



## Newsletter Number 74 February 2024

Views and opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or Committee

Deadline for the next newsletter will be  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Copy should be sent to:  
[newsletter.editor@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter.editor@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

### Chair person's report, January 2024.

This is my first newsletter and I would like to thank the previous Chairman, Lilia Bogle, and her Committee for steering the Buckingham U3A through Covid and the subsequent recovery. It was a difficult time, but we are optimistic for the future with 68 groups, more in the pipeline, and 797 members.

In October we were entertained at the open meeting by Tony Harris as Henry VIII who brought to life this larger than life character, not least as he was dressed for the part.

Following the AGM in November, we had the enjoyable Christmas Social with a Ceilidh by The Barn Rat Band in December where a good number of you came and enjoyed the dancing.

January saw the first New Member coffee morning and then the following day an Open Meeting where the speaker's topic was 'Utterly Immoral'. Hopefully this has got the new year off to a great start and I look forward to seeing many of you at events throughout the year. In the meantime, enjoy your groups and make the most of your U3A membership!

At the AGM we elected Lilia Bogle as President and I am very grateful for those members who form the current committee:

Chairman - Howard Mordue	Vice Chairman and Speaker Secretary - Roland Simpkins
Secretary - Heather Haydock	Treasurer - Susan Geary

Membership Secretary - Steve Warnes	Webmaster - Dorothy Morgan
Newsletter Editor - Sheryl Hargreaves	Technical Support - Steve Meakin
Group Liaison Officers - Mark Owen, Katerina Owen, Arthur Newman	

A little about myself. I moved to Buckingham in 1973 and am married to Jane. From my first marriage I have a daughter, two sons and six grandchildren. I am a Buckinghamshire and Town Councillor and like others in U3A, involved in other organisations. I joined the U3A originally to learn French and enjoyed the language and meetings.

Howard Mordue, Chair Buckingham U3A.

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## Committee

### Membership – Tales From The Database

Buckingham and District U3A has been running since 1997. At least that is what our membership database says and as we know, despite recent news from the post office, databases never lie.

Just for information, we present the following figures to give you an idea of how we fit into the UK wide U3A movement giving people in their third age opportunities to keep learning and enjoying the company of others.

We currently have 797 paid up active members. We have 68 different groups listed although a few are not currently running for various reasons.

Of our membership: 673 live in MK18 while 52 in other MK postcodes; 43 live in Northants postcodes; 11 in Aylesbury postcodes; 10 in Oxford postcodes; 6 in Luton postcodes; and 2 others, 1 of which is 10 Downing Street? That seems to be me! I think it has been used to help test the database.

We have 477 Mrs, 231 Mr, 66 Ms and Miss and 23 Drs, Revs and other titles.

There are over 1000 UK U3A branches with over 450,000 members. (Jan 2020 figures).

The decision was made last year to honour our longest serving members by given those who have been members for 25 years and more the special status of Honorary member. Apart for earning our respect for their sterling service to the local association, they will be given special subscription free membership. Well done to those hardy perennials.

This will not be a regular inclusion in the newsletter so don't worry. Also you won't be tested on it!

Steve Warnes, Member Secretary [memsec@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:memsec@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

### Newsletter Editor

Hello everyone. A thank-you to Sarah Katz for showing me the ropes while compiling the Autumn/October Newsletter and to those providing contributions. I look forward to meeting more of you plus being the conduit to spread our news.

I endeavour to include all photos, however sometimes space precludes. Please keep those cheery articles coming in. Thank you.

Sheryl Hargreaves, Newsletter.Editor@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

## Regular Items

### Recent Events

Henry VIII 25<sup>th</sup> October '23 (left), Christmas social band and dance (right):



Christmas social dancing (above left) and Simon Keable-Elliot 24<sup>th</sup> January '24 (right).

## Redesign and Reinvent Your Retirement – Lilia Bogle, President



Looking back at my early years I am amazed how the world has evolved both mentally and technologically.

Innovations and technology today have changed the views on retirement.

