

# Newsletter

July 2023

u3a  
in Kennet

## News Updates

**General News:** Welcome to our July Newsletter. We hope you are enjoying the summer and the various activities that are available locally. Our programme of u3a in Kennet events continues through the summer months with our Kennet u3a Talk on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge. Jonathan Hinks will explain the importance of water and dams: a subject of increasing importance as the effects of climate change become more apparent. Our Coffee Exchange on 27<sup>th</sup> July will introduce Mariana Baschiera from the Greatwood Charity at Clench Common who will inform us about their therapy work with retired animals (including horses and dogs). We are pleased that our Coffee Exchange session in June stimulated much interest and has resulted in the establishment of a new group for Qigong, described below.

**Coffee Exchange:** The Coffee Exchange on June 27<sup>th</sup> featured an inspirational talk by Felicity Simpson about Qigong. She gave us a synopsis of the history of the movement which has become part of Chinese medicine. It involves using breath control with slow moving movement to cultivate vital life energy (Qi in Chinese) without stressing the body. It is a wellness practice designed to prevent disease and increase longevity. Once health is compromised, it is a drug free method to regain health and strength. During the presentation, it became clear that we in the West concentrate on curing illness but Qigong (and other Eastern practices) concentrate much more on keeping well. For once, we, the audience, had to take part. Felicity demonstrated and we stood up and copied her graceful movements. Altogether we learnt four different slow moving exercises which certainly left us invigorated and calm. The great success of the talk was demonstrated when Felicity was swamped with applicants to join a regular session she will organise for u3a Kennet. It seems we now have a 67<sup>th</sup> group – Qigong. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact [qigong@u3aikkennet.org.uk](mailto:qigong@u3aikkennet.org.uk).



Upcoming Events – details in  
main text

19<sup>th</sup> July at 2:15pm:  
Kennet u3a Talk

27<sup>th</sup> July at 10:15am:  
Coffee Exchange

13<sup>th</sup> September:  
u3a Day

Here are the links to our web  
page [u3aikkennet.org.uk](http://u3aikkennet.org.uk) and  
Facebook page  
[www.facebook.com/u3aikkennet](https://www.facebook.com/u3aikkennet)

*Please “control and click” on links  
to visit suggested webpages*

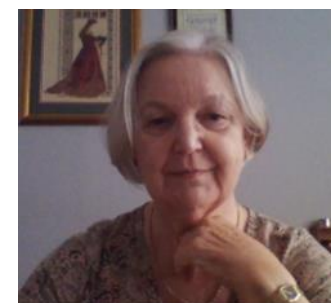
The next Coffee Exchange session will be on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July upstairs in the Assembly Room at Marlborough Town Hall. Doors open at 10:15am and coffee, tea and biscuits will be available. Our speaker will be Mariana Baschiera from the Greatwood Charity at Clench Common, giving a talk entitled "How racehorses help us to change lives and create futures." Greatwood was the first charity to use former racehorses to educate disadvantaged children and young adults with Special Educational Needs. The Charity gives children and adults a break from busy life & an opportunity to find confidence, peace and wellbeing. It originally aimed to help racehorses find a new home and job outside racing. Marianna will tell us how adults and children are helped to reconnect to their values and natural curiosity through hands on work with the horses. This promotes self-esteem and confidence and opens up more options for them in future, including going into animal-related fields for work. Their programmes are all rooted in a mindful awareness of ourselves and the world we live in. We plan to record the talk so that those unable to attend are able to "catch up" later via our web page.



**Kennet u3a Talk:** The next talk will be at the Kennet Valley Hall on the 19<sup>th</sup> July. One of our own members will be tackling the issue of Dams and the World Water Problem. Jonathan Hicks, the Technical Director at HR Wallingford – the Hydraulics Research station – has spent his career in dam construction and will be talking to us about dams and problems associated with them in addressing the worsening world water problem. His illustrated talk will include dam construction and the problems associated with their construction, the effects on local populations, flood hydrology and point out some of the seismic concerns which are relevant particularly near the boundaries of tectonic plates.



