel so bad,
I think too, of our other mates,
Of the folk who can't do Zoom.
Are they well? Do they miss us too?
Do they also feel the gloom?

So please clever scientist, do find a cure.
I know you can do it, of that I am sure.

Only please make it soon 'cos I'm desperate to be,
Someone else on the stage, I'm fed up being me!!

Barbara Baker

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