Retirement today has its challenges, charms and opportunities and the expected age of retirement is now unpredictable.

I recently met a gentleman who has now retired at age 35 and decided to take control of his life by extending his retirement years, to enjoy and explore his dreams and aspirations.

We now have new members joining our U3A under the age of 50 who are working part-time or have fully retired.

23 years ago, I retired from work at the age of 57, I redesigned and reinvented my life for retirement after completing a Life coach training course and now living my best life.

The beauty of retirement is “You retire from your work, not your life” - Sukant Ratnakar

Reinventing and redesigning your life, offers you, amazing opportunities to live your life, create your own space, fulfil your dreams, live life to the fullest and embrace the journey ahead. Enjoy the ride!

The success in enjoying the ride is planning reinventing and redesigning the route.

I will be covering Identifying the areas of need when planning for your retirement, in this spring newsletter and subsequent issues I will be addressing some areas about redesigning and reinventing your retirement and giving you an insight into ways to cope with this new lifestyle.

The ideal key to success is planning your route through your journey.

The first question to ask yourself is:

Who are you and what do you want?

What would you like your life now to look like?

As we are all different individuals with different ideas, needs and expectations we have different ways of coping with our life changes.

Reinventing and redesigning your individual needs, and desires in a structured framework, will allow you to embrace the changes that will create your successful and well-earned retirement.

Taking you from being retired to being inspired allowing you to “Live Learn Laugh” the ethos of the U3A.

Various simple models can be used to aid you in this process and allow you to have an enjoyable, balanced lifestyle in your retirement.

One of the simplest models that can be used is “The wheel of life.” a visual tool or exercise that can help you quickly understand how balanced or fulfilled your life is and where you would like to make changes to plan, redesign, and reinvent your retirement to get the best life yet.



If you would like to know more about how to start redesigning and reinventing your retirement using “the Wheel of life” in more detail as a planning tool I will be offering Free places to three U3a members for the opportunity to attend one of my complementary workshops in Spring.

For more information about these workshops, contact me at [lilia\\_bogle@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lilia_bogle@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone 07518893162.

Look out for my next article “Making the Right Choices and Planning Your Time “in the U3A Summer issue.

I wish you all happiness and enjoyment in your retirement.

Lilia Bogle (Professional Life Coach)

## Groups

Creative Writing – Poem by Kim Whitbread

<b>Whistles and Weed.</b>
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Watching, watching silently and secretly when she was meant to be in bed.  
The cold draught as the front door was opened to admit more visitors,  
Coats thrown over bannisters.  
Hushed voices could not contain the excitement.  
Mum and dad taking it in turns to make mugs of tea with special biscuits.  
Special because they were going to save the world.

Paint pots and paper, banners and flags.  
B for ball, A for apple and N for nose.  
Tongue stuck out in concentration,  
Thinking that the A looked more like a witch's hat than an apple,  
A nearly six-year-old girl helping.  
Helping to save the world.

Woken up early and a minibus with steamy windows;  
And being told off for drawing a smiley face.  
But mum, when we save the world, we will all be smiling!  
No smiley faces now though. This is serious.  
Lots of people and seriousness is essential,  
When you want to save the world.

Singing and chanting, not very good songs.  
Getting cold and hungry, can't feel my feet.  
Songs are angry shouty, and people are pushy, hold on tight to mum's hand!  
Don't like this now, too many people, crowding around me.  
Can only see legs and coats, and smelly smoke makes my head ache.  
But I am helping to save the world.

Blue lights and sirens, whistles, and people running,  
Sticks and police and trampled banners.  
Screams and crying, coats pulled and torn.  
People and paper on the ground, a muddy footprint on my witches hat.  
Run, run, run to the minibus! Oh no! Smiley all gone.  
Did we do it mum? Did we save the world?

KIM WHITBREAD  
November 2023.



## Digital Photography – Picture of the Year



Picture of the Year by ALLAN ANDERSON

There is a set monthly subject. Please refer to the details on the website for a calendar of events for the year. Photos are to be sent to Peter as Jpegs please, so I can download and show as slideshow on the TV, or circulate if there is no meeting. At least one week is needed before the meeting date. Two (2) Photos per person only.

