



# Newsletter

July 2025

## WELCOME



Photo: Susan Turner

This month's Newsletter shares news from some of our groups who have been out and about during the summer months.

We are also pleased to share more information about our Special Interest Day on '**Global Tipping Points**' in September.

## REPORT ON THE COFFEE EXCHANGE 19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2025

### 'UNDER THE COVERS AT THE MARLBOROUGH LITFEST' by JULIA TYLER

Julia Tyler, the vice chairman of the organizing committee for the Marlborough Literary Festival, a Trustee of that charity and a member of u3a in Kennet, came to the Coffee Exchange at the Town Hall on a hot day in June to talk about what goes on behind the scenes in the setting up and running of the highly successful annual LitFest.

During her lively talk, Julia shared many facts and figures. This is the sixteenth year of the LitFest, and the number of events has risen from the original fourteen to forty last year. However, Julia was honest in saying that forty had almost broken the volunteer team and this year there will be thirty. She spoke about the other

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Coffee Exchange**, 10.15 am, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Town Hall, Marlborough. Peter Noble will inform us about the names associated with Savernake Forest.

**Coffee Exchange**, 10.15 am, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Town Hall, Marlborough

**Special Interest Day; 'Global tipping points'**. 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at Marlborough College.

Copy date for the August Newsletter will be 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025. Please send to: [chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk).

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



activities that the charity ran during the course of the year, the sponsors, and how authors are selected.

More than seventy members listened avidly to hear the gossip about visiting celebrities and anecdotes on how disasters have been avoided and successes celebrated. There was a good deal of support among members in the room and many members will enjoy the events when the festival takes place in September.

## KENNET U3A TALK, 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2025.

### 'THE EARLY HISTORY OF PENGUIN BOOKS, THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION' by BARRY EDWARDS

In the Sixties bookshops began to be flooded with paperbacks but they were first introduced in the Thirties. Allen Lane whose family ran the publishers of Bodley Head was travelling from Exeter St Davids Railway Station in 1934 and looking for something to read. He was inspired to create paperback books – Penguins. He took an enormous risk and chose 10 titles which he released on the same day in 1936 – these were pages stuck together with a thicker paper glued to form a cover. (The first editions also had a further loose thin paper cover.) Barry Edwards, the Kennet Talk speaker, has always admired Allen Lane and been fascinated by the phenomenon of the social revolution which made so many books easily accessible to all. At 6d each, they were a fraction of the average 14-shilling price of most hardbacks.

Barry Edwards, a former Head teacher and travel guide, came to Lockeridge to share his fascination with Penguin Books with members of the u3a in Kennet. He brought a quantity of early paperbacks with him. He used these to illustrate the initial very distinctive design of three horizontal bands (as shown on the photograph). The design included several penguins on the cover – penguins with wings at different angles – and the earliest published books also had The Bodley Head mark on the cover. Barry showed the audience all the different early colours: orange for general fiction, green for crime fiction, dark blue for biography, cerise for travel and adventure, red for drama and yellow was defined as miscellaneous – covering crosswords and puzzle books. This innovative cover design helped to establish Penguin as a modern publisher of good books at affordable prices. By 1937, 10 months after the first Penguins were published, one



million copies had been printed. Brian explained that after a dip during World War Two, the company continued to expand and the controversy over the publishing of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' and the subsequent publicity during the famous trial in 1960, made them a household name.

Some years ago Barry began to collect early Penguin books. He has pursued books all over the country in bookshops, charity shops and on the Internet. He originally planned to collect the first 1500 and is still hoping to reach that goal. Of his 1442 books, 1058 are first editions. Barry talked of his missing 58 volumes. If you are interested in helping him find the ones he lacks, he has provided a list of what he already owns which can be shared with you.

With just a few old books, Barry captured and entertained the audience for the best part of an hour. He enlivened this revolutionary story with humour and anecdotes and the whole talk came alive with his obvious passion for the subject.

