



January  
2021



Dear Members

With the prospect of the vaccine being rolled out for the country over the coming months I am hoping the end will soon be in sight and a feeling of normality will return but for now our area is in Tier 4 and MKu3a remains closed for all groups except those who can meet virtually. If any group would like to join the virtual MKu3a family and would like assistance, please let me know.

It was decided last year to cancel our AGM with the hope we would be able to resume the usual procedure in 2021 – this now seems unlikely. Over the last 10 months many of you have taken to technology and embraced online platforms, Facetime, WhatsApp and Zoom as methods of contacting friends and family. MKu3a will need to make an amendment to our constitution to bring our current practice of holding meetings online constitutionally correct. We circulated the date for the Special General Meeting which will be held before the online Open Meeting speaker on January 27<sup>th</sup> in an earlier communication and it is also detailed below. An email will be sent by Lynne Button with details of how to book a place at this meeting and how the voting system online will work. Proxy votes will also be available as is our normal practice and this form can be found in the Admin Area of our website with a return date of Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Once again, I must ask for members to consider stepping forward to come onto the committee and help run our excellent organisation, it is a rewarding activity, and you will be contributing your skills for the benefit of us all. The roles are varied. Please let me know if this is something you would like to explore further – I will be happy to discuss the possibilities with you by phone. Please write to me and I will ring you at a mutually convenient time [chair@mku3a.org](mailto:chair@mku3a.org).

Best wishes to you all and let's hope for a better 2021.

**Lesley**

## Notification of a Special General Meeting

### **MKU3A 2021 Special General Meeting**

All members are invited to attend via Zoom

2.15 p.m. Wednesday 27 January 2021

### Virtual Talks to Members

In December we were fortunate to finish this year's talks via Zoom on a real high, excellent speakers with interesting topics.

Our first talk was from Tom Way, a photographer of well deserved repute. He shared with us some of his stunning wildlife photographs and some information behind the taking of the photographs. I think we were all in awe at the time and patience needed, over 20 days of waiting to get the perfect shot in some cases, and we were entertained by a very personable and able speaker.

The following week James Taylor shared with us some of the picture postcards from his personal collection of over 20,000! A humorous and insightful talk, not only did we all smile and I am sure chuckle but we also appreciated the historic context surrounding this genre. James' in-depth knowledge and enthusiasm shone through and if we continue to need to have remote talks for members then he is definitely someone I would wish to re-book.

The third Wednesday in December was a real treat. Our choir led us in a Christmas Carol Concert interspersed with very relevant readings, a much needed lift to the spirits and the result of much rehearsal and practice – thank you. We followed this with a fun and thankfully not too difficult Christmas Quiz ably quiz mastered by our member Stewart Pye and who knew the connection between Ghislaine Maxwell, Justin Trudeau and Humphrey Bogart!

The committee have received some lovely positive feedback about the talks, so pleased it has offered some bright spots to our members during this year of lockdown and hope even more people are able to participate next year.

### **Talks booked for January 2021**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January: Mark Dawson** a history professor who will share with us his insight into the history of food for the common man

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January: John Fieldsend**, a survivor of the Nicholas Winton Kindertransport of children rescued from Nazi Germany – his personal story which I am sure will be both interesting and emotional – another u3a who have listened to his talk have warned us to have our tissues ready

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January: Captain Adrian McCourt** who will give us an insight into Trinity House which is advertised as one of Britain's best kept secrets. Intrigued?

If you wish to book a place then please email me at [vicechair@mku3a.org](mailto:vicechair@mku3a.org) and other future talks can be seen on the diary page of our website

## **Lynne Button**

### Quiz Group

It is hoped to resume the quiz group with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> January (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday) this will be on Zoom and will consist of two 40 minute sessions with a break in the middle. The topic will be 2020 and participants are invited to prepare 10 questions on the topic; this can be done verbally.

If you are interested in taking part, please email me – [quiz@mku3a.org](mailto:quiz@mku3a.org). I will add your name to the Quiz Group and will send out a link the morning of the Quiz.

## **Stewart Pye**

### MK u3a Choir

A MASSIVE, MASSIVE THANK YOU



A huge thank you to all who attended our Zoom choir concert on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December. There were over 90 attendees who enjoyed both choir and community sung carols as well as poignant readings. It was a great start to what will hopefully be a festive if somewhat strange lock down Christmas. With your amazing help and generosity you have helped us raise to date (24<sup>th</sup> Dec) £930 (with gift aid added £1122.50) which is a phenomenal total.

If you missed the concert but would still like to donate to the local food bank charity, I have repeated the link below. The link will be open for donations until 16<sup>th</sup> January.

<https://localgiving.org/fundraising/mku3a-choir-virtual-christmas-concert/>

The whole choir wish you a happy and healthy Christmas and a better New Year when it comes.