Peter Cammas 01280 815279. [digital.photography@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:digital.photography@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Dining Group – First Visit

The dining group has since October become active with 20 members. The objectives are fun, the art of dining conversation, good food, interesting location... and really what else you want to get from it, as it is very much for the members.

Our first visit was to Mowgli restaurant Oxford on 22 Sep 2023, with 8 people attending. Mowgli restaurant is all about how Indians eat at home and on their streets. It was born to feed the raw need Indians have for tiffins full of fresh bright intense flavour. Mowgli is not about the intimate, hushed dining experience. It is about the smash and grab zing of healthy, light, virtuosic herbs and spices. You will find most of the menu new exciting dishes that you will NOT have seen in general Indian restaurants, they can be small portions





for sharing, this is a different Indian cruise experience. The setting is interesting and dining is fun in a restaurant street food environment.

There was another in November to the Boxing Hare and 3 planned for the first quarter 2024.

Charles Tanner, Group Co-ordinator [dining@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:dining@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

### Square Dancing – Announcement

Due to there being no-one willing to take on the unique Square Dance caller training, Susie Kelly has, sadly, announced the group has been cancelled. Susie advises the decision has been very hard and she will miss the lovely group of loyal dancers – some of whom have been in the group since U3A started here in Buckingham.

### Creative Writing

We continue to meet now on a monthly basis and whilst people come and go, we have a core group that try to make every meeting. I continue to ensure that the way we work is suitable for everyone and I do try to give interesting ideas for everyone to work into a short story. We aim at about 1500 words. Mind you sometimes the ideas don't turn out as I hoped but I'm pleased so long as we've all done some writing and enjoyed the exercise. We still use either the first or the third Monday in the month and this does give us a choice if people are busy. At present we meet at our house near Thornton. We have plenty of room around our kitchen table and of course we are not tied to the whims of Caretakers as at other venues and it costs nothing.

Susie Kelly, Group Co-ordinator [Creative.writing@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:Creative.writing@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Music Ensemble



Performing for the Community Lunchers at St Peter and Paul's Christmas lunch.

The U3A Music Ensemble goes from strength to strength! We are now over 20 members with a regular attendance of about 18 musicians. In the past couple of months, we have had two gigs – one at the Padbury Church Crib Service and the other at the Community Lunch in the Parish Church at Buckingham. The Crib Service was lovely – very well attended, with plenty of children in the congregation. This year we played inside because of inclement weather – a wonderful change from last year when we and our instruments got very cold and damp!

At the beginning of December we played in a much bigger venue – at St. Peter and Paul's Church in Buckingham. We were entertaining the diners at the annual Community Christmas lunch and that was a very happy occasion, with plenty of singing of popular carols and a few festive songs to finish.

We are always happy to receive new players into the Ensemble. It would be wonderful to welcome a percussionist – even with only a kit of snare and cymbal. We do possess some small percussion instruments. For further details, please contact

Sandra Truscott, Group Co-ordinator [music.ensemble@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:music.ensemble@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Painting Group



Photo supplied by Pamela Tonge – ‘Sunrise/Sunset’

The Painting Group meet on the third Monday in the month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm in the Cote next door to the Woolpack in Well Street. The preferred medium is watercolour. We are all amateurs and would welcome new U3A members to join us. Subs are £2.00 a session and include a cup of tea or coffee. February’s topic is a bird or animal, wild or tame. In March we’ll be trying our hand at a sunrise or sunset. Do come and join us for a relaxing afternoon!

Pam Tonge, Group Co-ordinator [painting@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:painting@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Tuesday Gardening - Embleton Way Community Centre

Last year saw us have some excellent speakers ranging from Milton Keynes Parks Trust, a talk on unusual plants and another how Bees can help gardeners. We held a gardeners Question time where we all learnt a lot and had fun. We had several trip out to visit gardens in Silverstone and Livingstone Lovell and to Whichford Pottery where we had a tour and saw the pots being thrown. We went to Cherry Lane Nursery and had an interesting afternoon learning about how the Nursery works and they told us about many plants they



stock. All these events were rounded off with a our usual cuppa and cake. We finished the year off with a Christmas Social with afternoon tea and games.



