



Newsletter

November 2025

CHAIR'S WELCOME



Photo: Susan Turner

In my first introduction, I should like to thank Jill Turner and Jeff Hide for their very successful three years as chair and vice-chair respectively. We do not say goodbye to either, however, as Jill remains as the editor of this Newsletter and has become the joint chair of the Bath & Wilts network of u3a's, and Jeff is remaining on our committee responsibility for compliance.

The u3a in Kennet has many volunteers, primarily on the committee, leading our many groups, or helping in our Usefuls and Technology Support groups, making our u3a the success that it is. We still need new volunteers though to help with all these functions, so please be sure to put yourselves forward if you feel there is a way you could contribute your time and energy.

The u3a's principle is that it is run by its members, for its members, so we will always welcome new help and ideas from our membership.

I am very happy to announce that we have coopted a new member, Julian Beames, to the Committee to look after Information & Publicity. Julian joined the u3a in Kennet early this year after retiring in 2021 from a career in aviation marketing, which included extensive worldwide travel and 10 years living in Toulouse, France.

He is currently a member of the Aviation Group and hopes to join other groups in due course.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Coffee Exchange:

10.15am, 27th November
2025, Town Hall,
Marlborough

Christmas Coffee Extravaganza

10.15am, 11th December
2025, Town Hall,
Marlborough

Coffee Exchange:

10.15am, 22nd January
2026, Town Hall,
Marlborough

The copy date for the
next Newsletter will be
15th December 2025.

Please send to:

newsletter@u3aikkennet.org.uk

Links to our web page
u3aikkennet.org.uk and

He and his partner live in Wootton Rivers, having moved to Wiltshire in 2017. He currently holds the role of Parish Clerk for his village.

Julian's hobbies include painting, which he took up again after retiring, and is interested in all transport related topics.

Mike Morison, Chair, u3a in Kennet

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND KENNET TALK, 22nd OCTOBER 2025,

The 2025 Annual General Meeting was held on 22nd October 2025 and Chair: Jill Turner reflected on the past year 2024 – 2025 which had been a busy year during which membership numbers rose from 708 to 758. Thanks were expressed to Mike Morison our Membership Secretary for managing the 'Beacon' membership database. With more than 70 groups the range of opportunities for members continued to rise with new groups including the Motorcycle Group; Bus Adventures; Book Bunch and Forget-me-not. Thanks were expressed to Alison Dewar and Georgie Neville who co-ordinate and support all groups.

The well attended Coffee Exchanges and Kennet Talks were noted with thanks to Jill Chambers; Speaker Secretary who had organized the very interesting programme with sessions on the role of a County Councillor, Avebury Manor, living healthier and longer, drinking and waste water, the Merchant's House, Wiltshire white horses, the artist M C Escher, the Lit Fest, Savernake Forest, the Wansdyke and fires in Marlborough. The Kennet Talks included sessions on Marlborough underground, Misinformation, the Arab/Israeli dispute and the Penguin paperback revolution as well as a session led by the Art and Art History Group on the local Surrealist Painter: Henry Orlik.

The support for all events with refreshments that was provided by the Usefuls Group as well as Jeff Hide with posters and banners and Hamzah with technical support.

Treasurer Alastair Sheen presented the annual accounts for 2024/25, which had been examined by Kieran Roughan. Alastair noted the healthy financial situation and the availability of grants to support the groups. Furthermore it would not be necessary to increase the membership subscription for the next financial year.

The AGM concluded with the election of Committee members for the year 2025/26. Jill Turner stood down as Chair and Committee member after completing the maximum term of 9 years and details of the full Committee are shown at the end of the Newsletter. Mike Morison was duly elected as Chair with Gavin Maxwell-Hart and David Pocock as joint Vice Chairs. In addition to the Committee thanks were expressed to some non Committee members notably former Chair David Hammond as well as Pat Harper. Jill also expressed appreciation of the support which had been received from John Slaughter who had sadly died during the year.

Jill concluded by thanking the Committee and members for their support and noted that she would continue as Newsletter Editor and will take over from David Hammond as a joint Chair of the Bath and Wiltshire Network of u3a's.

The AGM papers and draft Minutes are available here: <https://u3ainkennet.org.uk/?s=agm&id=8587>

THE WIT AND SONGS OF NOEL COWARD by PETER GILL

The autumn Kennet Talk was a lively look at the work of that most English of Englishmen – Noel Coward. Coward himself insisted that he be known as The Master. He has been described as a polymath and, certainly, he had an astonishingly extensive range of talents. He was a wit, painter, dramatist, actor, novelist, cabaret artiste, director, composer, librettist, comedian, dancer, singer and TV star.

Peter Gill, a vocalist, pianist and actor entertained the audience with stories of Coward's life. Using the epigrams, songs, and writings of Noel himself, Peter talked through Coward's career. He told the story of his friends, his work, and his travels. Peter repeated anecdotes, quoted some verses, and delivered some of Coward's famous witticisms. Interspersed, with the stories Peter played his keyboard, and sang several of Coward's best known songs including *Mrs Worthington*, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, *Don't let's be beastly to the Germans*, *London Pride* finishing with *Mad about the Boy*.

Peter referred to Coward's great friendship with many stars and celebrities including leading members of society and the Royal family. Coward was undoubtedly influential but he was above all an entertainer. Seeking to find a modern figure who may have taken on the mantle from Coward, Peter suggested maybe Stephen Fry, but settled finally on Victoria Wood.

