

Newsletter

June 2023

u3a
in Kennet

News Updates

General News: Welcome to our latest Newsletter. Summer is here and we are continuing with our programme of u3a in Kennet events. We are pleased to note that our membership continues to grow and has reached our highest level yet at 666 members. Please do continue to spread the word and encourage your friends to join us. Our Groups continue to increase with new subject areas being added and our schedule of interesting talks continues throughout the year.

Coffee Exchange: It was good to see many of you at our recent u3a in Kennet Coffee Exchange session on 25th May 2023 for over 60 of us to hear Alan Brown, a volunteer from the Bobby Van Trust, explaining how to stay safe online and how to recognise the many and varied ways in which scammers attempt to defraud innocent victims. With cyber-crime being one third of all fraud in the UK, this was a subject which attracted interest. Alan had a lot of detailed advice, but maybe the simplest and very effective advice was to improve our passwords. If we all just changed a couple of passwords as a result of this talk, it would make a tremendous difference. Apparently a three word password or a 12 alpha numeric password makes breaking into an account much more difficult. We are very grateful to Alan for his explanations and help. We recorded the session and it is available at youtu.be/OtiINn1svJc.



**THE WILTSHIRE
BOBBY VAN TRUST**

Registered Charity No: 1153790

Upcoming Events – details in main text

29th June at 10:15am:
Coffee Exchange

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

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



The next Coffee Exchange session will be on Thursday 29th June upstairs in the Assembly Room at Marlborough Town Hall. Doors open at 10:15am and coffee, tea and biscuits will be available. Our speaker will u3a in Kennet member Felicity Simpson who will talk to us about Qigong (pronounced “Chi gong”), something we might all want to try. It was developed in China thousands of years ago as part of traditional Chinese medicine. It involves using breath control

combined with slow flowing movement to cultivate vital life energy without stressing the body. Felicity will talk to us about the history of the exercise and introduce us to some of the practices. You will be delighted to know that these exercises are described as gentle, and are designed to prevent disease and increase longevity. We plan to record the talk so that those unable to attend are able to “catch up” later.

Kennet u3a Talk: The next talk will be at the Kennet Valley Hall on the 19th July. The talk will be given by Jonathan Hinks, a Technical Director at HR Wallingford. It will be about water and dams. Look on our website nearer the time for more information.

Our u3a Day: The idea of having a national day for u3a first appeared in 2019 but the plans for 2020 were delayed, including our own, due to the Covid crisis. By 2021 we were able to proceed, but with considerable restrictions on individual proximity and numbers of people in groups. Nevertheless, we held our event in the Marlborough Town Hall in September with 82 members involved following a mainly one-hour rota to advertise all groups by a display of A3 colour posters. It was an excellent pilot and this enabled an even better event on our 30th anniversary celebration in 2022.

Why do this? To maintain our u3a we need to retain our membership and attract new members to replace those who are no longer with us. There is a natural turnover and without efforts to recruit and retain we would face a reduction in members, groups and enthusiasm.

u3a in Kennet clearly provides for the needs of the town and environs. The people need to know about us and many do not! So, we will build on our past successes and have our u3a Day on Wednesday 13th September 2023 in a similar manner to last year’s. Jeff Hide will be writing to the Group Leaders seeking their help, to fill the slots for their group’s table in the town hall and he would be very pleased for any of you to contact him directly with an offer to take part at 01672 511774 / 07792102219 or vicechair@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Website: For the latest news about u3a in Kennet please check out our website www.u3ainkennet.org.uk which is the ‘official’ source of information. If you have any queries about your membership please contact Mike Morison our Membership Secretary at membershipsec@u3ainkennet.org.uk

Group News

Groups: We’re going strong with over 60 groups, plus reciprocal membership with Pewsey Vale u3a and access to regular national activities. Our membership is growing too and perhaps some of you may want to revive groups which have closed over recent years? Since last summer leaders have stepped forward to provide several new groups that help replace others. Music Maestros instead of Music Appreciation and a brand new Family History group. Our new Craft group helps those with interests from no less than five former groups; covering patchwork, card-making, quilting, embroidery, knitting and crochet. Bridge continues online but not face to face. How about it? Are you interested in joining, offering or supporting some subjects which we do not currently have – like-for-like, closely related or vaguely similar? Computing, for example, has involved Build Your Own Website; Computers; Cyber Protection; iPad Beginners; and Mac Basics and Users. We have also lost a Basic French group, along with Model Making; and – most recently – the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths group. If you are interested in these or others please contact groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk. We could probably offer anything with enough willing participants and those prepared to have a go at leading or co-leading. As they often say elsewhere, support and training are provided!