This year is another full year with many speakers and trips already organised.

We start with a trip to Evenley Wood Gardens to see the Snowdrops in February, we then have speakers on the National Gardens Scheme, Stowe Gardens, trips to Tomkins Arboretum and Swallow Nursery are planned and that just to begin with, so it's looking like a busy 2024.

We have a lively, thriving membership and have several new members joining us this year. So if you are looking for another group to join, like gardening and enjoy meeting other like-minded people we would love to see you. First Tuesday of the month – 2pm.

Margaret Hooper, Group Co-ordinator [gardening@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:gardening@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Strollers Walking Group – Spring 2024

Strollers walking group continues to walk every Wednesday, weather prevailing. Walk and talk is our theme, and there is plenty to go around!

Since October we have enjoyed walks around Twyford, Waterhall Park, and we visited Stowe to see the Walking with Giants exhibition which was beautiful and very moving. Locally we did Berties' walk, the Railway walk and Bourton Park circular walk. Future walks will include Stoke Bruerne, Stanton Low, Steeple Claydon and Stony Stratford.

We ended the year with our annual Christmas lunch at the Buckingham Golf Club, and a good time was had by one and all. We are looking forward to sunnier climes and more enjoyable walks.

I have a full group at the moment, but please contact me on the address below to be added to the waiting list:

Barbara Willis – [strollers@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:strollers@buckinghamu3a.org.uk). All photo images by Barbara Willis



October – Twyford.



November Stowe Walking with Giants.



Stowe January (below left) and Waterfall Park November (right).



January – railway walk.

## Singing For Fun

On the second and fourth Thursday of each month vocal chords are vibrating at Buckingham Football Club as we render a range of songs from our youth (mis-spent or otherwise!) Yes, we're the Buckingham U3A Singing for Fun group and, led by the dream team of Arthur and Linda Newman, we spend a happy couple of hours warbling our way through popular lyrics of the 60s and 70s.

Words and backing music are provided and Arthur 'conducts' us with enthusiasm - and I think we often surprise ourselves by remembering, with total accuracy, the songs we sang and danced to, back in the day. Away we go with 'It's Now Or Never', 'Stand By Me', 'Eight Days A Week', 'Annie's Song'... and up bob the happy recollections of our devastating disco dancing, bouffant hairdos (male and female), stiletto heels and, of course, those 'kinky' boots.



It's fun, and it's also therapeutic. And we not only entertain ourselves. Though we don't go in for performance work Singing for Fun is involved in occasional singalong sessions at Buckingham Opportunities Centre in Well Street. Plans are also in the making for a session at the next Buckingham U3A Christmas celebrations – watch this space!

If you're interested in exercising those vocal chords contact Arthur and Linda through the group website. Maybe see you on those 'Country Roads...'

Contributor: Yvonne Oram. Email [Singing.for.fun@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:Singing.for.fun@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Leisurely Walkers

As the group name suggests we operate at a more gently pace than other Buckingham U3A walking groups – the branch being lucky to have such a good range to suit all tastes and abilities. The 'Leisurelys' usually walk for just over an hour and there are stops along the way giving the opportunity to take a breath and to admire our surroundings.

Bourton and Chandos Parks provided good, local strolling opportunities – with the added enjoyment of 'spotting' the Buckingham heron and egret. And thereos an excellent range of walks in the town itself, with our local history enthusiasts highlighting points of interest. We go further afield of course. Hillesden's hills give fine countryside views; Stony Stratford offers good strolling by the river and theres a choice of lakeside and wooded walks at Milton Keynes. We round off all routes with coffee and cake.

This year the Leisurely Walkers are trying a different organising format. Anne Mills has been planning and leading the walks for some time (often trying out the routes in advance to check suitability) but is now stepping back and sharing all this with three other members. A list of the most popular walks is being circulated and members are encouraged to add new ideas to the collections of venues and to lead walks they particularly enjoy.

