

# NEWSLETTER

## Buckingham and District



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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[www.buckinghamu3a.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

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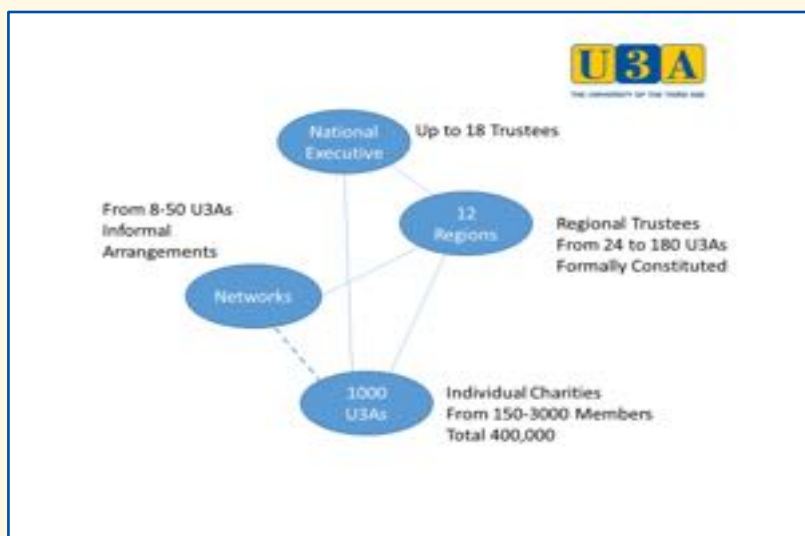
### THE U3A MOVEMENT - Beyond Buckingham

Clive Cowdy



There are now 1000 U3As in the UK with 400,000 members. Thus the average is 400 members and by comparison, Buckingham now has in excess of 800 members. The demographics of the 'Third Age' indicate that, realistically, the target population for potential U3A membership nationally is more than 6,000,000, so we have just 6% penetration. As one of the best kept secrets and with very little organised marketing the movement continues to grow at about 7% p.a. The basic organisation of the U3A is 11 Regions and a number of local

Networks where clusters of U3As join together to share knowledge and skills and to support each other in achieving the social and educational objectives of the movement. Buckingham U3A is a member of the Beds Plus network of 8 U3As in Bedfordshire and North Bucks. The most recent event of that Network was the annual inter U3A Quiz and several more joint activities are planned for this year.



Whilst each U3A is an independent locally managed charity they are all part of the Third Age Trust, which is the national co-ordinating body that sets out the guidelines for the ethos and operation of all U3As. The governance structure of the U3A is the subject of national debate and consultation right now and the 2017 AGM will be considering the outcome of this review. Well-informed guesses are that the larger regions (Eastern and South Eastern) will be split into more manageable units with the roles of Networks and Regional Volunteers being developed to assist the Regional Trustees.

### GROUP UPDATES and NEW MEMBERS' COFFEE MORNING

Lilia Bogle - Group Liaison

In Spring our U3A groups are a blessing, giving us a reason to get up and go. Perhaps more important are our Group Co-ordinators, who are the 'life blood' of our organisation and we should support them by joining as many groups as we can, to keep our minds active, be introduced to new ideas and learn new skills. New groups are always being formed and old ones re-formed, so check on the website for details and to get involved. We have an excellent website, which helps attract increasing numbers. Please visit the site if you haven't, as you're missing out on the exciting things that are happening. Many members don't attend the open meetings and this is a way of keeping in touch with what's happening.

Most of our groups continue to thrive, some with the co-ordinator supporting their group for many years, while others generously run groups in their homes. Being a group co-ordinator is a great way to get to know people and can be very rewarding.

We welcomed nearly 30 new members at a coffee morning in April and look forward to getting them involved in joining some of our interest groups.

New groups being launched are - Calligraphy, Line Dancing, Guided Meditation and Orchestra. Some groups are requesting new members, such as Music for Pleasure, Folk Dancing and Alternative French Lunch. If you're interested in attending please contact the group co-ordinator or me.

If you have an idea for a group please let me know, so I can investigate the possibilities. Or, if you want to join a group that is full, please speak to me at a monthly meeting.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of our group co-ordinators at the annual lunch, to exchange ideas and review the way forward.

**THEATRE OUTINGS**

Di Procter

A ballet, a play and two musicals have had theatre goers regularly making visits to Milton Keynes Theatre. The ballet was Matthew Bourne’s Red Shoes and the trip proved so popular I had to keep ringing for more tickets! It was our largest outing to date and was another wonderful production by this well-respected choreographer and enjoyed by all. (I believe it may be Cinderella next year!)

A more select group went to see Not Dead Enough based on a Peter James play. It was a clever thriller with a very interesting twist at the end. On this occasion, we met up before hand and enjoyed a meal together, which was most successful.

