



The Third Way e-newsletter

April 2022

AGM and update from Chair

This is my first news item as Chair of MKu3a, a position I am very honoured and humbled to now be appointed to. A letter of thanks to you.

Thank you to all of the members who attended our AGM on Wednesday 23rd March, it was much appreciated and we did achieve our minimum quorum requirement of 60 members attending. It is really important that we are able to rely on a broad base of members to influence how we are managed and how we progress in the year ahead. Our outgoing Chair, Lesley Sparks, shared with us some of the highlights from our Annual report – so many achievements during what was another difficult year due to COVID restrictions and it was reassuring to remember how MKu3a was able to continue to flourish. Our outgoing Treasurer, Diana Sears, reviewed our financial position and confirmed the very positive outcome from our external audit, we are fortunate to be in such a stable and well managed position.

Many of our Trustees had reached the end of their term of office and stood down from their positions. They have been amazing in how they have supported MKu3a through their volunteering and I am sure all members will wish to join me in thanking Lesley Sparks, Diana Sears, Simon Wong and Susan Guiver for all they have contributed to and achieved within MKu3a.

AGMs of course look forward as well as reviewing the previous year and new Trustees and Officers of our charity were elected as follows:

Trustees and Officers of the Charity

Chair: Lynne Button

Vice Chair: Martin Sears

Treasurer: Dave Hall

Secretary: Brian Baldwin

Trustees

Membership Secretary: Yvonne Ashmore (continuing Trustee)

Communications lead: Martin Woodman

Groups: Chris Costello, Hazel Spencer

We are currently in the process of amending our website, details with Charity Commission and so on, it will take a little time.

So what next? It is always a little difficult to predict but one area we will be focussing on is u3a 40th (and our 35th) anniversary celebrations later in the year. I hope it will be an exciting opportunity to reflect on how far the movement has evolved and to expand on ideas for future development.

Lesley is an almost impossible act to follow but I can only say I will do my best. I look forward to both your support and ideas for the future

Lynne Button

Chair

Members Meeting and talks

It felt rather nostalgic this month as had the last, at least for the moment, of our talks to members via zoom. Thank you for the very positive feedback about the delivered programme of talks, much appreciated.

This last talk was by Tricia Thompson, again entertaining us this time with her talk about Victoria Woods and Julie Walters. It was over far too quickly and left us wanting more.

Our live talk this month was after the AGM and delivered by Graham Twemlow, giving his expert insight into the artwork and developing styles of Film Posters over a number of decades. It was interesting to see how this genre had grown and how some of the most iconic films had actually initially rather boring and lacklustre posters to advertising them. A very interesting and well received talk.

Our talk in April is at the Oak Tree Centre starting at 2.30 pm with doors opening at 2.00 pm.

Wednesday April 27th In a light-hearted, informative talk, Bobbie Darbyshire will explain how the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrives in a writer's mind. Bobbie won the 2008 fiction prize at the National Academy of Writing and the New Delta Review Creative Non-fiction Prize 2010.

As always talks can be booked directly by members by logging onto our website and going to the diary page or by emailing me at chair@mku3a.org.

With me taking over the Chair position at MKu3a we are now in need of a volunteer to take over the booking and organising of these meetings. Please let me know if you are interested in this role.

Lynne Button (Chair)

New Members Induction Meeting – 4 April 2022

We are holding an Induction meeting for our new members on Monday, 4 April, starting at 2.00 pm. It will be held in the Great Linford Parish Office meeting room, in the Great Linford local centre.

The session will briefly outline the background to the u3a movement, explain how to get the best out of your membership with MKu3a, and show you how to navigate around the website and join interest groups. You will also meet other members.

If you joined MKu3a recently you will receive an invitation by email. if you want to come along please send me an email (membersec@mku3a.org). You will receive further information nearer the time.

Yvonne Ashmore (Membership Secretary)

25 Years, 200 Students and Counting ...

David Hyde has led the Milton Keynes U3A French group for 25 years, following a career teaching French at secondary level. He first became very interested in the language thanks to two very good teachers who taught him in the 6th form at school. At that stage he was especially interested in the literary texts.

