

Newsletter

April 2023

u3a
in Kennet

News Updates

General News: Welcome to our fourth Newsletter of 2023. Spring is here now and along with the emerging flowers we have a full programme of u3a in Kennet events in the diary for April with our Kennet Talk on 19th at Kennet Valley Hall, our monthly Coffee Exchange session at the Town Hall on 27th and our Media Day at Marlborough College on 28th. Details of these events are included in this Newsletter and we look forward to seeing many of you at the sessions.

Media Day with Marlborough College: Our topical, thought-provoking and multi-generational event will be held on Friday 28th April 2023, from 9.30am to 4pm, at the College Memorial Hall. Our excellent speakers are all experienced journalists and media personnel working at national and local level. They will consider a wide range of issues about the media today and tomorrow including social media, 'truth' and democracy. Further details, including the programme for the Day will be sent to attendees soon.

New Members' Lunch: The next lunch will take place on the 5th May at Kennet Valley Hall. The invitations have now been issued and we look forward to seeing all those who have confirmed that they are coming.



The first lunch took place in March. It opened up at 10am and the caterer Dan Lefevre, arrived with his assistant and they worked through, hands on, dealing with the various and numerous menu choices alongside the members of the Really Useful Group (RUG). The RUG laid table covers in u3a yellow and blue and prepared each place with cutlery, drinking glasses and jugs of water. Coffee with biscuits was served for those present and for new members when they arrived. Our Chair and Vice Chair addressed the members, welcoming them. Those new members present were given a brief account of our u3a and of

Upcoming Events – details in
main text

19th April at 2:15pm:
Kennet u3a Talk

27th April at 10:15am:
Coffee Exchange

5th May:
New Members' Lunch

28th April: Media Day

13th September: u3a Day

Here are the links to our web page u3ainkennet.org.uk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet

Please "control and click" on links to visit suggested webpages

forthcoming events. They were assured that new Executive Committee members are needed as retirements are an annual factor. At 1pm in an organised fashion diners from the two rows of tables collected their meals from two serving tables. This system eliminated unnecessary long queues. Much mingling took place between members and Group Leaders and a display of posters for the interest groups was set up on the stage. Thanks go to Alison Dewar who organised the RUG and liaised with the caterers. Also thanks were expressed to Dan Lefevre and Polly, our caterers who prepared, cooked and presented an enjoyable two course meal. The six Committee members present agreed that these caterers, as hoped, had given a good service and be asked to cover the second lunch on 5 May.

Kennet u3a Talk: The next talk is on 19th April at 2.15pm. The talk will be given by Commodore Ian Gibb MBE. It's called "*From Sea Cadet to Commodore and beyond...*". He will enlighten us with tales of his 43 years at sea with the P&O Company followed by 22 years as an Elder Brother of the Corporation of Trinity House. His vast knowledge covers the changing face of passenger vessels and their passengers from the early 1950s, culminating in his attaining command of the P&O flagship ORIANA on her entry into service in 1995, followed by an 'alteration of course' as a willing servant of Trinity House to ensure continued safety for the seafarer around the English and Welsh coastlines. Ian is a fifth generation Master Mariner (on both sides of his family) who entered the School of Navigation, Warsash, in January 1954. Apprenticed to the P&O in 1954, he remained in their employ, gradually working up to Command of passenger liners in both P&O and Princess Fleets. His first 'brass hat' was in 1975 and his favourite ship was CANBERRA where he served on and off for 17 years. He is married and lives in Wiltshire, his hobbies include walking a pet beagle twice a day and raising money for the RNLI. He also writes for the magazine 'Shipping - Today and Yesterday'. It will prove to be a day not to be missed.



Coffee Exchange: The March event was given by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. It was the first session held upstairs in the Town Hall, giving a significant improvement in space for the 120 people who attended and in the quality of the presentation.