Day Trip Group: On Thursday 20th April the group went to Chichester. The coach had them in the city by 11.00, giving time to those wishing to do the guided city tour or a guided tour of the 11th century Cathedral. Both of these tours were led by wonderful volunteer guides. Many members were keen to see the (temporary) exhibition "Sussex Landscape" by Twentieth Century artists, which included works by Turner, Constable, William Blake, Ravilious, Vanessa Bell. The exhibition was held in the Pallant Gallery (see picture), a Queen Anne House tucked away in a side street, but just a few minutes walk from the city centre. The Gallery also houses a permanent exhibition but not many of us had a time to take this in as well. Some even managed a visit to the beautiful Bishop's Palace and Gardens. Everybody seemed to have maximised their time in this small but beautiful city.



Other News

Obituaries

Rachael Watson-Smith. Following last month's obituary for Rachael Watson-Smith a 'JustGiving' page has been set up by u3a in Kennet member Geoffrey Belbin inviting donations in support of Pancreatic Cancer Research. The aim is to support the development of screening programmes for this type of cancer. Pancreatic cancer is the tenth most common cancer in the UK and it has the lowest survival rate. It is hard to detect and as a consequence patients are often diagnosed too late for treatment to be effective. The importance of screening and early detection cannot be underestimated. The web link for donations is here: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/geoffbelbinpancreaticcancer

Jane Moakes: Jane passed away earlier this month and a full obituary will be published in our next Newsletter. A service of Remembrance is to be held at the North Wilts Crematorium – SN4 8ET on Thursday 29 June a 2023 at 11am. If you want to attend please contact Nick Moakes nickmoakes@btinternet.com. Refreshments will be provide after the service at Marlborough House, Broad Hinton, SN4 9PA



More about the Bobby Van Trust: The Trust, who spoke to us at last month's Coffee Exchange, helps older and disabled people to secure their homes and installs fire alarms and CO2 monitors. Wiltshire is one of only two counties in England to have such a facility. This local charity is entirely dependent on fund raising and we would like to take this opportunity to advertise their next event. On 6th and 7th September, the annual nearly new designer clothes sale will take place in Longbridge Deverill with all proceeds going to Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust, Swindon Women's Aid (which covers all Wiltshire) and our local Ukrainian refugees. If you have any contributions for this deserving charity, please contact Jennie Shaw on 07775 824670 to arrange collection. Or just go along in September and buy your autumn wardrobe!

Shakespeare Live's summer show: The Merchant of Venice is the summer show and will be held at Cleeve House at Seend for 7 performances between 3rd and 8th July. To find out more, ring 07780 938107. The picture shows the rehearsals ongoing.



Merchants House: Volunteers are crucial to the effectiveness of The Merchant's House. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise, add energy and dynamism to a variety of tasks and help keep costs to a minimum. There are a wide of opportunities available which include:

- serving in the shop
- being a house guide
- helping at events
- helping with the school visits and educational activities for children
- costume making and embroidery
- helping in the trust office
- maintaining archives and our library
- property maintenance
- helping in the garden
- helping in the museum

If you would like more information or to arrange a visit to find out about volunteering with us, then please contact us on 01672 511491 or email us at info@themerchantshouse.co.uk.



Savernake Forest – invitations from Forestry England: Forestry England has invited members of u3a in Kennet to join the conservation volunteer group for older people which meets on the last Thursday of every month in the Savernake Forest carrying out practical conservation tasks. If you are interested to find out more about the conservation group or would be interested in a guided walk in the Forest please email chair@u3aikkennet.org.uk

Calling All Writers: We are looking for a new Newsletter Editor soon. John Martin took on the role of editing our Newsletter prior to the Covid 19 pandemic and will be standing down from the role at our Annual General Meeting in October 2023. The Editor can be a member of the Executive Committee but this is not essential. Likewise the role could be filled by two members working together and with support from the Executive Committee. The role is essentially that of editing the articles which are submitted by Group Leaders and the Executive Committee. We would of course welcome anyone who wishes to write articles too. Previous experience is not essential although we would welcome any writers or journalists... Digital skills are required. If you would like to find out more about this opportunity to support your u3a please contact Jill Turner via chair@u3aikkennet.org.uk or mobile 07900 223345 for more details.

u3a in Kennet Committee



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