As part of his degree studies he spent a term in Grenoble, known as the capital of the French Alps. During his working life he spent many holidays camping all over France with his family – he recommends this as a good way to meet similar French families, especially for children to meet. From his travels, he would choose as his favourite part the South, inland from the Côte d'Azur.



Reflecting on the differences between teaching in schools where language study is compulsory and teaching adults who study French as a leisure pursuit, David considers so long as people are interested, teaching French is a delight. However, he adds U3A groups are very good natured and, because there is no required syllabus, it is possible to lead the discussion in random directions. He estimates that over the years, with the churn of students, he has taught around 200 U3A students.

David is very supportive of the U3A concept that everyone has something to share: skills, experience, sports, etc. and that all contributions are valued and that the organisation is run on a purely voluntary basis. This has underpinned his long voluntary service to the French group which is highly valued and appreciated by us all. He has seen changes over the years, particularly the increase in administrative tasks, often as a result of changes in legislation. Of course, there are now more groups than in 1996, across a wide range of interests.

A member of some groups which have folded, David currently also belongs to the Spanish and Walking groups.

Even though born in South Bucks and having taught in Brackley, David knew nothing about Milton Keynes when he was appointed to a post in Ousedale school in Newport Pagnell.

David sees parallels between the U3A and Milton Keynes. He likes the concept of Milton Keynes – how a new town has been built in the middle of the country but preserving the original three towns, the range of opportunities, the cinema, the theatre, the libraries and the grid road system.

We look forward to the next 25 years.

The French Group

A talk from Peter Keegan on use of oil paints for Painters Progress group

As some group members have begun using water based oil paints we decided to invite Peter Keegan a local professional artist to talk to us about how to use oils in a landscape. The techniques used are also directly transferrable to acrylics.

Palette arranged warm on left cool on right, light tones at the top and dark at the bottom (for this painting) see photo.

He mixed in the centre of the palette. By painting tonally he was able to use one main colour, in this instance the brown that he mixed and added different colours at opposite sides thus creating a variety of related shades. He wiped his brush when adding a new colour but didn't completely clean it until he started mixing an entirely new tone. This helps cohesion

He uses hog bristle filbert **brushes** 10 and 6. **Solvents** - mineral spirit or zest it, paint medium which is 50% linseed oil and 50% turps.

Oil painting **paper** texture similar to canvas.

Plot by drawing the composition using thin colour and simplified shapes in proportion. Remove specs and squint to help simplification. Use darkest tone; alizarin, green and ultramarine (to make brown) in this instance. Hold brush like a wedge – scumble which is dry and scratchy.

Block by establishing tonal values for representational painting. Begin with darkest tones. Squinting is helpful in deciding tones (or black and white photo). No outlines or horizon line. The tonal value gives shape and depth. Blend alizarin and ochre with the original brown for a warmer brown and white on the other side of it for greys. Just wipe brush on rag for related colours. Don't overuse white as it makes the colours chalky.

Colour Build up layers, beginning with thin paint gradually getting thicker and dark to light. Thus the final layers will be lightest tones applied more thickly. Every stroke counts, one stroke at a time / \ not licking the canvas 88

Exercise restraint! Leave the highlights until the end.



We tried using these techniques to paint our own seascape. It is the first time we have all used the same source image, it was an interesting and useful experiment which invoked a discussion about composition and establishing a balance between sticking rigidly to theories or going with personal feelings.

Sandra Oxley

The Quiz Group



The Quiz Group continues to meet monthly on the third Tuesday on Zoom, each month we have a topic which members of the group prepare question to be answered by other members of the group. If you wish to take part, you will be more than welcome. If you wish just to take part and not prepare questions that is fine. I stress that even if you find some question difficult there is no need to feel embarrassed as we do not ascertain how many questions you managed to answer. The main thing is to enjoy and perhaps learn something new. The April quiz, the topic is matters relating to the Queen and her Jubilee, is Tuesday April 19th at 2 pm on Zoom. Participants will be sent a link beforehand.