**u3a Network Workshop:** u3a in Kennet hosted a Workshop for the Bath & Wiltshire Network of u3as at Kennet Valley Hall on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June. The Network comprises the 14 local u3as in the area which runs from Bath in the west to Kennet in the east, Malmesbury in the north to the four Salisbury u3as in the south. It is an informal grouping designed to provide support to local u3as. 25 chairs and other committee members from 11 out of the 14 u3as in the Network attended to discuss common issues. The day focused on recruitment of new members, recruitment of committee members and systems to support local u3as. Other ideas were also discussed including sharing suggestions about speakers, organising events and running groups. The last part of the meeting was joined by Dr Liz Thackray (top photo) and Susan Parker (lower photo) who were on a three day tour of u3as in the south west. Liz is the volunteer Chair of the Third Age Trust and Susan is the volunteer South West Regional Trustee who sits on the board of the Third Age Trust to represent the interests of the 133 u3as in the South West. The role of u3a Networks is to "bridge the gap" between individual u3as and the Third Age Trust and encourage local co-operation between u3as. You can find out more about the South West Region at [u3asites.org.uk/south-west/welcome](http://u3asites.org.uk/south-west/welcome).



**Help Required:** Our u3a continues to exist and grow due to the contribution of our Group Leaders and Committee members and more help is required now. No special skills or knowledge are required other than a willingness to support us. Please do consider offering your help and contact [groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk) for more details.

## Group News

**Theatre Group:** Following their joint leadership of the popular Theatre Group since 2019 Sarah Foxall and Jenny Oakshott have decided to stand down and new leadership is required. The leadership role can be shared quite easily and Sarah and Jenny would be very happy to offer a full handover and any support required. Please contact Group Co-ordinators [groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk) or Sarah and Jenny [theatre@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:theatre@u3ainkennet.org.uk) for further information.

We thank them both for their support for our u3a. In addition to her role as the Theatre Group Leader Sarah was also a member of the Executive Committee from 2009-16 as our Membership Secretary and she continues to lead the Book Circle and the Spanish 1 Groups. Jenny was also an Executive Committee member joining in 2014 as the Publicity Officer and becoming the Honorary Secretary from 2017.

**Croquet Group:** The new Croquet Group is now underway, run by Nick Stedman. It meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays from May to September. An outdoor sport! They play at Lockeridge.



**New Qigong Group:** Following her presentation at our June 2023 Coffee Exchange Felicity Simpson has agreed to set up a new weekly Qigong practise group. The group will learn about the movements, breathing techniques, self-applied massage and meditation. The first meeting will take place as soon as possible in Marlborough to discuss the arrangements for the new group including where and how often the group will meet. If you would like further details please email [Qigong@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:Qigong@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

**Art Group:** The Group's final session before the summer break was held in one of our member's garden. The picture shows the way in! There were plenty of shady spots to keep the Group out of the warm June sunshine and refreshments kindly provided by the host, keeping the members nourished and alert. It was a fine way to end our summer programme. The Group will restart on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm in our usual venue, the Scout Hut on George Lane, Marlborough. Each meeting is 2 hours. There is no formal tuition at our meeting but advice is available if members can help. New members would be most welcome as there are a number of vacancies. A small charge is payable in advance for the hire of our venue. This is a very informal, friendly and mixed group where pastel, collage, acrylic, drawing and water colour are all practised in a relaxed and pleasant environment. More details can be sought from the current Group leader, Allan Skipper, via the u3a in Kennet website.



**Science Discussion Group:** Nick Stedman and Gerald Long are starting a new Science Discussion group. They describe it as “for anyone who wants to talk about science in the news or of topical interest. We meet each month in a private house. We don’t have formal presentations but to contribute to any discussion you would need to have made some effort beforehand to understand the issues. The topics for discussion will be decided by the members in the weeks before each meeting but there could also be other agreed topics of underlying or personal interest.” The group membership will be limited. To register your interest, please contact [sciencetalk@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:sciencetalk@u3ainkennet.org.uk).