## NEWS AND UPDATES FROM OUR GROUPS

### SAFETY (OUTDOOR GROUPS)

We sent a copy of our draft document on '**SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR ACTIVITIES OFF THE BEATEN TRACK**' to all members with our April 2025 Newsletter and invited comments by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025. The materials were developed principally for our outdoor groups although the messages and tips are widely relevant.

We are sending the draft document again with this Newsletter and if you have any further comments please send them by email to [groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk). We will finalise the guidance and laminate the final version and make it available to members of our outdoor groups.

### REMINDERS FOR GROUP LEADERS

Our Newsletter for Group Leaders in June 2025 included reminders on a couple of requests:

- Please check that your group's information on the Beacon database and our website is up to date to ensure that the next u3a in Kennet Yearbook is accurate and to assist with the recruitment of prospective members.
- Please inform our Treasurer Alastair Sheen: [treasurer@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@u3ainkennet.org.uk) if you are holding £5.00 or more in cash for your group by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025.

### ART AND ART HISTORY, GROUP 2.

We are pleased to confirm that following strong interest in this subject our second group will begin in October 2025. The Group will meet on the 4th Friday of each month at the Friends' Meeting House in Marlborough. Commencing with 15 members there will be space for more to join.

Jane Fox, Group Leader for our first Art and Art History Group will launch the second group and offers to take over as Leader will be welcome. For more information please contact Jane on [art.history@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:art.history@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

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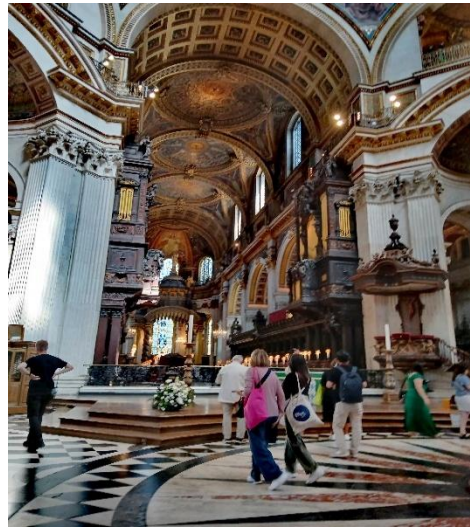


## DAY TRIP GROUP LONODN VISIT, TUESDAY JULY 8<sup>th</sup> 2025

Our journey to London took longer than usual due perhaps to the extra traffic caused by President Macron's Westminster visit and also the sunshine attracting a lot of tourists. Future London trips will be in early spring! Or perhaps earlier – there's an interesting exhibition at the National Gallery to consider ...



*Photograph of the Cartier Exhibition  
at the V&A museum by Heather Lee*



*Photograph of St Paul's Cathedral by  
Diana Foster-Kemp*

Everyone was very good-natured and many were adventurous. Such as the lady who went over to Battersea Power Station to take panoramic photos from its tallest tower to the gentleman in his nineties who jumped on a 381 bus to visit HMS Belfast. Those who had booked tickets for the Cartier Exhibition at the V&A said it was magnificent. Others found joy in the Tate Modern, the Royal Academy and the Guildhall Art Gallery.



*Photograph of the Imperial War  
Museum by Kate Morison*



*Photograph of Leadenhall  
Market by John Lafford*



The artisan Borough Market was crowded but those who went enjoyed it. Of course, St Paul's was a big draw and this time Southwark Cathedral was visited and admired. Some of us more timid ones spent the day in the cool of the Imperial War Museum. Unlike London's bigger museums, it is never crowded and there are no queues. It has four floors of fascinating exhibits. If you remember visiting it 30 years ago, you will find it greatly changed and improved.

Thank you to everyone who came. Kate Morrison, Group Leader

*Photograph of the London view from Lift 109, Battersea Power Station – Sheila Hanson*

## GLOBAL HISTORY GROUP

We had a very successful visit to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford last month. Members made their own way there and browsed the temporary exhibitions before assembling for the first guided tour of the Greek and Aegean World galleries, from 11.30 – 12.30. The collection is rather more substantial than I had imagined, and the tour focused on a few representative highlights, and was most illuminating.