Stewart Pye (Quiz Group Coordinator)

MKU3A Choir



With the weather improving, and spring very definitely in the air, we continue to prepare (with fingers very tightly crossed!) a variety of pieces for our Summer Concert aptly named “Hopes and Dreams” which will take place at the United Reformed Church in Newport Pagnell on Sunday 12th June at 2.30pm followed by a cream tea, so please make a note in your diaries. More details will follow next month.

Several new members have joined us recently, but we are always happy to welcome new members in all voices so if you enjoy singing and would like to join us at the Downs Barn Church on Tuesdays at 2pm please contact us for more information, via the website.
Stay safe and well.

Sheila Staincliffe, Joint group coordinator

THIRD AGE PLAYERS - 25th Anniversary Production *Two Great Entertainments for £5.00*

We are pleased to offer an exciting programme of entertainment featuring:

HOW TO DARN SOCKS AND SAVE THE WORLD (A Play for our Time) – by Margot Lista
This unusual one-act play is full of humour, visual delight and ultimately; poignance.

And we also offer:

RAMBLES ON RADIO (A Kind of Radio Play) – by Robert Scott

Are you ready to enjoy the thrills and spills of a gothic horror, as the TAP players let you into the mystery and secrets of Wesley Hall?

The play should be a thriller ... but chaos ensues as the cast let their personal problems interfere with the performance ...



**The TAP Spring Production runs from THURSDAY APRIL 28TH /FRIDAY 29TH 7.15pm,
and SATURDAY 30th APRIL 2.15pm**

At Marsh Drive Community Centre, Great Linford MK14 5HH

TICKETS (Numbers strictly limited) £5.00

Email: Tap@MKu3a.org

or call/text 07905 247870, or call 01908 887 387

Recorder Group

Are you interested in playing the Recorder? Would you like to join an enthusiastic Recorder Group? The Group will be small – 5/6 players who use all sizes of recorder. This size of group enables us to play one to a part and to meet in member's houses. We plan to meet in the morning of the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month for approximately 1.5 hours. There will be no auditions, but aspiring members will need to be able to read music fairly fluently, it doesn't matter if you are a little rusty as it will all come flooding back. You should also have a range of 1.5 octaves on whatever recorder you play. We play a variety of music and suggestions from Group members are always welcome. If you are interested please send your enquiry to Hazel Spencer, New Groups Facilitator, at groups@mku3a.org. When making an enquiry about the group please include any previous experience you would like to share and the type of recorder you play.

Hazel Spencer

Garden & Environment

Coming out of lockdown last summer Garden & Environment restructured and under Covid Rules met in September, October and November. We have not met over winter, but our full programme starts off in April until November. We meet in the lounge of Hungerford House across the road from Emerson Valley Local Centre Car Park for 2 pm the 2nd Wednesday of the month and we have vacancies.

Best if you get in touch by email if you would like to join us on April 13th: gardening2@mku3a.org

Group Co-ordinator Mike Jenner

A Marriage of Chemistry and Poetry!

Having got my hands on a fascinating book recently, I felt it needed a wider audience as the author is a fellow-member of the MK-U3A, Steve Gray, with whom I have become friends at the Monday Bridge Group. Devotees of the Quiz Programme "Pointless" will be fascinated, I'm certain, as well as those who enjoy poetry.

To quote an inside fly-leaf: *"Steve Gray spent over 40 years working in schools as a science teacher and senior leader until retirement in 2019. He has contributed to GCSE science textbooks and was a member of the team that devised and wrote the popular "Exploring Science" series for Key Stage 3. He retains some contact with the world of education as a school governor and a volunteer with the English Speaking Union."*

With pandemic lockdowns clamping down on the freedom of well-earned retirement, Steve used much of the time writing poetry that blossomed out of his career. The fruit of this is the publication this year of a book entitled **"The Periodic Sonnets"** (ISBN 9798416789794). To quote the back-cover: *"It is a collection of over 140 sonnets, in which you will find fascinating facts for each of the elements in the periodic table, as well as a tribute to the scientists who contributed to the history and development of the key scientific ideas, with all the associated rivalries, disputes and academic politics."* Enjoy.