## Other News

**Bay Meadows Nature Park:** The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is delighted to announce that the Nature Park on the edge of Marlborough that straddles the beautiful River Og chalk stream has just opened. We learnt all about it at a recent Coffee Exchange. Enjoy a relaxing and therapeutic time in the meadows alongside the River Og, see what wildlife you can spot, take the circular walk via two new bridges across the river and maybe stop for a paddle by the bridge. Bay Meadows has a fantastic area reserved for wildlife. They have planted lots of native trees, created new wetland features and introduced cattle grazing which will help restore the meadows for wildlife. They too will be leading regular guided activities in the wildlife refuge and will be providing opportunities to volunteer.

**Obituary for Jane Isabel Moakes – an appreciation:** Following the brief obituary which appeared in the June 2023 Newsletter Jane’s family share Jane’s story.

*Jane was born in Finsbury and grew up in Shooters Hill, south east London. Attending the Roan Grammar School, Blackheath. She met her husband to be (David) at a school dance in 1954 and her plans to study medicine changed after the couple became engaged. They married on 28 March 1958 and enjoyed their honeymoon in Paris. After raising the children: Penny and Nick, she returned to education obtaining 'A' level sociology to add to the 4 'A' levels she had taken at school. She went on to read Sociology and Economic History at Bristol University qualifying subsequently as a teacher and working in Bristol. She was head hunted by Avon County Council to run an adult careers shop in Bristol and after retiring she became a magistrate and developed her talent for art and other cultural interests. Sadly she suffered from a hereditary and progressive retinal disorder resulting eventually in total blindness. Subsequently she developed vascular dementia too and was cared for by David. Her children remember her as a loving mother and grandmother and an inspirational teacher and role model.*



The above is based on the eulogy from Penny, Nick and David Moakes.

**Ramsbury Primary School:** One of the top primary schools in Wiltshire has at a recent inspection by OFSTED retained its Outstanding rating which is, in today’s context, absolutely exceptional. U3a member, Ashley de Safrin, is standing down as Chair of Governors this Summer and the current Vice–Chair is replacing him as Chair in September at the start of the new academic year. The school is looking for a

Governor to replace Ashley with the possibility of becoming Vice-Chair. It requires someone who has the time to dedicate to school matters and would be ideal for someone with a previous professional or business background. The 2 skills areas that would be particularly welcome would either be HR or finance. It is also necessary to be fully competent at e-mails. Being a Governor carries responsibilities but is extremely rewarding. Ramsbury has a very strong Governing Body so you would be joining a great team which includes a number of parents. The role of the Governors is to support the teaching staff and be a "critical friend". The Head Teacher is accountable to the Chair of Governors. The Governing Body's role is strategic, allowing the school leaders to make day to day decisions within a strong strategic framework. Governors are encouraged to visit the school on a regular basis but they do not need to be based in or near Ramsbury. Ramsbury's Head Teacher is a fantastic leader and the school's culture is outward looking and very much a "can do" one. This is a great opportunity for one of our members to really make a difference. If you want to know more or are interested please e-mail: [Ashley.desafrin@gmail.com](mailto:Ashley.desafrin@gmail.com) or call him on 07584 354699.

**Explore Wiltshire's Hidden Histories with a New App:** Explore local history and discover Wiltshire's rich cultural heritage with our new 'Explore Wiltshire' app, available on Apple and Android devices. It features information about historical landmarks, cultural sites and significant events that have helped to shape Wiltshire's landscape. The free, easy to use location-aware app, also includes historic photos, engravings and information from the archives of the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. So what are you waiting for, download and get exploring now <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/explore-wiltshire-new-heritage-app>

**Calling All Writers:** We are looking for a new Newsletter Editor. John Martin will stand down as our Newsletter Editor at our Annual General Meeting in October 2023 and we want to continue his work and the regular communication with our members sharing news and updates. The Editor brings together the articles which are written by Group Leaders and the Executive Committee. We would of course welcome anyone who wishes to write articles too. 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. Previous experience is not essential although we would welcome any writers or journalists... Digital skills are required. To find out more please contact: [chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

## 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*



Alastair Sheen  
*Committee Member*

For more information: [u3ainkennet.org.uk/executive-committee/](http://u3ainkennet.org.uk/executive-committee/)