

Newsletter

August 2023

u3a
in Kennet

News Updates

General News: Welcome to our August Newsletter. We hope you have enjoyed the summer months so far despite the wet weather here in the UK and the heat across much of southern Europe. Your u3a in Kennet Committee has planned a full programme of events for the autumn with our regular Coffee Exchange sessions, our Open Day on 13th September 2023 at Marlborough Town Hall to which all members are invited and our Kennet Talk for which we are delighted to welcome Robin Nelson as our guest speaker following our Annual Meeting. We will also host another of our lunches to welcome our new members. We will have several vacancies on the Committee following our AGM as some Trustees will be standing down after completing their terms of office. Can you help to support your u3a by offering some time? No previous experience is required. Please contact chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk for an informal discussion or if you would like further information.

Coffee Exchange: Marianna Baschiera from the Greatwood Charity, based at Clench Common, came to talk to us at the Coffee Exchange in July on how racehorses help to change lives and create futures. Marianna has a masters degree in teaching mindfulness based programmes which has helped her develop the well-being provision at Greatwood. The Charity was established to help former racehorses find a new home and a job outside racing. During the rehabilitation process, it was discovered that the animals could help both children and adults during difficult times. Marianna told several stories about individuals who have benefitted from regular visits to the stables – people with physical or mental problems who found strength from their contact with the horses. Some young people have taken their interest forward and are now employed within the racing industry. Marianna also mentioned that for those who were overpowered by the size of the horses, they keep goats and even chickens to help by providing the physical contact which is so important in the therapy. The audience was fascinated by the stories and moved by the success of the therapy. The charity is doing amazing work for individuals and several of our members put forward ideas on how they could publicise they work more widely.

Upcoming Events – details in main text

31st August at 10:15am:
Coffee Exchange

13th September:
u3a Day

25th Oct at 2:15pm:
AGM

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

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

The next Coffee Exchange session will be on Thursday 31st August 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 u3a in Kennet member Tony Globe who will update us on the establishment of the new Family History Group. In recent years there's been a rapidly growing interest in researching family histories, prompted in part by programmes such as "Who Do You Think You Are?" and "Long Lost Family". At the same time technology is making more and more information accessible online. Tony Globe, Leader of the Family History Group, will show us what is available today and how it can help us to build our own family history. Tony will be using examples based on his research into his own family, and there may be some surprises in store...! If you are interested in delving into your own family's past, bring paper and pen to make notes. 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 July talk Dams and the World Water Problem was by one of our own members, Jonathan Hinks. The title of the talk excited much interest even before the event. A reliable source of water must be one of the most important issues facing the world. Certainly Jonathan's talk gave us plenty of information on how dams are helping to solve the problem. His talk ranged over the increase in the size of world population, the history of dams and the varied uses of dams including irrigation, hydropower, water supply, flood control, and navigation. His vast experience in the field was obvious from the detailed and interesting stories of the construction of various dams. Jonathan has worked in over 18 different countries designing and advising on dam construction. His talk was peppered with amusing anecdotes of his personal experiences and illustrated with 49 slides. We are extremely fortunate to have such a distinguished expert among our members and we are very grateful for his stimulating talk delivered with his wry sense of humour. During his talk Jonathan referred to his particular interest in earthquakes and reservoirs. If anyone is interested in his further paper on this subject, it is available on the u3a in Kennet website. A recording was made of the talk and it is also available for anyone who was unable to attend the talk in person. This can be found on <https://youtu.be/uy75-30pZ9Q>

Membership Renewals: Thank you to all of those who have renewed their membership since early July – well over 450 so far. Mike Morison, your Membership Secretary would particularly like to thank those who have followed his instructions with regards to the bank account to be used and referencing their online payments. Wrong accounts and lack of membership number on the BACS payment can take a lot of extra time. On that note, there is one payment of £12 which was made on 21 July @ 11.24 with the only reference of 'Shakeshaft WA White'. Could the person who made this payment contact Mike at membershipsec@u3ainkennet.org.uk so that he can process this renewal (it is presumed it was a renewal?). Having done 450 renewals means that there are some 200 that haven't renewed yet – you should have received a reminder recently. It is also recognised that some will not wish to renew for a number of reasons. Please let Mike know if that applies to you so that he can update our membership database and stop bothering you!



u3a
in Kennet
OPEN DAY

Make the most of life once you're no longer in full time work by exploring new ideas, skills and interests with your local u3a.

Come and discover more on
Wednesday 13th September 2023
from **10.00am to 3.00pm** at
Marlborough Town Hall

Here in Marlborough and the surrounding area we have over 600 members with over 60 interest groups covering indoor and outdoor activities, learning and fun – from Art History to Wine Appreciation, Languages to Table Tennis.

Start a new hobby or improve and enjoy an existing one. Meet new people, make new friends.

We will be exhibiting what we do and will be on hand to answer your questions. Come and join us.

Look out for us and see us on www.u3ainkennet.org.uk

u3a in Kennet Charity No. 1022692 Established 1992

u3a Open Day: It is almost here again and set for Wednesday 13th September between 10.00am and 3.00pm for the general public in the Marlborough Town Hall, ground floor Court Room. The Mayor and Town Crier will formally open the displays at 10.30am. Inside there will be fourteen tables displaying posters and exhibits from our 66 groups. There will be music, including live pieces from our recorder ensembles, a video film and free light refreshments organised by our Really Useful Group, with plenty of tables and chairs set out. To date we have 56 of the 76 volunteers who have offered to attend and support their groups confirmed. Please will those who have not yet been in touch with Jeff Hide know of their attendances and times. Most do an hour's slot. For the remaining 603 members of our u3a, please do attend and bring a friend or neighbour to see what we offer our community. If you have any queries, please do contact Jeff Hide via vicechair@u3ainkennet.org.uk or on 01672 511774.

Group News

Global History Group: The new Global History group will kick off this autumn. We are looking to meet monthly in person to collaborate on: devising a programme for discussion; and then to look at differing aspects of the chosen theme over several meetings. In essence we will seek to broaden and improve our understanding of our world by looking at:

- The history of the world's great civilisations – e.g. China, India, Japan, Central America, West Africa, the Middle East, Russia.
- The history across all civilisations of common themes – e.g. Human Migration, Spices and Plant Migration, Empire, Nationalism, Autocracy.

These are merely suggestions. The group will evolve to meet and develop the interests of the members. It is envisaged that a few core members will volunteer to rotate the delivery of an introduction in each meeting – others may simply wish to attend. If you are interested in joining this new group, then please contact Iain Goodfellow at iaindsg@aol.com or Georgie Neville at georgienville@u3ainkennet.org.uk

Anyone for Tennis? This offer has come in from Peter May, one of our u3a in Kennet members. After the Covid lockdowns, tennis rapidly became one of the nation's favourite sports – not only is it largely socially distanced but it is a great way to exercise gently in the fresh air. So how about forming a u3a tennis group? Tennis is a game for all ages and Marlborough Tennis has a healthy proportion of its members of a similar age profile to u3a, so it goes to show you are never too young or old to pick up a tennis racket.



Ability need not be a barrier either with the club having a range of players, from new starters to rusty rackets to good league standard players. More important is your desire to have fun and enjoy the sport. We find many tennis players played tennis in their youth and then work, families and more got in the way and only when retirement came along did tennis feature on the agenda once more. Marlborough Tennis is

situated at the top of Port Hill, with the same entrance as the Golf Club. The club has six courts and invites u3a in Kennet to make use of these fabulous facilities by establishing a tennis group. The club can make either one or two courts available for a nominal charge of £10 per court per hour so for a doubles match, that is just £2.50 per hour each which is remarkable value. Ideally, u3a would have a regular slot that Marlborough Tennis will reserve and book. We can be flexible on what day and time suit you, but as a guide any day from Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm would be good. Interested in taking up tennis? Then get in touch with Alison Dewar or Georgie Neville via groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Quiz Group: The Group will be starting up with their usual monthly online quizzes in early September following our summer break. If you would like to join us, we are always happy to include new members for our sociable and informative quizzes. Each quiz (on the first Thursday of each month, starting at 2.30pm) consists of 5 rounds of 12 questions each on subjects from Art to History, Geography, Politics, Science, Quotations and many more. The teams consist of 3 or 4 and are swapped around every month so there is plenty of time to meet new u3a members. If you would like to join our group, please contact Mike Morison on quizzing@u3ainkennet.org.uk - He looks forward to hearing from you.

History Group and Current Affairs Groups: Michael Hart is standing down as Group Leader for both the History and Current Affairs groups. After more than 15 years of leading the u3a in Kennet English and European History and the Current Affairs Groups Michael Hart has stepped down at the age of 95. Following an impressive career in education as a history teacher, headmaster of schools in the UK and overseas (International schools in Brussels and Luxembourg) and then a school inspector, Michael was awarded the CBE. He moved into Marlborough in 2006 and soon joined u3a in Kennet taking on the leadership of the European and subsequently the English History Groups. Many members of the History Groups joined at that time and have benefitted enormously from Michael's extensive knowledge, dedication and enthusiasm for the subject. He is widely respected in the Groups for his candid, balanced and concise lectures, his kindness & humanity and his wider approach as a European. His strong sense of fairness sees clearly the necessity for future diplomatic *rapprochement* in the interests of peace, trade and culture. Having lived through and loathed the rise of Nazism as a schoolboy in Germany Michael is chary of the disruptions of populist movements and believes NATO is essential to collective European Defence. He has argued constantly for peace, for justice and a free unbiased rule of law, a free press and accountable governance. He advocates the intrinsic dignity of nations seeking stable and collaborative, working solutions to world problems and the protection and betterment of their peoples. In addition to his role as a Group Leader Michael also supported u3a in Kennet as a member of the Executive Committee from 2007-2009 in the role of the Charity Commission contact.

Qigong Group: The Coffee Exchange in June featured an inspirational talk by Felicity Simpson about Qigong for which a u3a in Kennet Group is now formed. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact qigong@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

Current Affairs – relaunch: Jill Turner (Chair) has taken over as the Group Leader. The Group will meet from 10.00am on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Friends Meeting House in Marlborough and on the 3rd Friday mornings from 10.00am using the WHYPAY phone conferencing system. The Current Affairs Group considers a wide range of topical issues which are introduced briefly by Group members prior to a wider discussion.

Recent topics have included:

- Stagflation' and the economy
- The Russian war against Ukraine
- Nuclear deterrence
- Illegal immigration
- Wokism: the new intolerance
- The relationship between the Civil Service and Ministers
- Is there a future for the United Kingdom?
- China and Taiwan

New members are welcome – please contact Jill if you would like further details on chair@u3aikenet.org.uk.

Other News

Ian Keel: Ian died in July aged 89. He was a long-time keen member of the Birdwatching Group, on the committee of the former Travel Group and, with his wife Juliet, ran the Thursday Coffee Club for many years.

Town and Tower Magazine: Members may be interested to know that u3a in Kennet has secured further local media coverage with a couple of articles in the August edition of 'Tower and Town'.

Lifelong Learning Resources: The u3a Trust provides free online learning sessions every month. For details, see: u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events. Members may also be interested in the free online journal: 'The Conversation' found at theconversation.com/uk, noted for its academic strength and political independence (see About Us) and its wide coverage of important topics.

The Meadow Brown Butterfly: *An article sent to us by Allan Skipper*

This butterfly is one of our most common. In this year's Big Butterfly Count it comes second to the Red Admiral with just a few more days to the end of the count. Other names for it are Brown Meadow Eyed, Golden Meadow Eyed and a Meadow Brown Argos; the eyes referring to the wing spots. Lepidopterists refer to this butterfly as one of the browns. In this country there are eleven species of brown butterfly including the Small Heath, the Ringlet and even the Marbled White ... clearly not a brown butterfly. Eggs are laid from July to October and the caterpillar grows from October to May. These larvae feed on grasses and turn greener as they shed their skin six times during growth. The larvae then pupate for three to four weeks before emerging as adults from July to September. The wings of the Meadow Brown feature in "The garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch. A demon is wearing the butterfly's wings and having a word with a sinner ... saying possibly "You are doomed". If you can find these wings in the painting please let Allan know where to look. He has tried.



Marlborough LitFest 2023: Tickets are now on sale for the 14th Marlborough LitFest (28th September – 1st October). The 2023 festival offers more than 40 events with an exciting mix of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, children’s authors and free schools events, workshops and LitFest’s annual Big Town Read taking place in the historic market town over the festival weekend. This year’s line-up includes 2023 LitFest Golding Speaker Sebastian Barry, Natalie Haynes, Robert Harris, Amanda Craig, Matthew Rice, Tracy Borman, Kate Summerscale, Daniel Finkelstein, Mike Brearley, Daljit Nagra and Frank Cottrell-Boyce. Festival brochures are available at The

White Horse Bookshop in Marlborough and libraries around Wiltshire or to view online; for more information, visit marlboroughlitfest.org. You can book tickets online through their webpage, by phone at 0333 666 3366, or in person at The White Horse Bookshop, Marlborough



Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Bay Meadows Project: Following the presentation about the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Bay Meadows project earlier this year the site will be opened at 2.00pm on Wednesday 20th September. Please note that the location of the event will be reached by a 15–20 minute walk from the access to the reserve, including a steep and potentially slippery incline. You are invited to join them for a tour of the site and drinks and light refreshments to celebrate the opening and all that has already been achieved for wildlife and people with the help of their supporters, partners and volunteers. Please let them know if you are going to attend by 1st September by contacting Luke Maundrell, c/o Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Elm Tree Court, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1NJ or via email at LukeM@wiltshirewildlife.org. Please also let them know when replying if you have any dietary or accessibility requirements.

Newsletter Editor: We are still 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

u3a in Kennet Committee



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