With the tightening of health and safety checks, recommended at national U3A level, the group co-ordinators are asking walkers to provide an emergency contact number, to have appropriate footwear for the walks and to use a walking stick (or those snazzy Nordic Walking poles!). No-one wants a pleasant outing to abruptly end in an over-stretched A and E.

Walkers are generally sensible souls, however, so we hope for a good season of walks this year and adding even more pleasant routes to our programme. At the moment we're a 'full house' but if any U3A members are interesting in setting up a similar group please

get in touch (information on the U3A website). We'll happily help out with organisation and planning – at a leisurely pace, of course!

Contributor: Yvonne Oram. Email [Leisurely.walks@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:Leisurely.walks@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

## Environmental Sustainability – New Group

We are forming a new group where we can learn from each other about global environmental challenges and how to improve the sustainability of our homes, gardens, towns and villages. The Environmental Sustainability group will include talks and discussion on topics such as climate change, recycling, gardening for wildlife and biodiversity, reducing food waste, avoiding single-use plastic, plant-based cooking and baking, energy efficiency and solar power.



Well Street Floods



Planet Refill - Buckingham

If you are interested in finding out more about this new group, and potentially joining, please email Heather Haydock at [environment@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:environment@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

### Croquet – Buckingham Cricket Club

Do you fancy spending a pleasant afternoon in the fresh air with a friendly bunch of U3A members? Does a couple of hours on a Friday afternoon getting some gentle exercise with a bit of mental effort and a lot of fun appeal to you? If you answer yes to those questions, then why not come along and join the Croquet Group.

Croquet is a simple game with easily understood rules. No previous experience is required and there is no need to buy any equipment or wear any special kit. There are little tricks and tactics involved, but they can soon be learned by playing the game. Seasoned members of the group are always happy to pass on hints and tips on how to play the game. We are a very sociable group and games are not taken too seriously – although winning is always the aim.

We play on the outfield at the Buckingham Cricket Club on Bourton Road every Friday afternoon (weather permitting) from the first Friday in April until the end of October. Play starts at 2.00 and usually ends around 4.30. The first session is free for new members so they can find out whether or not they like the game. After that it is £15 for the whole season.



Croquet at Ivy House

If you feel like you want to give the group a try, or want more information, please contact group co-ordinator Roger Edwards at [croquet@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:croquet@buckinghamu3a.org.uk).



## Local History – Airfields and Canal

### **Wartime Airfields of Buckinghamshire**

In October, our group member, Chris Brockbank gave an enthralling talk about the wartime airfields in North Bucks.

Chris explained that most of our local airfields, the most well-known of which were

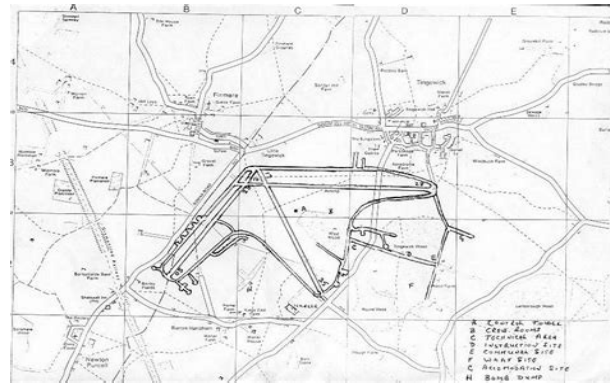
**Finnmere**

**Little Horwood**

**Westcott**

**Wing**

and were intended for training bomber crews although as the war progressed these changed to “active” units with operations over Germany and then supporting the D Day landings.



He explained the reasons for the layout of most bases and the runway set-ups which were generally of two or three concrete strips with taxiways and dispersal bays.

There were some exceptions and one in our area was Finnmere which was a satellite station for RAF Bicester and towards the end of the war was a training base for Mosquito pilots. Here the runways radiated in a fan from a central point rather than the normal “triangle”.