Stay safe and well

**Sheila Staincliffe**

Joint group leader

## **Thames Valley Network**

Repeat of Understanding Architecture Event Monday, 25th January & Tuesday, 26th January  
10.30am to 12.30pm on Zoom

This event proved so popular in September that we are repeating it. The aim of these presentations is to inform members how to “read” buildings, how to understand what they are seeing and what it symbolises; also to provide a brief history of architectural progress from 18th century to modern times. It is hoped this will enrich your future travels at home and abroad.

We are very fortunate to have Dr Geoffrey Tyack, FSA, FRHistS as our speaker for both days. He is a Fellow Emeritus of Kellogg College and President of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society. He has many publications to his credit and considerable experience teaching groups of all ages. Each of these four lectures will be around 45 minutes in length, copiously illustrated with photographs and allowing 15 minutes for questions afterwards.

### Programme for Monday 25th January

10.30-11.15am The Classical tradition

11.15-11.30am SHORT BREAK

11.30-12.15pm Gothic Revival, followed by questions and answers

12.30pm Lecture 1 ends Programme

### Tuesday 26th January

10.30-11.15am Early 20th Century (Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts)

11.15am-11.30am SHORT BREAK

11.30-12.15pm The Modern Movement, followed by questions and answers

12.30pm Lectures 2 ends

The fee for the two days is £5.00 To attend please return a completed application form to:

msherrington2@aol.com and make an online banking transfer. Or send a printed application form together with a cheque to the address below. Closing date Monday, 18th January 2021

Confirmation will be by email unless a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed with the application. The Zoom link will be circulated a few days prior to the event. Mrs M Sherrington, 53 Cumnor Hill, Oxford, OX2 9EY.

If you would like to receive details of future TVN events by email please send your name and preferred address to [events\\_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk](mailto:events_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk).

### Understanding Architecture Event

Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> January & Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 on Zoom

#### APPLICATION FORM

Please type or complete in block capitals – one form per device. Where two or more members intend to share a computer/tablet we only require one application but would appreciate all the names.

I/we would like to attend this event:

Full name(s) .....

Email .....

Telephone number .....

Certify that I / we belong to ..... U3A

Signed ..... Date .....

*N.B. forms sent from a personal email address do not require a signature)*

**Payment of £5.00 per application should, if possible, be made by bank transfer**

**Sort code: 20-85-73**

**Account number: 63159434**

**Account name: Susan Berry TVN Events Please use reference: ARC**

N.B. There may be problems with the transaction due to banks' own security rules. If so, please send a cheque instead.

I have paid by Bank Transfer YES / NO

**Please return your completed form to [msherrington2@aol.com](mailto:msherrington2@aol.com)**

**OR**

I enclose a cheque made out to: U3A Thames Valley Network YES / NO

Please return to: **Mrs M Sherrington, 53 Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9EY**

**Closing date Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Confirmation will be by email unless a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed with the application. The Zoom link will be circulated a few days prior to the event.

### Painting of the Day

During 2020, it has been a real pleasure to take on a project and deliver a column to the MK u3a Facebook page, of a 'Painting of the Day'. It has, for me, served the real U3A purpose of learning and research and helped keep the old grey cells ticking over. Thank you particularly to the MK u3a archivist who I have treated with complete disrespect and awoken him (or possibly her – it's difficult to tell under the layers of dust) from years of slumber in the garret at Kingston Towers.

The initial series gave daily offerings up to number 103, although this included at least 113 works of art as some days contrasted two or more works. The greatest delight was the returns in comments from those pottering about the virtual gallery. Please have no fears – the cameras have been turned off, so we have no record of the facial expressions of our viewers.

(The 2020 Christmas Series has not been entered into this review as this is incomplete and the gallery is still welcoming visitors to have a tour. Virtual Prosecco with Mince Pies is still on offer).

Works have date ranged from 43,000 BC (Historic Indigenous Australian Art) to 2019 AD (portrait of the Scottish Rugby Player Doddie Weir, by George Burns), and, artistically, from Marie Bashkirtseff (Russian Victorian artist) to Alan Younger (British 20<sup>th</sup> century stained glass artist).

I have recorded the reactions of the viewing public and I am pleased, today, to give you the top MK u3a works of art. These are not the works that are 'liked' but are, by my totally subjective way of measuring, those that produced the highest 'Appreciation Rating'. This takes into the following:

- The number who actually clicked on each work and are recorded as 'Viewed';
- The number who reacted further by a 'Like' (or on one occasion' a 'dislike' – this is a positive reaction), multiplied by a factor of 5;
- The number of those who commented, each per conversation, multiplied by a factor of 10.

- Your top five are:
1. **View of Delft** (ca. 1660) by Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675)
  2. **Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer** (aka: The Lady in Gold) (1907) by Gustav Klimt (186 –1916)
  3. **Portrait of Yarrow Mamout** (1819) by Charles Wilson Peale (1741–1827)
  4. **The Nuremburg Trial** (1946) by Dame Laura Knight (1877 –1970)
  5. **Luncheon of the Boating Party** (1881) by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919)

This is an intriguing list which demonstrate the range of works that produced a reaction in you, dear art critics.