Kerrigan Pring

Schoolreaders – Looking for volunteers to listen to children read in Milton Keynes

I work for the children's literacy charity Schoolreaders, which recruits local people to go into primary schools and listen to children read one-to-one on a weekly basis. This is a free service that we offer to

primary schools. We are partnered with several schools in Milton Keynes and now need volunteers to sign-up and become Schoolreaders.

Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 3 children were leaving primary school not able to read to the required standard. This is predicted to be 1 in 4 since the schools closed and children's education has been so disrupted. Many children are not read with at home, and the weekly intervention from a volunteer makes a huge difference.

I am hoping the Milton Keynes U3A may be able to help spread the word about the scheme to your members? I have attached a poster that can be used. If you would be able to send it out to your members or put it in any upcoming newsletter or Facebook group etc., we would be incredibly grateful.

Our website for more information is www.schoolreaders.org and people can sign up to volunteer [here](https://www.schoolreaders.org/volunteer-application-form) (https://www.schoolreaders.org/volunteer-application-form).

If you have any questions about the scheme, please let me know.

Lesley Solomon, Operations and Communications Administrator

Office 01234 924222

Direct 01234 938071

Web: www.schoolreaders.org

Volunteering opportunities at Milton Keynes Museum

I am getting in touch to promote Volunteering Opportunities at Milton Keynes Museum and to invite you and your network to attend our Volunteer Open Days at Milton Keynes Museum.

When? Tuesday, 29 March from 10AM to 12PM and Sunday, 3 April from 3PM to 5PM

Where? Granary Tea Room at Milton Keynes Museum (McConnell Drive, Wolverton, Milton Keynes MK12 5EL)

Who? Anyone from age 13 upwards to long time retirees

What? Are you interested in volunteering at a local heritage site? Want to put your skills to good use and pick up some new skills?

Looking to make new friends in your community? Do you have some spare time on your hands, whether it be an hour or a day?

On our Volunteer Open Days, you will get a chance to learn more about the Museum and its story from Museum Director, Bill Griffiths, and to learn about our available Volunteer Roles from Museum staff and Team Leaders – there will be plenty of behind-the-scenes views and opportunities to ask questions!

Light refreshments and hot drinks will be available.

About the Museum

Milton Keynes Museum was formed in 1972 by local people determined to preserve the area's heritage in the face of the development of Britain's biggest New Town. Today, the Museum tells the story of Milton Keynes and the surrounding area through the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on Victorian home life, farming, communication and transport. It is an award-winning community-run heritage site with a unique approach to **volunteering**: Our volunteers are involved in all aspects of running the Museum; Room guides, cafe and shop staff, administrators, educators, event organisers, maintenance workers, gardeners and collection specialists among them. They work at all levels, including management, and from just a few hours a month, to several days a week.

To RSVP, please email volunteer@mkmuseum.org.uk

Mirjam Rundel, Volunteer Support and Recruitment Officer, Milton Keynes Museum

T: 01908 316222 M: 07456 555756

Bow Brickhill Womens' Institute

Meet on Thursday 28th April at 7.30 pm in the Pavilion in Rushmere Close, Bow Brickhill. The speaker will give a talk on MK Waste and Recycling-Super Powers. A donation of £4 is requested to help with refreshments and hire of the hall. Raffle tickets are £1 each. This is an open meeting for friends and family.

Contact details from Stephanie Warren swarren3@sky.com

English Country Dancing

Shenley Wood Retirement Village, Chalkdell Drive, Shenley Wood, MK5 6GJ
Tuesday evenings 7.30–8.30 pm. Come and join in the fun.

Contact Ann Tynan 01908 503318 or pronip@aol.com

Member's Recommendation

I have a recommendation for the next Newsletter. It is for a superb reprographics/printing company, they are based on Furzton and I have had extremely good service. They are brilliant at enlargements and multiple copies of cards, printing and scanning.

