



Newsletter

January 2026

CHAIR'S WELCOME



I hope you all had a very pleasant and relaxing time over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

We look forward to you joining us in our monthly Coffee Exchanges or your continued membership of our many groups.

You will find the dates of some of our events in this first Newsletter of 2026.

Photo: Susan Turner

Mike Morison, Chair, u3a in Kennet

NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

After over 6 years, Mike Morison has handed over the role of Membership Secretary to Kate Morrison who has also been coopted onto the Executive Committee.

Kate will be familiar to many of you as the joint organiser and leader of the ever-popular Day Trips group.

Please note that her surname is spelt differently to the Chair's, ie Kate has 2 r's in her surname (Morrison) whereas Mike only has 1 (Morison)!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Coffee Exchange:

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

Kennet Talk,

2.15pm, 10th February 2026, Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge

Coffee Exchange:

10.15am, 26th February 2026, Town Hall, Marlborough

The copy date for the next Newsletter will be 15th February 2026 with contributions to:

newsletter@u3ainkennet.org.uk

Other useful links

u3ainkennet.org.uk and www.facebook/u3ainkennet

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

COFFEE EXCHANGE, JANUARY 2026

Join us for our first Coffee Exchange of the new year on 22nd January at the Town Hall in Marlborough to catch up with u3a colleagues and to learn more about the Prospect Hospice and its important work.

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM OUR GROUPS

TABLE TENNIS GROUPS CHRISTMAS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD SOLUTION

As promised in our December 2025 Newsletter Group Leader Simon Caudell now reveals the answers to the cryptic crossword puzzle; **Eight Words of Eight Letters**

1 B	O	2 H	E	M	I	A	4 N
A		Y			N		O
5 L	I	S	T	E	N	E	R
A		T			U		M
N		E			E		A
6 C	A	R	D	I	N	A	L
E		I			D		L
7 R	H	A	P	S	O	D	Y

Across

1 & 7 My Pooh Bear and his funny song.
5 One using radio to record direction, right?
6 Car heading for Dover in A50 South, say.

Down

1 Man in pub is an acrobat.
2 This year, mad frenzy.
3 It's suggestive ... of an Italian
suppository.
4 As a rule there's no room, friend.

POSSIBLE SECOND ADVANCED FRENCH GROUP

We have a very dynamic advanced French Group, currently with a waiting list. It would be helpful to know if there are other members who are interested in joining an Advanced French Group 2. This would be run by a French native speaker. In our group which meets monthly in the Group Organiser's house, we read and discuss current affairs articles from a prestigious weekly magazine and have recently started reading one of Alexandre Dumas' classics.

If your French is of good conversational standard and you want to practice your spoken French, then please let the group organiser, Ashley de Safrin, know of your interest;

French.adv@u3ainkennet.org.uk

OBITUARY SUE OWEN

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Sue Owen.

Sue joined the Monday Walking Group in 2022, having regained her 'four mile legs' after an illness. Sue, along with Les, quickly became stalwarts of the group: offering walks on a regular basis. When the call came for a new group leader, Sue took up the mantel with quiet efficiency and dedication.

Whilst Sue often walked at the back of the group, she took time to 'work the group', sharing stories, ideas thoughts and experiences.

Sue loved photography, wild life and the Wiltshire Landscape, the walking group offered the opportunity for all these – she would often be seen taking photos and identifying flowers on the route round.

Sue was a great believer in the local community and what it offered, be it the cinema, the Litfest or the History Society, and she would promote them to others. This included Bay Meadows nature reserve where she and Les often walked, commenting on the kingfisher which seemed to be waiting for them!

The Monday Walking Group were fortunate to benefit from Sue's kindness, warmth, friendliness and compassion. She will be much missed.

OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION for MEMBERS

HENRY ORLIK – TALK BY GRANT FORD

Following his talk last March to u3a in Kennet on the artist Henry Orlik, Grant Ford will be discussing Orlik's work and presenting his views on his first institutional show in his lifetime at Museum & Art Swindon, 24th January 2026 at 11am..