In this case, to say "You had to be there to appreciate it", is not just a phrase but has real meaning. Peter's acting talents, his fluency and singing voice made the afternoon an absorbing entertainment enjoyed by a large audience.

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM OUR GROUPS

QUIZ GROUP

The Quiz Group first met during the Covid lockdown in late 2020 via Zoom. We still meet regularly on-line on the first Thursday of each month (except during the summer months) and, to celebrate our 50th quiz, we intend to meet face-to-face for the first time at a venue in or near Marlborough on Thursday, 4th December in the afternoon. If you would like to participate on this occasion, and possibly join our group, please contact Mike Morison on quizzing@u3ainkennet.org.uk for more details.

IT WORKSHOP



Unfortunately, we have not been able to find a date for another IT workshop this year. However, we intend to run one early in the new year for users of both Apple and Android smartphones and tablets.

A time, date and place should be announced in the next Newsletter.

u3s IN KENNET AND PEWSEY u3a TRAVEL GROUP

Members from Kennet and Pewsey Travel Group enjoyed their second trip of the year taking a five day holiday based in the 4 star Hydro Hotel, Eastbourne.

As always there were lots of outings including Brighton Pavilion, Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Weald and Downland Museum, Rye, Battle, free time in Eastbourne and a steam railway trip, where we indulged in a luxurious afternoon tea. We even viewed the Repair Shop to see if we could be transformed!



OBITUARY

EILEEN NANCARROW

Eileen Nancarrow, friend and fellow Thursday Book Group member has died.

Eileen joined Kennet U3A in its early days. True to her belief in the importance of volunteering, she joined the Committee, becoming Groups Co-ordinator from 2004 to 2006 and Vice-Chair for 2007. At one stage she also acted as Membership Secretary.

Just after joining, Eileen was a member of both the Monday and Thursday walking groups, later joining the Wine Appreciation Group and the Book Group. While she no longer took part in the first two, she was an active member of the last; if there was a clash, Book Group won. If she wasn't there we always felt Eileen's presence.

Eileen embodied the hallmarks of U3A Friendship, Fun, Learning. Several Book Group members recall how welcoming she was when they first joined as well as friendly conversations when they met her on other occasions.

Many of us also knew Eileen in her other lives, the Baby Sitting Circle, playgroup, the school gate, Quakers as well as her other volunteering and working life. Through the Pre-School Playgroups Association she fostered the importance of a child's early years and parental involvement and later in Citizen's Advice Bureau where she began as a volunteer and later ran the bureau in Kennet.

Wherever Eileen was you knew you were likely to be challenged in your thinking. Many a discussion group which included her would have the "rug pulled from under their feet when she came up with a totally different perspective on the matter in hand. Eileen did not shy away from controversy but she was always thoughtful and generous in argument.

Eileen possessed a strong moral compass which guided her life and thinking. While she could be serious, she could also be witty, but her wicked sense of humour never lost its generosity of spirit and of kindness. Unassuming to the last Eileen will be remembered as a lively, intelligent and fun person. She will be much missed.

MILES HOWARTH

Miles Howarth passed away on 21st November after a short illness and further details will follow next month.

OTHER NEWS for MEMBERS

HELPING u3a IN KENNET MEMBERS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FALLS AND TO IMPROVE STRENGTH AND BALANCE

Did you know that 1 in 3 adults over 65, and half of those over 80, experience at least one fall each year? According to the NHS, falls and related fragility fractures cost the UK over £4.4 billion annually.

Following u3a in Kennet's participation in the Marlborough Health and Wellbeing Open Day in September 2025, two courses have been developed especially for our members in cooperation with the Wiltshire and Swindon Sports Partnership.

- 5 week course – strength and balance
- 10 week course – strength, balance learn how to fall more safely, build confidence in getting back up again

The sessions are suitable for members of all abilities and will be held at The Jubilee Centre, 28 High Street, Marlborough, SN8 1LW. (<https://www.jubileecentremarlborough.co.uk>)

The sessions will be delivered by former Paralympian Chris Hunt Skelley MBE and will begin on Wednesday 14th January 2026 from 1pm with up to 10 places available

The costs are £30 for the 5 week course or £50 for the 10 week course.

Please contact : jillturner@u3aikkennet.org.uk for more information.

ART EXHIBITION –HENRY ORLIK



**The Lost Surrealist:
Henry Orlik's Quantum Revolution**

24 October 2025 - 14 March 2026
Swindon Art Museum



A major public institutional exhibition devoted to Henry Orlik's visionary work.

A Catalogue featuring over 30 fully illustrated works and new entries about Orlik's titles, subjects and methods, will be available to purchase at the exhibition.

WINSOR BIRCH
The Fine Art & Sculpture Company

 **MUSEUM & ART
SWINDON**

Following the interesting talk on local artist Henry Orlik in March 2025 members may be interested to visit the new exhibition that has been organised to share his work.

The exhibition is called '***The lost Surrealist: Henry Orlik's quantum revolution***' and it is now open at the Swindon Art Museum and will be available until 14th March 2026.

u3a IN KENNET EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE u3ainkennet.org.uk/executive-committee/



Mike Morison, Chair,
*Membership & Beacon
Administrator*



David Pocock
Joint Vice Chair



Gavin Maxwell-Hart, *Joint
Vice Chair*



Alastair Sheen
Treasurer



Annette Weaver, *Secretary*



Jill Chambers
Speaker Secretary



Alison Dewar
Committee Member



Jeff Hide
Compliance



Georgie Neville
Committee Member



Hamzah
Technology



Julian Beames *Co opted
member, Information and
Publicity*