MFS REPROGRAPHICS LTD,
15 BLACKMOOR GATE, FURZTON, MK4 1DS
01908 50 45 50
www.mfsreprographics.co.uk

Lavinia Culshaw (MKU3A member)

Milton Keynes Macular Society Support Group


Macular Society
Beating Macular Disease

Do you or anyone you know have a macular condition such as Age Related Macular Degeneration? If so are you aware that we have a very friendly support group in Milton Keynes that meets monthly:

2nd Tuesday of each month from 2.00 till 4.00

Centrecom Meeting Place, 602 North Row, Secklow Gate West, Central Milton Keynes MK9 3BJ (behind MK Library).

Macular Disease is the leading cause of sight loss in the UK, affecting over 1.5 million of us, with Age Related Macular Degeneration accounting for well over 600,000, but nobody needs to face it alone. Groups like ours are here to help.

We offer practical & emotional support to anyone with central vision loss from any macular condition, as well as to their family and friends, with a varied programme of speakers, social meetings, and lunches out. Come and share your experiences and problems with others who understand.

We also run a monthly drop-in coffee morning on 1st Tuesday

For information please phone Maggie: 01908 319 292 or E-mail: mkmacsoc@gmail.com

Macular Society: <https://www.macularsociety.org/>

Macular Society Helpline: **0300 3030 111**

Badminton & Table Tennis for Mental Wellbeing

Fun, casual drop-in session for people experiencing mental health problems. It is run by a qualified coach, all equipment is provided and open to all abilities!

Time Every Wednesday, 11.30 am–12.30 pm

Venue Sports Hall, Woughton Leisure Centre, Rainbow Drive, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EJ

This group is provided FREE by mental health charity **Sport In Mind** for the benefit of local people.

Dementia-Friendly Table Tennis Sessions

Time Every Wednesday, 1.15 pm–2.15 pm

Venue Middleton Pool & Fitness Centre, Tickford Street, Newport Pagnell, MK16 9BG

Cost £5.00 if playing

Beginners are welcome, and pre-booking is advised.

Please contact Stephen Baggaley if you want more information on the above two events.

Tel 07815 123225; **email** baggaley1@hotmail.com



Maps for Milton Keynes Walkers

Hello U3A walkers !

About 30 years ago I joined a small group who met on a regular basis for country walks in the Milton Keynes area, sometimes venturing farther afield to scenic and hilly areas in other parts of the country.

Over the years I built up and catalogued a large collection of printed walk descriptions for use on our excursions. Our advancing years (we are now well into our 80s) decree that our walking ambitions are unavoidably diminished and we no longer have a use for the huge archive of over 10,000 descriptions (kept in 21 folders) of walks in England, Scotland, Wales and some parts of Ireland.

The essential index to this collection is in the form of a searchable 1.4MB Excel spreadsheet listing individual walk numbers, counties, nearest towns, driving distance to starting points, National Grid reference numbers, walk features, difficulty rating, walk distance and duration. Driving distances to start points are given in miles from a Milton Keynes origin but can be changed to any other origin using an eight-figure National Grid reference.

I feel that this library and spreadsheet, which include descriptions published right up to March 2022, could be of use to active and enthusiastic walkers and would be happy to pass on the entire collection to anyone who could demonstrate that they could make the intended serious use of it rather than regarding it as a pile of wastepaper. The folders are inevitably rather heavy (weighing a total of about 45 kilos) and would have to be collected from Milton Keynes. Does any U3A rambler know of an individual or organisation who might be interested?

Please contact **Malcolm Anderson**

Email mfa35mk@gmail.com

Key Contact Details—more on the web site

Chair Lynne Button; email: chair@mku3a.org

Vice Chair Martin Sears; email: vicechair@mku3a.org

Secretary Brian Baldwin; email: secretary@mku3a.org

Treasurer David Hall; email: treasurer@mku3a.org

Groups Facilitators Chris Costello/Hazel Spencer; email: groups@mku3a.org

Webmaster Dave Barratt; email: webmaster@mku3a.org

Membership Secretary Yvonne Ashmore; email: membersec@mku3a.org

Communications Coordinator Martin Woodman; email: comms@mku3a.org

Thames Valley Network Coordinator Brian Baldwin; email: tvn@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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Telephone: 01908 281717; **email:** info@mku3a.org

Registered charity number: **298693**