Over 60 years ago, the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust was established initially to protect butterflies in a wood. Now with 23,000 members, there are over 40 nature reserves covering wetland, woodland, meadows and chalk downlands protecting wildlife and natural habitats across the county. Anthony Atkinson, a Community Engagement Officer at the Trust, spoke about the Trust's work in general and also particularly about the project at Bay Meadows, north of Marlborough beside the A346. Much of the work already achieved on the site has been undertaken by volunteers of all ages - from primary school children, all the way to several of our own members. Anthony also kindly took several questions and stayed to chat with members after the meeting. A recording of the session is available at youtu.be/OEMRk4zellg. In addition to the talk there was plenty of time for mingling and chatting, having coffee and tea, and for the introduction of several new groups which are being established - family history, recorder ensemble and craft. You can look on the website site for further information about these, plus all about our other groups and future planned events.



The next Coffee Exchange session will be on Thursday 27th April upstairs in the Assembly Room at Marlborough Town Hall. Doors open at 10:15am and coffee, tea and biscuits will be available from 10.30am. Our speaker will begin at 11.00am. Lucy Maynard from the Dogs Trust will talk about their work. We plan to record the talk so that those unable to attend are able to “catch up” later.



Celebration of the Coronation of HM King Charles III : The arrangements being prepared by the Marlborough Town Council to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III will not now include any appearance from u3a in Kennet as no offers to help have been expressed except by our Recorder Ensemble Group. It became clear that our u3a members are being involved in family commitments and also celebrations in their own locality. Added to this the Marlborough Town Council’s developing plans would not have facilitated our original ideas.

u3a Day: Our own u3a Day along with the National u3a week will take place within the week beginning 18th September 2023, giving plenty time for ideas and preparation for the event. If a venue or person has to be reserved/booked, timing does though become important. In the past few years we have presented displays inside and outside the Marlborough Town Hall with publicity celebrating our presence in Kennet, providing socialising for existing members and attracting new ones. We currently have 655 members and 62 interest groups and Jeff Hide should be delighted to hear from any member or group with their ideas of how best we can hold our u3a Day this year please. He can be contacted on 01672 511774 or via vicechair@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Speaker Secretary: David Lacey our Speaker Secretary has stood down from the role now and we are most grateful to him for the excellent programme of speakers which he had organised for our interest and enjoyment during this year. Jill Chambers from the Executive Committee has agreed to take on the role and is already planning ahead for the 2024 programme. Please do get in touch with her if you have any ideas or thoughts on speakers for the future. Her email is speakersec@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

A New Trustee: Alastair Sheen have been co-opted to the u3a in Kennet Executive Committee to provide additional support across the variety of tasks that are essential to the smooth and effective running of our u3a.

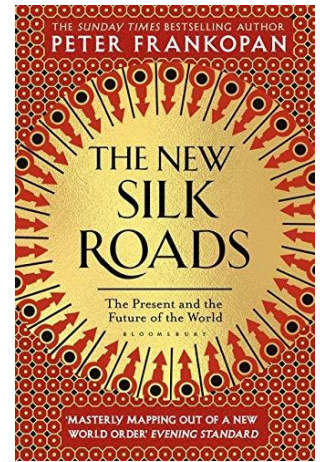
Group News

New Groups: Near the entrance at our most recent Town Hall coffee exchange you may have stopped for a chat about groups and met others with similar interests. Look out for another ‘groups’ welcoming table at the next coffee exchange. A new group cannot be promised every month in 2023 but we can at least answer a few questions and put you in touch with like-minded spirits. Please email ideas and comments to groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Family History: This is a recently formed new Group. It takes place 2.30–4.30pm on the last Monday in each month at the Quaker Meeting House. More information can be obtained at familyhistory@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Craft Group: Are you interested in sewing, knitting, crochet, embroidery, felting, paper craft or any other portable crafts? The new Craft Group had their first meeting on 4th April and has decided to hold future meetings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month in Marlborough. They all had brought projects that they intended to start, although very little crafting actually happened at this first meeting! They chatted about our crafting interests which included knitting, patchwork, paper craft, crochet and cross stitch. If you would like to join the group, please email Kath Pocock at craft@u3ainkennet.org.uk for more information.