Delft, by Vermeer, is a famous landscape of his home city, capturing most of the significant buildings from a viewpoint on the other side of the River Schie. The ripples in the water just allow reflections to be seen. There is a huge Dutch skyscape.

The two portraits are completely different, the Klimt using his brightest technique in gold and silver leaf to portray the wife of the Austro-Hungarian business man, Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer who commissioned the painting.

Yarrow Mamout was a slave, near to Washington D.C. who was able to buy his freedom and became a minor celebrity. To be painted by the popular American portraitist, C.W. Peale, is unusual as Mamout would not have been able to commission it himself, so who did commission it? It may have been for the Peale family museum.

Laura Knight herself requested permission to attend the 1946 trial of those in Nazi high office. Her use of the bombed city and piles of dead people as the back wall of the courtroom is highly emotional and deeply reflects the prosecution case.

Luncheon of the Boating Party is just a complete favourite as it captures an idyllic atmosphere as Renoir's friends share food, wine, and conversation on a balcony overlooking the Seine at the Maison Fournaise restaurant in Chatou. Parisians flocked to the Maison Fournaise to rent rowing skiffs, eat a good meal, or stay the night.

**Allan Wright**



1







Would you like to join a new Poetry Appreciation Group?

It is hoped that meetings would begin in January/February 2021. A few members are already interested and it is planned for the present to use a combination of Zoom meetings and email exchanges to discuss poets/poetry. The aim of the group is to share members' knowledge and enjoyment of poets/poetry.

If you are interested, please contact Shirley Dewar, Groups Co-ordinator, on 07879 007513 or [groups@mku3a.org](mailto:groups@mku3a.org).

### **The Enemy**

No spears are thrust with heartless aim, no metallic clash of sword,  
No arrows arc through foggy air, no flesh by daggers gored,  
No pistol shot or Gatling gun disturb the spring birds' sound,  
No Sharps or Schmidt or cannon fire leave pock-marks on the ground;

No galloping fine horsemen in their armour and their shields,  
No muskets, drums or pipers surge in waves across the fields;  
No Blunderbuss or Petronel, no Caliver so fine,  
No men in splendid colours... waiting anxiously in line;

No nineteen-fourteen trenches – no, nor bodies on the Somme,  
No tanks, no agile spitfires, no grenades or V2 bomb,  
No remnants of Pearl Harbour or the breach of Sorpe Dam;  
No fall out in Hiroshima, no napalm in Vietnam;

Yet... war is surely on us, and we fight as fight we must,  
We listen, rapt, to government: in government we trust,

Our uniforms are patterned masks; nurses don their PPE,  
The NHS is striving to keep us safe and set us free;

The Third World War crept up and bludgeoned people from behind,  
For the enemy is devious and the devil's task to find;  
It's snatched our precious citizens, it's cleared each social street,  
It's infiltrated houses and forbid our friends to meet;

It's cruel in its variety and rips through all our hearts,  
It arrogantly mocks us from its castle's high ramparts;  
It's not what we imagined - this catastrophe caught us short,  
It's nothing like the battles that have previously been fought;

Though we hunker down in every town when told to isolate;  
We shall come out all guns blazing and test, trace and vaccinate,  
We shall fight it on the beaches, in the fields and on the street,  
Don't expect us to surrender till our mission is complete –

We *will* defeat the virus: we will sound its deathly knell,  
We will pulverise its germs and spikes and live it's tale to tell,  
We'll stand together, worldwide nations, in common patriot cause,  
Till from mountains and from valleys this dire enemy withdraws;

When this is done then we can sing and dance and celebrate...  
Yet some, alas, they cannot sing - for them it is too late;  
And in their name we'll build a peace where swords no longer smite,  
Where love and kindness pull us through – advance, my friends, and fight!

**Greta Langdale**

Member of TAP

10.9.20

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## MY FIRST CAR/AND HOW I STARTED WORK IN BLETCHLEY

I passed my driving test in Watford during 1965. My first car was a Morris Minor, a very reliable, sturdy car. I moved to Bletchley in 1966 and my wife and I drove to and from Watford for a few years. We travelled down in the mornings through Leighton Buzzard and Hemel Hempstead and to make a “round journey” came home using the M1.

January 1968 the car skidded on ice south of Leighton Buzzard and we ended up hitting a large tree on the opposite side of the road. The car turned on its side but fortunately we were not too badly hurt. My wife slid into me and bruised her shoulder (no seat belts of course in those days). I had just whacked my elbow.

I was back on the road with a Ford Anglia which did me good service for the next 4 years. I was worried about driving the following winter and looked for a local job in Bletchley. I joined the then fledgling Meat and Livestock in Queensway House in October 1968. Stayed with them almost to my retirement.

**Brian Graves**



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