



# Newsletter

March 2024

## WELCOME

Easter is coming and with it our full programme of u3a in Kennet



events and Talks beginning with a relaxing morning of seasonal poetry readings from our Poetry Appreciation Group at our Coffee Exchange on 28<sup>th</sup> March at the Town Hall in Marlborough. (further details below).

In this Newsletter we have news from several of our Groups too along with details of recent meetings and visits.

We wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable Easter and look forward to seeing you at future events.

## EVENTS

### Coffee Exchange: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at the Town Hall in Marlborough

Join us for a morning of poetry readings from Mary Caudell and our Poetry Appreciation Group. Adopting a seasonal theme the readings will consider aspects of new beginnings allowing us to pause from busy times, to reflect and to ponder on deeper issues.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Further details in the main text.**

**Coffee Exchange;** Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024.  
'Enjoying poetry; spring and new beginnings'. Mary Caudell and our Poetry Appreciation Group

**Kennet u3a Talk: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024** at Kennet Valley Hall in Lockeridge.

**Coffee Exchange:** 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Town Hall, Marlborough.

Here are the links to our web page [u3ainkennet.org.uk](http://u3ainkennet.org.uk) and Facebook page [www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet](https://www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet)

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

### **Kennet u3a Talk, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

'Should Have taken the Medicine' will be the title of our second Kennet Talk of 2024. It will be presented by Terry Bracher who is the Heritage Services Manager for Wiltshire Council and based in Chippenham at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. Through a selection of archives, he will be providing an insight into some aspects of the history of medicine from medieval times to the early nineteenth century, particularly in Wiltshire. Terry was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2021 for his work on services to Heritage and Public Libraries in Wiltshire. Further details about the Talk to follow after Easter.

### **Report on the Coffee Exchange: February 2024, 'Winter prepares for spring'.**

Sonia Wright a well known local horticulturist led us through the jobs needed in the garden to take us from Winter into Spring. Her detailed instructions on the varying plants were listened to carefully – notes being taken and Sonia has since contacted some members with her written notes – at their request. Her lifelong passion for plants shone through her talk and in answering the wide variety of questions put to her.



Sonia produces all her own plants from seeds and propagation. For many years, she ran a stall at Marlborough Market. Generously she brought along a large selection of glorious plants that many of the audience purchased on the day. Nowadays Sonia is running courses on gardening at her base in Ogbourne St George and more recently at the Marlborough Summer School.

### **New members lunch 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024**



The new members lunch was held at Kennet Valley Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024. As the membership of our u3a has enlarged, so have the new members' lunches increased and, in consequence, the manner of the event has become well established. The object of these events is to enable new members to meet with other new members, meet and discuss groups and activities with group leaders and committee members and feel part of a caring organisation.

Planning is important and our thanks go to Annette, our Secretary for the time-consuming administration work. The catering has, as previously, been organised by our Really Useful Group led by Committee member Alison Dewar working with Dan Le Fevre, the caterer, who

are much appreciated. The quality and choice of menu have been first class and specifically praised by the diners.

The recent lunch on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March was well attended by 34 new members who were able to have conversations with 22 Group leaders and committee members and see a selection 24 posters describing the activities of our groups. Our Chair, Jill Turner, opened and oversaw the event receiving many expressions of support from those present. Plans will soon be underway for the next welcome to new members. Jeff Hide Vice Chair.

## GROUPS NEWS

### BOOKS

**New members welcome to Books!** The Books! Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 2 to 4pm usually in members' homes in and around Marlborough. We discuss a wide variety of books – mainly fiction so far. Titles have included: 'Bournville' by Jonathan Coe, 'The Marriage Portrait' by Maggie O'Farrell and – our current read– 'Glory' by NoViolet Bulawayo.

The Group has six members currently and would like to expand to make sure we have a 'critical mass' at each meeting because not everyone can attend every meeting (despite the lure of tea and cake and stimulating discussion). If you are interested please contact the Group Leader:

[BOOKS@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:BOOKS@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

More books! – Marlborough LitFest 2024



The LitFest celebrates its 15th year in 2024 from 26–29 September and the festival programme is currently being compiled offering fiction, non-fiction, poetry, children's authors and free family activities over the festival weekend. The first announcement for the 2024 line-up is LitFest Patron, Sir Simon Russell Beale, talking about his memoir, *A Piece of Work*, on the evening of Sunday 29 September. Beale will be interviewed at LitFest by Emma Smith, Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of

Oxford, who has published and lectured widely on William Shakespeare.

The festival has just launched its fifth national 'Love Books' competition, to celebrate and share a love of reading. Explain your choice of a favourite book, poem or play in up to 750 words, with winners in each age category winning £300; runners-up will each win £100. The

annual competition is open to anyone across the country in three age groups: 13–15 years, 16–19 years and 20 years and above. The closing deadline for entries is 28 June 2024.

Friends of Marlborough LitFest benefit from priority booking for festival events and a brochure. The full programme will be announced in July when tickets go on sale. For more information and 2024 festival programme updates, see [www.marlboroughlitfest.org](http://www.marlboroughlitfest.org)

### Craft Group

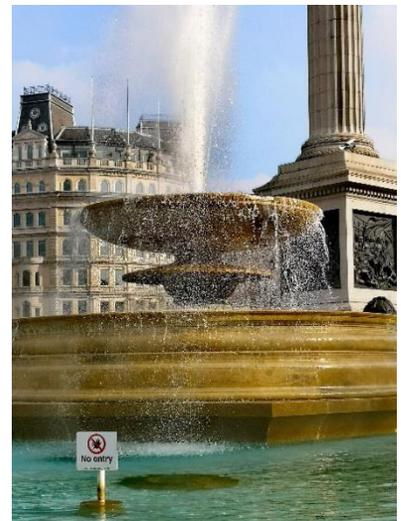
The Craft Group members have knitted some Fish and Chip jumpers and hats that have been sent to a charity that will forward them to babies who need them in Africa.

“Fish and Chip” Babies are so called because they are sent home wrapped in newspaper being too poor to afford clothing. The charity asks for jumpers to be knitted in bright colours, and definitely no white as that is the colour of funerals. For more information please contact Group Leader Kath Pocock. Email: [craft@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:craft@u3ainkennet.org.uk)



### u3a in Kennet Day Trips Group

On March 8<sup>th</sup> the sun shone for the u3a in Kennet's first daytrip of 2024. Fifty-one members made the most of a beautiful DRY day in London. We were dropped off in Westminster and the group dispersed to their chosen venues. Some people stayed close by, visiting the Abbey or the Churchill War Rooms. Others went as far as King's Cross to see Tom Hanks's immersive Moonwalkers exhibition. Some of us were more traditional visiting the National Gallery and the newly refurbished National Portrait Gallery then grabbing a cheap lunch in St Martin-in-the-Fields Crypt restaurant. Others took a leisurely walk along the Embankment to see the John Singer Sargent Exhibition at the Tate Britain or strolled through a very sunny St James's Park. Intrepid travellers took a riverboat from Westminster Pier and sailed down to Greenwich while others paid an interesting visit to the Supreme Court saying that they do very good tea and cake. I think most of us had sore feet at the end of the day but everyone enjoyed it. We're looking forward to organising a trip to Oxford in May.



Group Leaders: Kate Morrison and Juliet McGregor. Email: [daytrip@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:daytrip@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

## OBITUARY

We were sad to hear that Lizann Warr passed away on 27th February 2024 aged 90 and her funeral held on Friday 15th March. Lizann was a member of u3a in Kennet before becoming a member of Pewsey Vale u3a and an 'Associate' member of Kennet. She was an active member of the Controversial Current Affairs Group prior to the pandemic and latterly a member of the Theatre Group.

## OTHER NEWS

### Invitation for potential school governors

u3a in Kennet is continuing to develop our educational partnership with Marlborough College and other local schools with early planning now underway for our third one day joint event building on our Climate Change event in 2021 and our Media Day in 2023. Further details to follow.

Jimmy Scragg, Deputy Head at the College leads the College partnership and outreach work and is looking to recruit volunteers to be governors of two schools in Swindon with which the College has links. Good governance can make a significant difference to the quality of a school, and to the education its young people receive. The commitment involved is around 6–8 committee and board meetings through the year, one or two visits to the school per term, and assisting with the occasional panel hearing which arises from time to time. Expertise in a diverse range of areas is valuable: education (primary or secondary), finance or business, HR, health and safety, social work, the law, planning or construction to name a few. If you would be interested and would like to discuss the possibility further, please get in touch with Jimmy at [JRBS@marlboroughcollege.org](mailto:JRBS@marlboroughcollege.org).

### Members' offer from the Parade Cinema, Marlborough. (<https://www.theparadecinema.com>)

The Parade Cinema has approached u3a in Kennet with an offer to host a morning screening, once a month (probably the first Thursday) with a ticket price of £12 for a minimum of 40 u3a people. Filter coffee and a croissant would be available too at a discounted price. Films would be selected from the following listing: [DCP | Distribution \(bfi.org.uk\)](https://www.bfi.org.uk). In order to assess the potential level of interest from our members so that we can respond to the Cinema please email: [Secretary@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@u3ainkennet.org.uk) if you might consider taking up this offer.

**Shalbourne Garden Club annual sale.** The sale will be held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2024 from 10am to 12 o'clock at Shalbourne village hall, Kingston Road, Shalbourne, SN83QF offering plants, garden accessories and books. (Cash only) The hall is opposite the village shop where cash can be obtained and refreshments purchased.



Jill Turner  
*Chair and Charity  
Commission Contact*



Jeff Hide  
*Vice Chair*



Alastair Sheen  
*Treasurer*



Annette Weaver  
*Secretary*



Mike Morison  
*Membership*



Jill Chambers  
*Speaker Secretary*



Hamzah  
*Technology*



Alison Dewar  
*Committee Member*



Georgina Neville  
*Committee Member*



David Moakes  
*Publicity*