Ford will discuss Orlik's remarkable practice, tracing how surrealism, science and speculative thought converge in this newly rediscovered body of work. Drawing on curatorial research and close engagement with the artist's archive, the talk offers fresh insight into Orlik's radical vision and its resonance today.

This Curator Talk will last approximately 40–45 minutes, with time to ask questions afterwards. There are a few tickets left at £8.00 each and the details are provided here: [The Lost Surrealist: Henry Orlik's Quantum Revolution](#)

THE ANCIENT BOROUGH OF MARLBOROUGH AND THE MONARCHY

St Peter's Church displays by its main entrance door at the southern side, the information on a blue plaque stating that Cardinal Thomas Wolsey was priested in this church on March 10, 1498. This is a well-known fact from history, as are the many references to royal connections with Marlborough over the years. These included the building of a castle ordered by William the Conqueror and the granting by King John, in 1204, of certain legal rights. In 1139 King Stephen besieged the castle during the war with Empress Matilda known as the Anarchy. King Henry III spent time in Marlborough in 1267 after his defeat by the Barons led by Simon de Montfort at the Battle of Lewes in 1264. Here, in the well-established castle, Henry III made a re-affirmation of the Magna Carta, named the Statutes of Marlborough. Over the years many monarchs had dealings with Marlborough. Significant grants were also made by monarchs including the Charter of Incorporation in 1576 by Elizabeth I enabling The Borough of Marlborough the right to govern itself and create its own by-laws.

There is another connection, though not so obvious. This can be found inside St Peter's Church set on the northern wall of the chancel near the High Altar. It is a tableau to the memory of the immediate family of Sir Nicholas Hyde, (1572 – 25 August 1631). In the English of the day it reads,

"Here lye the bodies of two sonnes & a daughter of Sir Nicholas Hyde, Knight Lord Chief Justice of the Kings bench & of The Lady Mary, his wife, that is Robert buried 24 January 1626, Frances buried 28 January 1626, Elizabeth buried 28 February 1626. Wee shall goe to them but they shall not returne to us vs 2 Sam 12.23"

Sir Nicholas was born at Wardour Castle, Wilts. He married Margareta Swaine circa 1591, in St. Peter's Church, Marlborough. They were the parents of at least seven children. Whilst living in Marlborough, probably in Hyde Lane, three of the children died in 1626. These were Robert, Frances and Elizabeth. They are buried in St Peter's Church. Sir Nicholas and Margareta died later

and are buried at All Saints Church, Catherington, Wiltshire near their home at Hinton Daubney. A chapel and tableau are still there today.

Nicholas had a meteoric rise to power and served as Lord Chief Justice of the Kings Bench as well as in other offices. It fell to him to give judgment in the celebrated case of Sir Thomas Darnell and others who had been committed to prison on warrants signed by members of the privy council of Charles I. He was also one of the judges who refused bail to the seven members of the House of Commons who the King imprisoned for sedition for their actions in the 1629 Parliament. (Note the Black Rod tradition now)

Sir Nicholas Hyde was uncle of Edward Hyde, his brother's son, and he strongly encouraged and supported Edward's legal studies. Edward became a prominent English statesman, lawyer, diplomat and historian who served as chief adviser to Charles I during the First English Civil War and Lord Chancellor to Charles II from 1660 to 1667. In 1641/1642 Edward had become opposed to Charles I's attempts to build alliances with Scots Covenanters or Irish Catholics to bolster his royal troops against the English Parliamentarians. Having been a Royalist and a Roman Catholic, Edward escaped Cromwell's revenge and exiled himself to France together with his family and the future Charles II and James II. Charles II was to create Edward 1st Earl Clarendon in due course as well as to grant other honours and titles.

Of relevance to Marlborough's royal connections was the fact that Edward, had a daughter called Anne who, in 1660 married James, Duke of York. James later became King James II. James and Anne had two daughters, Mary and Anne. Mary married William of Orange, and the couple became joint monarchs of England following the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Anne later became Queen and the first Monarch of all Great Britain. Sir Nicholas Hyde therefore, became great-grandfather to two English sovereigns, Queen Mary II and her sister Queen Anne. Hyde Lane and Clarendon Court, Kingsbury Street, are named after the family.

St Peters Marlborough



All Saints Catherington



Jeff Hide, Compliance

WINTER INTO SPRING.

Frosted shoots
and spiky stalk,
blanched and rigid,
coated like chalk.
The sap stays within,
shielded, on ice,
warmth of the sun
the first to entice
emerging buds
beyond their world,
their protection discarded,
petals unfurled.
Burgeoning blooms
enhanced by heat,
embryo, flower,
transition complete.



Anon.

HOW RIGHT THE GREAT BARD WAS WITH 'AS YOU LIKE IT IN THE SOLILOQUY ENTITLED 'ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE'. A CHILDLIKE ACCOUNT FOR US ALL.



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move. Their dimension was eternal. It was permanently of silence and peace. There was no change because there was nothing to begin or end; go anywhere or come back. The Selfs were at home and happy.

It could be light years away, billions of years ago, or it could be right here and now in another dimension but whichever, there lived a race of beings which we shall call Selfs. The Selfs did not have bodies created of matter like us so they were invisible. You could see right through them. Their home was similar and existed of clear light. Time, as we know it, did not exist in their world. They lived in an existence of no time nor form. Without these nothing could start or stop or

This did not mean that they had no power. Far from it, their power was unlimited, and they could experience anything they chose to think of. Because they used the energy of thought, they could, for example, think of being a cast of actors and could do this together by setting up a theatre, writing and performing in a play on a stage. This theatre could have physical properties and the creation of time was factored in too. Light and sound happened.

The play was, of course, quite different from life at home. Life at home was comfortable, soft and stressless; unlike the play. They named the theatre Earth. They made up props for use in their play such as masks and costumes. There were backdrops with pictures painted on them like streets and trees, boats on seas.

To act in the play they took on particular characteristics like being kind or nasty, heroes and villains, victims or violent parts and chose names for themselves; personal names. As more Selfs left home to visit the theatre, more wanted to act in the play. The stage had to be bigger and bigger and it all took up more time. The plots had to be more complicated and include horror, comedy, romance, pain, death and bereavement.

Then there had to be more experiences like having fog and storms, floods and fires. There was no audience, just more Selfs coming to see and then wanting to join in. It was all great fun for them as they had never experienced sorrow, worry or stress at home and it was not difficult for them because they had unlimited power. The more they acted in the play, the more they wanted to expand and they began to forget that it was just a play on a stage in their minds. They even began to treat each other seriously, forgetting it was all unreal – just a play. They treated others according to their masks and behaviour not as they used to at home. They forgot home.

They began to judge each other, presenting prizes for what pleased them and booing those that did not. They blamed others for their own faults, even complaining about the script and its writer. They became nervous and insecure, relying on more props to help them out. Others became a threat and so conspired to destroy the stage itself but they still thought that they were clever. Then one Self became cleverer than the others, claiming to know all the answers and because he was cleverer, he fooled the others. That was until he was too clever and found others jealous or fearful of him. They ganged up on him and eventually they all got fed up with acting in the play. They realised that it was all wrong and they were just too powerful to act in a play as it would end in destruction. So, they all went back home to their lives of no stress, no time and no form to consider what had happened.

Maybe Shakespeare was right – “All the World’s a Stage and all the men and women merely players.”.

Jeff Hide, Compliance.

(Concept from an anonymous leaflet many years ago)

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



**Mike Morison, Chair,
& Beacon Administrator**



**David Pocock
Joint Vice Chair & Events**



**Gavin Maxwell-Hart, Joint
Vice Chair & Outreach**



**Alastair Sheen
Treasurer**



Annette Weaver, Secretary



**Jill Chambers
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**Alison Dewar
Groups and Really Usefults**



**Jeff Hide
Compliance**



**Georgie Neville
Groups**



**Hamzah
Technology**



**Julian Beames Co opted
member, Information and
Publicity**



**Kate Morrison Co-opted
member: Membership
Secretary**