The musicals have been Funny Girl, which starred Sheridan Smith as Fanny Brice. She had starred in the role in London and we were very fortunate to see her performing at the matinee. This was a very professional show with some

great dance routines. Some of us were fortunate to see Joanne Clifton (the winner of Strictly Come Dancing, with her partner Ore) starring as Millie in Thoroughly Modern Millie. This show was packed with energy. How Joanne had managed to learn all the routines in time I am not sure!

I had to cancel the booking for Wonderland as there was not enough interest.

Numbers were short for the Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time but this now has enough takers and will go ahead. Pay by date extended to 7<sup>th</sup> May.

I have just booked 3 new shows for the autumn. Vincent and Flavia return in November with Tango Modereno. English National Ballet are coming with a double bill and finally the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical Sunset Boulevard. Full details below. The ticket price could vary a bit depending on the number of tickets we take up.

**NEW SHOWS – just booking (all Front Circle)**

Pay by

English National Ballet	La Sylphide and Song of the Earth	Oct 19th	14:30	£26	Jly 26th
Sunset Boulevard		Nov 30th		£38.50/£40.50	Jly 26th
Tango Moderno	(Vincent and Favia)	Nov 15th	14:30	£36.00/£37.00	Jly 26th

**SHOWS STILL BOOKING – will go ahead**

Pay by

A Judgement in Stone	Play	Jly 27th	19:30	£26	May 24th
La Cage aux Folles	Musical	Aug 10th	14:30	Inquire	
Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time	Play about a boy with Asperger's	Sept 13th	14:30	£20	May 7th
Così Fan Tutte	Mozart opera	Nov 23rd		£25	Sept 27th

**GARDENING WEDNESDAY**

Margaret Clarke - Group Co-ordinator

This new gardening group started in November. As we’ve been confined to indoor meetings so far, we’ve spent the time getting to know each other and talking about a variety of topics, plus having tea, coffee and biscuits. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month, between 2 - 4pm and we’re looking forward to our first outing in April, which is to Preston Bisset Nursery, for a ‘walk and talk on colour in the garden’. This will be followed by refreshments in their delightful café and the chance to purchase a plant or two.

We have some interesting gardens lined up for our summer visits and our current membership of around 20 gives us plenty of room for more gardening friends. Our members have a wide range of gardening and plant knowledge and abilities and our meetings are always fun and lighthearted!

**NEW TO DRAWING**

Carolina Kenealy

This group, which meets between 1pm – 3pm on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays, has changed its venue and now meets in the mezzanine room at the library (formerly in The Centre, Verney Close).



*Concentrating hard at New to Drawing.*

## BOOK CLUB 2

Julia Moreton

We meet in my flat on the morning of the third Monday of each month. We currently have 10 members, with 1 on the waiting list. Over the last year we've covered diverse subjects and authors, from Boris Johnston on Churchill, to Kate Atkinson, Melvyn Bragg and William Boyd. This year we will be reading Helen Dunmore, Wilkie Collins, Somerset Maugham and Patrick

Leigh Fermor.

In June we will be reading *The Music Room* by William Fiennes followed by a visit to Broughton Castle.

We are a fun group with diverse opinions and tastes!



## ART APPRECIATION

Pamela Tonge - Group Co-ordinator

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February fifteen members of the group visited the Royal Academy to view the excellent exhibition, *Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932*. This followed on from a talk on Russian Art in February. In March, the talk was on *The Glasgow Boys* and in April, Tina Brown led a discussion on Picasso's *Guernica*.

The talk on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May will be on *America After the Fall: Painting in the 1930s*. There will be a visit via the Winslow Bus to the Royal Academy to see their exhibition on the same subject on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The exhibition will include works of art by Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keefe, Grant Wood, Philip Guston, Thomas Hart Benton, Jackson Pollock and Alice Neel. At the time of going to press, there are still seats available if anyone is interested in joining us.

We will also be visiting the Georgian House and Grounds at Compton Verney on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May to view their current exhibition, *Creating the Countryside*, which will include paintings by Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable, JMW Turner, Samuel Palmer, John Piper and Sir Alfred Munnings, together with some contemporary work by Grayson Perry and Matt Collishaw. There are currently seats available on the Winslow Bus for this outing.

The talk on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June will be about depictions of the Annunciation by Philippa Atkinson.

The group meets on the first Friday of each month at 10.15am in the Mezzanine Suite at the Buckingham Centre, Verney Close. For regular updates, please visit our page on the website.



*The Art Appreciation group, on their visit to the Royal Academy to view the exhibition, Revolution.*



**NEW GROUPS -**

see **Quick Reference Guide for details,**

**or contact:** [group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

**Singing A Round**

We are pleased to say that this new group has started.

The initial session went extremely well and within five

minutes, the tutor, Joan Harris, had everyone singing and within a short time they were creating a beautiful sound and singing rounds! We still have plenty of room for more members - come along and have some fun!

**Railways**

This group started in February and looks at the history of railways, views DVDs, has discussion and gala day trips.

**Folk Dancing**

There was a trial run of this group in the new year, which sparked much enthusiasm to continue. We have eighteen members currently but we're keen for more to join us. Our knowledgeable and enthusiastic caller, John Weaver, is full of encouragement. Come and join in the fun!

**RAILWAYS**

**Geoff Sampson - Group co-ordinator**

Although a new group, I'm pleased to say we already have a good number of members, both men and women. We welcome anyone interested in railways from inception to modern day.

We held our first meeting in February, when we planned our programme for the year and watched Railways of the 1920s, which provoked discussion on the glorious days of steam.

Our March meeting was an interesting talk on Alaskan railways, by member Alan Fordham. We also ventured out in March, when a group of 4 set off from Banbury station to Kidderminster for a Severn Valley Railways gala day. On display were 3 Southern Pacifics (in various stages of build), a 9F and assorted tank engines. We had an enjoyable day out and our thanks go to Jeff Ainsworth for organizing the trip.

We welcome new members, so please do join us. See the quick reference page for more information.

**PROPOSED NEW GROUPS**

[group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

**Latin for Beginners**

Would you like to learn Latin? We hope to start a new beginners' group to enable you to read Latin literature; works such as the Aeneid, or Metamorphoses. We will be using NRR Oulton's, So You Really Want to Learn Latin?, which is in 3 books. We hope to hold weekly classes with a break for 'terms'.

**Reading Latin**

Perhaps you already know quite a bit of Latin and would like to tackle the literature straight away? Or even have a go at some 'unseens'? This proposed new group could enable you to do this. Members will jointly decide on reading matter. We plan to run sessions either weekly, or fortnightly, either way would be in 'terms'.

**Greek for Beginners**

Would you like to learn classical Greek? We hope to start a new group to enable you to read Homer, Sophocles, Thucydides and Plato.

We will learn by use of Wilding's Greek for Beginners or, depending on numbers, the tutor's own course. Classes will be weekly with a break for 'terms'.

All three classes above will be tutored by Steve Watkins, who can be contacted for further information on: 0700955149.

**Calligraphy**

Are you interested in forming a calligraphy group? Could you teach others? Are you interested in trying?

This class would learn with dip pens and hopefully go on to produce cards, wall hangings etc.

If you're interested, please use the above email. We already have a willing co-ordinator and just need people and a venue!



*The glorious days of steam.*

## PROJECT STREET LIFE

Designated charity for 2017

Project Street Life (PSL) has been running in Buckingham for over 15 years and is a very active organisation for young people aged 10 to 16. The group meets each week and offers a variety of interests, from the arts to table tennis, hockey and cake making (it runs the Buckingham Junior Bake Off each year). PSL aims to be part of the community, developing social skills and self-esteem, in an alcohol and drug free environment.

Margaret will be looking after our sales stall each month, the proceeds of which will go to PSL. Also, we'll have the usual raffles at our July and December meetings and the quiz will be available at our November meeting. We've been promised lots of fruit this year, so we'll have our usual produce stall in September.

We hope you'll all do your best to support this splendid organisation.

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## GARDENING TUESDAY

Vee Sampson - Group Co-ordinator

Another gardening year ahead of us and a lot to look forward to.

The Tuesday gardening group (see p2 for the Wednesday group report) has a full programme of speakers and garden visits and we started the year with an indoor meeting in February, when Mary Bullock came to talk to us about garden design. In April we have the Head Gardener from Woburn Abbey Gardens, which will be the perfect lead in to our visit there in July.

Two of our members kindly invited us to visit their Maids Moreton gardens in March; one was a delightful spring garden and the other a new garden, yet to get established. Both were very much enjoyed by everyone and we are grateful to June, Jenny & Eric for allowing us to share their spaces.

We have some interesting garden visits to look forward to in the summer; these include Woburn Abbey Gardens, Broughton Grange, and Rousham. The usual afternoon tea will follow and all we need is some sunshine to make the visits perfect. Good Gardening!



## HAND BELLS

Rodney Bennett

This year we again played at local schools and clubs during the Christmas period and, as we now have new members, our range of pieces will increase as the new ringers get used to ringing the bells.

We've just taken part in the annual Bell Fest, which was hosted by The Woburn Trefoil Handbell Ringers and took place in Woburn Village Hall. Nine groups took part, St Mary's and St Giles Church Handbells, Launton Handbell Ringers, Middleton Cheney Handbells, St Mary's and St Giles' School Handbells, Bodicote Handbells, Dunstable U3A Handbells, Chacombe Handbells, the host group and ourselves.

The proximity of Woburn Zoo prompted the host to choose All Creatures Great and Small as the central theme for the meeting, each team then selected music to match.

These meetings are always interesting, as we see ringing techniques that we don't use, and hear music we'd like to learn.

Next year the Bell Fest will be hosted by St Mary's and St Giles' School Handbell group.

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## REQUESTS FOR HELP

Sarah Raine is taking a temporary step back as Group Co-ordinator for Singing-A-Round and would like someone to take over for a while.

Jane Walker wishes to step down as Group Co-ordinator for Play Reading.

Is there someone who would be willing to take her place?

If you can help with either of the above important roles, please contact:

group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Janti Mistry is nearing the end of his time as Membership Secretary. He's hoping that someone will step forward to 'shadow' him, with a view to taking over next year. Please contact:

membership.secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

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## READING PROJECT in SCHOOLS

This project is growing and we now have over 20 volunteers, all reporting their enjoyment of the experience. If you're interested in joining them, please look at the notice board at the open meetings, or contact Edward Scott at e.scott@schoolreaders.org to be matched with an appropriate school. This initiative benefits the children in many ways: confidence, reading skills, and sharing the joy reading brings.

If you have any worries about this, please email our secretary, Rosemary: secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

**STROLLERS**

Sheila Dalzell - Group Co-ordinator

On a very wet February day, 22 of us braved the elements and had a lovely walk along the canal at Camphill, Milton Keynes. As you can see from the picture we enjoyed a welcome 'cuppa' at the Community Café. It was made even better by the staff, who had a good sense of humour and gave excellent service - certainly a place to revisit. Another good walk was around Fringford, on a cold February day. A group member had arranged for the village hall to be opened and we enjoyed an interesting exhibition of Fringford and Flora Thompson.

**RECORDERS**

Sue Norman and Helen Preston

The recorder group was very busy during the Christmas period - we played carols for the garden group, participated in the St Edburg's Tree Festival, shivered at Stowe, busked in Buckingham and for our final performance of the year we provided carols for the Christmas open meeting.

It was sad to say farewell to Lindsay Dunham at Christmas. She had worked tirelessly as joint group co-ordinator since we started out but is now concentrating more on hand bell ringing.

In January we played for an appreciative audience of residents at St Rumbold's Court, Brackley. In February, 6 of us travelled to Rugby to participate in a Recorder Orchestra Day, which proved to be a challenging but enjoyable experience. We played in an ensemble of around 40 and many of them played to a high standard!

On March 1st we celebrated our 5th Birthday - we've come a long way in those 5 years!

We've recently been joined by 3 members from Relax with Recorders and the link between the two groups continues to work well.

**BUCKINGHAM and DISTRICT U3A COMMITTEE**

<b>Chairman</b>	Clive Cowdy	01280 824274	<a href="mailto:chairman@buckinghamu3a.org.uk">chairman@buckinghamu3a.org.uk</a>
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**OTHER OFFICERS**

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# South East Forum



## Summer School



*Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> to  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June  
Chichester University*



*A Bridge Refresher Course*

*Explore a Slice of Sussex*

*Mathematics Demystified*

*Music: Classic Albums of the 1950s & 60s*

*Psychology: Self & Others*

*Sixty years of Changing Britain*

*The Origin & Wonder of Fairy Tales & Nursery Rhymes*

*Walking on the Downs & Coast*

*Watercolour Painting from Photographs*

*Women in Art & Society*

*Writing your life story – a practical workshop*

*Bryan Stephens*

*Ann Wickenden & Isabel Baker*

*Roger Luther*

*Mike Head*

*Anne Dale*

*Gillian Pitt*

*Bernard Smale*

*Roger Sugden*

*Janet Blight*

*Margaret Nicolle*

*Teresa & Bernard Hall*



*Papers on Forum  
website & from  
your committee*





# South East Forum

The logo for U3A, consisting of the letters 'U', '3', and 'A' in a stylized, blocky font. The 'U' and 'A' are yellow with blue outlines, and the '3' is blue with a yellow outline.

## Annual Conference

*Meridian Hall, East Grinstead*

*Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 9.30 to 15.30*

*Exhibition of Activities*

## Learn, Laugh & Live

*The View from the National Office*

*Samantha Mauger, the new Chief Executive*

*The U3A way*

*Hilvary Robinson*

*Role of National Subject Co-ordinators*

*Mike Fox*

*MOOCs – How on-line courses can support groups*

*Rodney Buckland*

*Discussion Groups, sharing your experiences*

*Is Moral Truth Absolute or Relative?*

*Talk by Professor Marianne Talbot (philosopher)*

*Free, including buffet lunch – costs paid by Regional Support Budget*

*Book by May 3rd*

*Further details and booking forms are available at*

<http://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/>