



Newsletter

August 2024

WELCOME



Our late summer Newsletter is a 'bumper' edition featuring more news from our Groups along with details of some potential new groups, forthcoming u3a in Kennet events.

Other local news includes an invitation to become a film

reviewer for 'Marlborough News' and details of a series of local music study days which may be of interest too.

We thank many of you for renewing your membership subscription enabling you to continue to benefit from our groups and meetings. If you have not already renewed please do so by replying to the recent email from Mike our Membership secretary (membershipsec@u3ainkennet.org.uk).

As we look ahead now to the autumn we are preparing for our 2024 Open Day on 25th September at the Town Hall and our Annual General Meeting with the next Kennet Talk on 30th October at Kennet Valley Hall in Lockeridge. We have more interesting Coffee Exchange sessions in the autumn and are planning ahead already for the 2025 programme of events.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Coffee Exchange; from 10.15am on Thursday 19th September 2024 Town Hall, Marlborough.

u3a in Kennet Open Day, 25th September 2024 (10.00 – 13.00), Town Hall, Marlborough.

Further details in the Newsletter page

Group Leaders' meeting, 25th September 2024 (14.00 – 16.00) Town Hall, Marlborough.

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

COFFEE EXCHANGE SESSION 18th JULY 2024. 'The Skill and will to survive', Mike Morison.



All the windows upstairs at the Town Hall were open on 18th July. The sun was beating down outside – the best day of the week. We met to hear our Membership Secretary Mike Morison advising us on how to survive misadventures and disasters. Mike had learnt about survival during his career in the Royal Air Force. He attended courses, and training exercises including sea survival and a NATO winter exercise in Norway. He experienced the physical dangers we may face in a

crisis. He explained what we should prioritise, how we can improvise and how we can improve our own chances at such times. He had a few very practical suggestions for any adventures we may undertake including carrying a survival blanket (which are surprisingly small), some sugary sweets and, of course, always carry water! There is also the question of the 'will' and Mike had stories of some survivors of plane crashes in South America who certainly had a very strong will to survive. Make sure you remember all the advice – it can be lifesaving!

Photo by John Slaughter

KENNET TALK, 24th JULY 2024 Working with the Ghosts of Hampton Court Palace.

Photo by John Slaughter.

Sarah Slater came to visit us to introduce us to the Ghosts of Hampton Court.



Sarah is a White Badge Guide at Hampton Court Palace where she takes tours dressed in costume. Her costume at Kennet Valley Hall was a black silk Victorian mourning dress complete with ruches, buttons and bustles which she had made herself.

She began her talk telling us about the traditions of mourning which began during the reign of Queen Victoria. The death of Prince Albert, Victoria's husband, at a relatively early age and the Queen's decision to live in black meant that society developed all sorts of taboos about mourning which were reflected in fashion. That and the rise in spiritualism which took place at the time also led to a strong belief in the existence of ghosts. Well known believers included Arthur Conan Doyle. The literature of the time reflected this belief as in 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. Sarah

speculated on what ghosts really are and presented us with various definitions. But how many of us actually believed in ghosts she asked?

Hampton Court was given to Henry VIII by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey when he was trying to placate the King. It was lived in by British Monarchs from Henry VIII to George III. There was some extensive remodelling by Christopher Wren during the reign of William and Mary. However, there are still many parts exactly as they were in Tudor times. More recently the Palace has gained the reputation of being the most haunted place in Britain. Most of the ghosts seem to have been ghosts of women and associated with Henry VIII which may not be surprising given his history!

Of all the ghosts it is the Grey Lady who is talked of most. She has been identified as Dame Sybel Pen who was nurse to Henry VIII's children and is reported to have begun haunting when her grave at the local parish church was relocated.

Many of the stories of ghosts were reported by the occupants of the Grace and Favour apartments. When the Palace ceased to be used by the Royal Family, the building was split into over 100 apartments and these were allocated to retired royal servants and widows of many who contributed to Court or military life. Among these was Lady Olave Baden Powell who reported seeing the ghost of Anne Boleyn. Sarah explained that this was not likely as the room where the ghost was seen was the old buttery and it seems an odd place for the former Queen to haunt. (The buttery was a room off the Great Hall where the butts of wine and beer were stored.)

A very odd story is the of Catherine Howard's ghost. Catherine, Henry's fifth wife was arrested at Hampton Court when Henry believed she was being unfaithful. She escaped the jailors and ran down a corridor to try and plead with Henry – she did not know he had already left the Palace. At one point in the corridors outside the Chapel she cried out. She was retaken and sent to the Tower of London and later executed. Nowadays there are numerous reports of her ghost being seen in this corridor and more intriguingly there have been many instances of modern day tourists fainting at the point in the corridor. Sarah told us that only the week before she had met a lady in Kent who had fainted there and still had no explanation why this had happened.

Sarah asked for the audience to put up their hands if they believed in the existence of some sort of 'ghosts'. 14 hands went up in the audience of nearly 80. This apparently is less than the national average. We are obviously a cynical lot. However, Sarah's talk was entertaining and informative and enjoyed by all. (*This piece is longer than some of our other reports because it was not possible to record the talk on video for copyright reasons.*)

HELP FOR YOUR COMMITTEE

We are delighted with the increasing membership of our u3a and the positive feedback we receive about the events, talks and services along with the range of interest groups that are available.

As we look ahead to next year some of the Committee members will be coming to the end of their terms of office and will need to be replaced with new members so that we can continue with our range of activities. Your Committee members are all volunteers in line with the u3a Principles and have a variety of interesting roles. We would appreciate extra support now to enable us to maintain and to develop further our u3a into the future.

Please do consider offering to join us. No particular skills or experience are required aside from enthusiasm, willingness to learn and to contribute in the team to support your u3a. Roles can be shared too. We need to ensure a strong and active Committee of willing volunteers so that we can continue to provide our members with the varied and interesting programme of events. Please call Jill Turner (Chair) on 07900 223345 for a conversation (without commitment) if you are interested to find out more.

GROUPS NEWS

GRANTS FOR GROUPS

We have some funds available to support Groups to purchase items of equipment for example cycling maps, jacks for short mat bowls and a table tennis table. Typically a percentage of the cost is provided and the Group members fund the remainder that is required. Please contact Alastair our Treasurer for further details: treasurer@u3ainkennet.org.uk.

SPANISH 3 GROUP

Lorenza Johnston and the Spanish 3 Group shared the photo of their enjoyable summer lunch which was held in July.



SCIENCE DISCUSSION GROUP – INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS.

Our Science News Discussion Group has an online Discussion Forum (a blog) for sharing the latest science news and science related issues. Recent posts include items of general interest to all members such as one about the recent discovery that the Stonehenge altar stone originated in Scotland and a new blood test for dementia which may be able to detect the disease up to 10 years before symptoms become apparent. If you would like to join the forum to read about interesting scientific issues and possibly to contribute too please contact the Group Leader: Nick Stedman sciencetalk@u3ainkennet.org.uk

Stonehenge discovery

3 Comments / Geology / Nick Stedman

The altar stone has now been analysed and found to have come from NE Scotland. The news announcement in Nature is here. The detailed geology report is here. What motivated those people to move a 6 tonne stone from 800 kms away quite apart from how did they do it? Was NE Scotland particularly important [...]

[Read More »](#)

Predicting Alzheimers

Leave a Comment / Biology / Nick Stedman

News that it may be possible to detect the likelihood of getting Alzheimers from the detection of blood biomarkers up to 10 or even 20 years ahead of any symptoms. The article published in Nature can be read here.

[Read More »](#)

NEW GROUPS – CHESS



Chess players are invited to join our proposed new Group which will meet regularly. We have already received an offer to lead the group and boards and chess clocks are available too. Please contact groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk if you are interested to join the new group.

WALKING TENNIS

Our new Walking Tennis Group has begun now with regular weekly sessions from 10am at the Marlborough Tennis courts. For further details please contact: walking.tennis@u3ainkennet.org.uk

LOCAL BUS TRAVEL GROUP

Last month we shared details about the new group which will explore the variety of bus journeys available from Marlborough with planned trips and days out. We have also received requests for book groups recently too.

Please do let us know if you are interested in any of these new Groups or have any suggestions or requests for other Groups. Email: groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk . We would be very happy to explore suggestions and to support the setting up of new groups.

THANK YOU TO GROUP LEADERS

We are pleased to acknowledge two of our Group Leaders who have stood down recently. Sarah Foxall has led Spanish Group 1 for a number of years and continues to lead the Book Circle. Sarah has also been our Membership Secretary and the joint Group Leader of our Theatre Group. Julia Tyler has led our Books Group and has handed over to Iain Goodfellow who also leads our Global History Group.

Thank you to them both and to all of our Leaders who sustain our many and varied groups.

POLITE REQUEST OF BEHALF OF GROUP LEADERS

If you are unable to attend a meeting please do inform your Group Leader both to assist with catering arrangements and also to avoid any undue concern about your wellbeing.

OPEN DAY - UPDATE FROM JEFF HIDE, VICE CHAIR (vicechair@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

Wednesday 25 September 2024 will be our next u3a Open Day and the ground floor of the town hall in Marlborough called the Court Room will again be open to the public, including our members, from 10am. However, this year, after many years of full involvement by most Group Leaders and many u3a members the doors will close at 1pm leaving the room available for a Group Leaders' meeting between 2pm and 4pm.