We then gathered for lunch on the terrace of the Ashmolean roof restaurant, where excellent food, drink and company made us late for our second tour of the Ancient Egypt and Sudan galleries from 14.00 – 15.00. Again there was a substantial collection to be introduced to by our somewhat hoarse guide, including very well-preserved mummies and a temple!

The day was greatly enjoyed by all – many thanks to Annette (Weaver) for organising the tours, and her patience in getting us to where we needed to be. Iain Goodfellow, Group Leader.



*Photographs of some of the exhibits by Iain Goodfellow*



## MOTORCYCLE GROUP



Our new Motorcycle group continues to enjoy their summer outings and met recently at Choppers café on the Collingbourne Road..

For more information about the group please contact Greg on [motorbike@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:motorbike@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

*Photograph by Reg Eyre.*

## SCRABBLE GROUP – REMINDER



The Scrabble group is looking for a few more members who are seeking an intellectual challenge and at the same time enjoy social chit chat.

The Group meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at the Group Leader's home in Axford at 2.30pm. They play at a moderate level but don't take the game too seriously.

If you are interested in joining please contact the group leader, Ashley de Safrin: [scrabble@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:scrabble@u3ainkennet.org.uk) or phone 07584 354699

*Photo: Susan Turner*

## SPECIAL INTEREST DAY – 'GLOBAL TIPPING POINTS', 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025, MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

Details about our next joint 'Special Interest Day' with Marlborough College and other local schools have been sent to all members.

Our 2025 all day event follows our two previous Days: 'Climate Change and sustainable futures' in 2021 and our 'Media Day' in 2023. Once again this year's event will be held at the College and members of other u3a's in the Bath and Wiltshire Network will join us too.

We will consider the theme of '**Global tipping points**' from a range of aspects including politics, health, Artificial Intelligence, language and climate change.

Our speakers will include:

- **Jonathan Dent**, Senior Editor, Oxford English Dictionary



- **Professor Sir Muir Gray**, senior public health physician and pioneer in healthcare
- **Heidi Venamore**, Chair of Council Marlborough College, geo-strategic advisor specializing in the Middle East and former Australian government diplomat
- **Professor David Waltham**, Professor of Geophysics, University of London
- **Dr Jeremy Wyatt**, Emeritus Professor of Digital Healthcare and Chair of the British Computer Society's AI in healthcare group.

Once again this year some students will give short presentations on their chosen aspects of the overall theme of the Day and respond to questions from the audience.

Non u3a members are welcome to attend the Day too.



Website:

[www.u3ainkennet.org.uk/global](http://www.u3ainkennet.org.uk/global)

## OTHER NEWS

### UPDATE MARLBOROUGH LITFEST, 25<sup>th</sup> –28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025



25-28 September 2025

For more information and regular 2025 festival programme updates, see the website: [www.marlboroughlitfest.org](http://www.marlboroughlitfest.org)

Tickets for the LitFest are on sale now via the website and by telephone: 0333 666 3366

in person: The White Horse Bookshop, Marlborough  
(please note the bookshop cannot take orders by telephone)



Jill Turner  
*Chair and Charity  
Commission Contact*



Jeff Hide  
*Vice Chair*



Alastair Sheen  
*Treasurer*



Annette Weaver  
*Secretary*



Jill Chambers  
*Speaker Secretary*



Alison Dewar  
*Committee Member*



Hamzah  
*Technology*



Mike Morison  
*Membership & Beacon  
Administrator*



Georgie Neville  
*Committee Member*



Catherine Lockwood  
*Co-opted Committee  
Member*



Gavin Maxwell-Hart  
*Co-opted Committee  
Member*



David Pocock  
*Co-opted Committee  
Member*