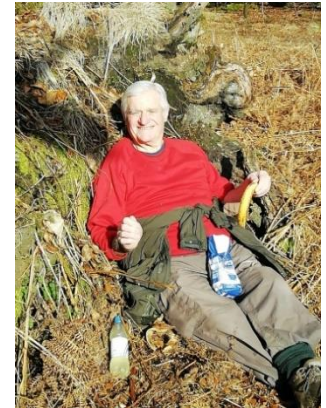
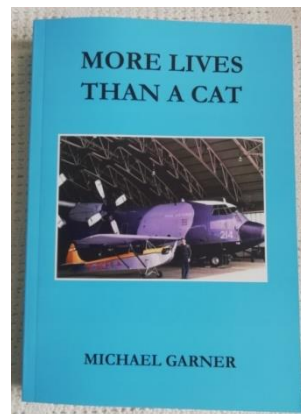
Global History: At present u3a in Kennet has two History Groups: English History and Local History. We are proposing to set up another group now which will focus on global history. The intention will be to consider current issues as the way to adopt a historic focus on global events – how did we get to the present situation? / why? / what is the background to... etc. For example the group might focus on China, Russia and the Middle East today and consider the Silk Road as the historic background to trade, communications and wider politics. It is proposed that the Group would meet on a monthly basis and would take several sessions to focus on each topic. Members would be encouraged to prepare for the meetings by reading relevant background books, for example Prof. Peter Frankopan's book on 'The Silk Road' as. If you are interested please contact groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk.



Creative writing: There is an emerging interest for several of our members, who are going to meet to explore the feasibility of another new group. To express interest please email groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Other News

Mike Garner Autobiography: Mike, now aged 90, is one of our members in the Thursday Walking and Table Tennis Groups. He has recently written and had published an autobiography called 'More Lives than a Cat'. The book has a focus on his love of flying and recently building 3 light aircraft. It is written with humour and candor. He spent his working life with the RAF and as an Air Loadmaster, flying around the world. Contact Mike via his groups or at 01672 810484 if you are interested in buying a copy. It costs £10. Part of the money is to be donated to the RAF Benevolent Fund.



Their Finest Hour: Share your family memories of WW2. You are invited to take part in 'Their Finest Hour', a Heritage Lottery-funded nationwide campaign organised by the University of Oxford to collect and preserve the everyday stories and objects of the Second World War. As these personal stories are fast fading from living memory, it is vital to preserve them and the wartime objects that often accompany them. Find out more on theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk.

Dying Matters Awareness Week: Dying Matters Awareness Week takes place this year from 8 to 14 May, led by Hospice UK's Dying Matters campaign. Throughout the week, people across the country will come together to encourage communities to get talking about death, dying, and grief. The theme of Dying Matters Awareness Week 2023 is 'Dying Matters at work'. At Prospect Hospice, there will be an interactive display in the Heart of the Hospice cafe which everyone is welcome to contribute to. The display will ask different questions on the topic of death and dying, such as 'What do you want people to wear to your funeral?', encouraging us all to think and talk about death, and helping to break the taboo that surrounds it. There will also displays in our charity shops and at Swindon Hub. Keep an eye on Prospect Hospice's website and social media for news and updates. If you would like to get involved with Prospect Hospice's Dying Matters Awareness Week, please contact larahill@prospect-hospice.net.

The u3a Trust Radio Podcast: The podcast celebrates and showcases the wide activity happening across the movement. It comes out every month on podcasting platforms, including Apple and Spotify, and as a captioned video on YouTube. You can find out more on the Trust's [website](#).

u3a in Kennet Committee



Jill Turner
Chair



Jeff Hide
Vice Chair



Kieran Roughan
Treasurer



Annette Weaver
Secretary



Mike Morison
Membership



John Martin
Newsletter



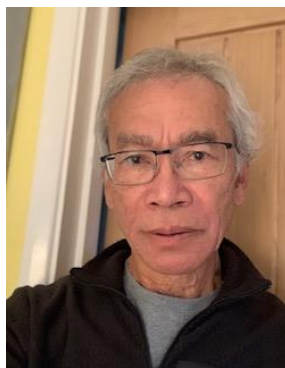
Jill Chambers
Speaker Secretary



Alison Dewar
Groups Liaison



Georgie Neville
Groups Liaison



Hamzah
Technology

For more information: u3ainkennet.org.uk/executive-committee/