In the past three years the annual Open Day has been most successful in producing new members, many of whom previously knew nothing of u3a. Publicity is essential to retain existing members and obtain new ones to replace those who move on. In the past year we lost members and also lost groups where there was no longer an interest in the subject. However, this is normal and quite proper as u3a is based upon interest groups – groups do not exist without the interest to justify them. It is most satisfying to find new groups being formed because there is the necessary interest. For example, Embroidery went and Craft has established itself, Music Appreciation went and Music Maestros is now in its third year, Family History is also well appreciated. There are many examples and these will all be in the new Year Book after the next AGM at which time we need to find some more members to join the committee – please! Dozens of u3a members have done their turn as a committee member over the years.

At the Open Day the activities of our Executive Committee of Trustees, Group Leaders and their groups will be represented by the usual posters. There will be a mini concert by our Recorder Groups in the morning and stands showing the work of the Digital Photography and new Crafts Groups. The Art Group will also be active. Tea, coffee and biscuits at no cost to the visitors and members will be provided by our Really Usefuls group.

I would appreciate it if a few experienced Group Leaders could attend also.

OBITUARY

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Lexie Bray. Lexie joined u3a in Kennet in 2015 and passed away in June after a short illness.

OTHER NEWS. HELP WITH USING THE INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

We are planning to offer a workshop session for members who are interested to find out more about using technology (including smart phones, laptops and iPads) and the internet.

Staying safe online, recognising financial scams and coping with online banking are topics which can present challenges to everyone. Further details will follow.

CALL FOR FILM REVIEWERS

Marlborough News (<https://marlborough.news/>) has invited u3a in Kennet members to join a panel of contributors providing short reviews of films they have seen at the Parade Cinema in Marlborough (<https://www.theparadecinema.com/>). The reviews will be published online.

Please email Neil Goodwin to find out more about the request: neil@marlborough.news

REPEAT ADVERTISEMENT FOR A SCHOOL GOVERNOR POST: PRESHUTE SCHOOL

This successful village school attracts pupils from a wide area. Could you help them to support the school leaders in their efforts to make their very good school even better?

Governors are not involved with the day-to-day running of the school. Their role is strategic: setting the school's vision, planning its direction, overseeing its finances and holding its leadership to account. Training is given and they are a supportive group.

You **do not** need

- A background in education
- A knowledge of how primary schools are run.

You **do** need

- A desire to contribute to the local community

- An interest in improving the educational outcomes for their children
- Some time to spare – a few hours each month
- A commitment to attend occasional early evening meetings and, preferably, spend a little time in school talking to children
- Basic competence with email and Word documents.

If you are interested, please contact the Chair of Governors, Susan Joslin, susanj@preshute.wilts.sch.uk.

ROBIN NELSON'S MUSIC APPRECIATION STUDY DAYS OCTOBER 2024 to MARCH 2025

Robin is a tutor, composer, conductor, lecturer, examiner and formerly the Director of Music at Marlborough College. Following his presentation 'Great Musical Moments' at our Kennet Talk on 25th October 2023 Robin and Sally Nelson invite interested members of u3a in Kennet to join his study day series. The study days are intended for musical enthusiasts, whatever their musical background or experience, offering some insights into the music and lives of the great composers.

Where? Hunter's House, High Street, Avebury, parking in nearby village car park,

When? **STUDY DAY ONE:** Two Song cycles: Schubert "Die Schöne Müllerin" and Schumann "Dichterliebe". Saturday 26th October & Sunday 27th October

STUDY DAY TWO: Debussy and Impressionism: L'après midi d'un faune, La Mer, Nocturnes and Estampes Saturday 16th November & Sunday 17th November.

STUDY DAY THREE: Opera Seria- Opera Buffa: Handel "Giulio Cesare" and Mozart "Cosi fan tutte. Saturday 7th December & Sunday 8th December

STUDY DAY FOUR: Four Viennese Chamber Music Masterworks: Mozart Serenata for winds "Gran Partita", Haydn "Emperor Quartet", Beethoven "Archduke" Trio, Schubert String Quintet in C. Saturday January 25th & Sunday 26th January

STUDY DAY FIVE: Three ground-breaking works by Monteverdi: L'Orfeo (1607) Vespers (1610) and Coronation of Poppea (1643) Saturday February 22nd & Sunday February 23rd



Annette Weaver
Secretary



Mike Morison
Membership



Jill Chambers
Speaker Secretary



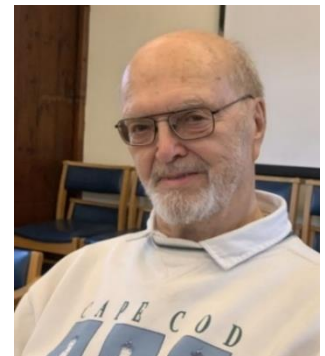
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