With so many training units there were many plane crashes. The worst plane crash in Bucks happened in Winslow. A Wellington bomber had taken off from Wing airfield at 1.25 am. During the flight the captain decided to return to Little Horwood airfield because the bombsight wasn't working. The pilot was unable to land because another plane had done a 'belly-flop' on the runway. He then tried to make another fly around the airfield but lost control of the plane over Winslow. It hit the roofs of several buildings, before crashing into the Chandos Arms pub. Seventeen people died in total, as well as the crew's cat, Wimpy, and all but one of the crew.

At Westcott, the entire crew and plane were lost on 15th March 1943 when the pilot realised, he was too high to land and tried to overshoot the runway and pull up, but the engine stalled and he crashed. It had been returning from a training mission called Bullseye where the airmen got to fire live ammunition.

At Mursley, on the night of 11th April 1943 a crew of 4 airmen died when a Wellington bomber (BJ879) hit the side of the tower and exploded, whilst doing training circuits and landings at Little Horwood airfield.

Winslow Hall was also used as a Bomber Command operations centre,

Several of our members had tales about the airfields, where family and friends were employed – and would you believe there was even a hint of some romances!

### **Buckingham Canal**

For our November meeting we welcomed Athina Beckett for a fascinating talk about the history of the canal and the progress of various renovation projects.

Construction reached Buckingham in 1801 with a ceremonial opening on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Marquis of Buckingham was a major shareholder in the Grand Junction Company, and had in fact loaned all of the costs of construction of the arm.

This had an immense impact on the area, opening up Buckingham to a wider world. This was particularly true in the winter for, although Buckingham was one of the first four towns to establish a stage coach (1636) (two days from London) it couldn't run in the winter because of the dreadful state of the roads which were just mud and clay. As the stage-coach only ran three times a week from the end of March it meant that only high value freight such as butter, veal and bank-notes were transported. Heavier goods were carried by pack-horse – 8 bricks at a time!

The opening of the canal caused a trade revolution, particularly in bulk goods such as coal, stone, bricks, slates and lime. There were manufactured goods and imported produce from London Docks and a lot of the capital's rubbish, such as ash to treat the clay soil and bones for fertilisers. All this meant that local produce could be also be moved faster and more easily, whether it was foodstuffs such as cheese, or the hay and straw that were exported to London to provide for the horse-drawn transport of the City.

Many trees from the area were cut down and sent for construction in the Navy. This led to the area, described in 1872 as being well-wooded, being quite denuded of trees.

Importing coal also meant Buckingham town had street lights for the first time, although this was expensive. Workers producing the gas were paid in kind at the New Inn!



*Buckingham Lock Prior to Restoration*

But all good things come to an end and although the canal competed with the Bletchley to Banbury Railway it slowly silted up. The silt problem was not helped by the Buckingham Corporation using the final section as a place to dump the towns sewage.

The last recorded boat to travel the Arm was a single motor boat, carrying carboys of chemicals to Leckhampstead in 1932: but by now the canal was so silted that the boat had to be hauled by a horse from Thornton Bridge.

Now a dedicated band of volunteers have made great strides in restoring sections of the canal with the aim of connecting Buckingham to Cosgrove.

Further details of their work can be found at [www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk)

Rodney Glew, Group Co-ordinator [local.history1@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:local.history1@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)

### Upcoming Open Meetings – 2:30 Buckingham Community Centre

1) **28<sup>th</sup> February** – Richard Watkins First Aid at home.

Covering - Falls and the likely causes/ways of reducing the possibility of taking a tumble in the first place. Along with looking at Strokes/TIAs and a demonstration of the F.A.S.T. test. Finally, identifying a heart attack and the differences with a patient in Cardiac Arrest.

2) **27<sup>th</sup> March** – Timandra Slade From a Hard Place to a Rock.

The true story of Col Jimmy Johnson of Tingewick, his capture and WWII escape.

3) **24<sup>th</sup> April** - Professor Sebastian Lucas The life of a Pathologist

Roland Simpkins, [Speaker.secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk](mailto:Speaker.secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk)