



# Newsletter

APRIL 2026

## CHAIR'S WELCOME

I hope you all had a relaxing break over the Easter weekend and are now enjoying the (mostly) improved Spring weather.



In mid-April, we held our third IT workshop with six of our members being helped on their smart phones and tablets by our Technology Support group members; Pat Harper, Jenny Langton, Jill Turner and Hamzah willingly giving up their morning. This, to my mind, is at the centre of the ethos of u3a – to pass on our knowledge and experience to teach and learn from others. Another IT workshop is planned for later in the year.

*Photo: Susan Turner*

We, in the u3a in Kennet, plan to be taking this idea further, following a National u3a initiative, to offer our knowledge and experience to the wider, local community in accordance with the Outreach principle. Gavin Maxwell-Hart, Vice Chair with Outreach responsibility, is working on how we can develop this and will provide more information in due course.

Meanwhile, please enjoy this month's newsletter with all the latest group information and other updates

**Mike Morison, Chair, u3a in Kennet**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Coffee Exchange:**

10.15am, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026,  
Town Hall, Marlborough.

Live music with the  
Pewsey u3a Music Group

**Kennet Talk;** 2.15pm 5<sup>th</sup>  
May 2026, Kennet Valley  
Hall.

### **Coffee Exchange:**

10.15am 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026,  
Town Hall, Marlborough

The copy date for the  
next Newsletter will be  
14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 with  
contributions to:

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

Other useful links

[u3ainkennet.org.uk](http://u3ainkennet.org.uk) and  
[www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet](https://www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet)

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

## COFFEE EXCHANGE, 26TH MARCH 2026

### SAVERNAKE PARK COMMUNITY FARM, MARK JANKOVICH



Mark came to talk about '*Rethinking small scale farming*'. Having founded a successful company manufacturing and selling sustainable cleaning products, Mark decided to pursue his vision for sustainability. He moved to Wiltshire and set up The Savernake Park Community Farm. He believes this project can be a prototype for others around the world.

His description of the thinking behind the ideas was inspiring and he demonstrated the determination to see the project through to success.

*Photo Hamzah*

His project needs volunteers and, at this stage, this means help with the routine work of tree planting. If you and your friends are interested in helping, please email [kathleenabell@yahoo.com](mailto:kathleenabell@yahoo.com).

If you were unable to attend, the talk is available on <https://youtu.be/EJTo-1eaDLs>. Please note that this link is not to be shared beyond u3a in Kennet members for copyright reasons.

## NEWS AND UPDATES FROM OUR GROUPS

### GROUP LEADERS' THANK YOU EVENT

On Friday 27 March we said 'thank you' to our group leaders and co-leaders for all their hard work in making our u3a in Kennet so successful and vibrant.

Over 40 of them were welcomed by Mike Morison (u3a chair) and introduced to his fellow committee members. Mike briefly reminded of our communication methods, followed by our treasurer, Alastair Sheen, discussing accounts and grants for individual groups.

Everybody enjoyed a simple lunch. Special thanks to Richard and Maryann Bettinson, Rosemary Davies and Manju Agrawal (from our 'Really Usefuls' group) who helped serve the meal and to set and clear tables.

In the afternoon, small groups continued at the lunch tables – this time in lively discussion of their 'good and difficult practice' (bearing in mind that all groups are different!). This valuable opportunity allowed them to engage with peers that they might not otherwise contact. We shared and kept notes, such as on the best things about roles; record keeping and communication; managing group size; safety on day trips and outdoor activities; sharing the

workload with other members within their respective groups; and exploring grants.

Thanks to all present for making the event such a success and to all those – whether able to attend or not – for the efforts they make for our u3a.

Georgie Neville and Alison Dewar. Email: [groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:groups@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

### **POSSIBLE SECOND ADVANCED FRENCH GROUP: NEW LEADER CATHRYN SHAKESHAFT**

We have a dynamic Advanced French Group, currently with a waiting list. We are keen to find out if there are members interested in joining a second Advanced French Group.

The group would be run by Cathryn Shakeshaft, a Francophile and retired teacher of English as a Second Language. Cathryn plans to focus on the Arts – French films, TV, podcasts and literature, and is open to members' suggestions and ideas too. If your French is of a good conversational standard and you wish to practise your spoken French, please send your initial expression of interest to Ashley de Safrin: email: [french.adv@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:french.adv@u3ainkennet.org.uk) who will forward your details to Cathryn.

### **AMERICAN HISTORY AND JAZZ APPRECIATIONS GROUPS – REMINDER**

On April 21 the American History Group and the Jazz Appreciation Group will be holding a joint session at the Friends Meeting House in the Parade, Marlborough. The Jazz Group's leader Clyde Nancarrow will give a presentation on the early history and development of Jazz, from its origins in early 20th century New Orleans to its breakout as a worldwide phenomenon.

Clyde will be exploring the impact of jazz on society as it became the first manifestation of black popular culture to achieve mainstream acceptance in the US and elsewhere, accompanied by illustrative audio.

Any u3a in Kennet member who would like to attend as a guest of the AHG and the JAG will be welcome, space permitting, on a first come, first served basis. Please apply to Alastair Sheen at [treasurer@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

### **SPECIAL INTEREST DAY 2027**

Following the success of the Special Interest Day in 2025, we have started early planning for the next one which will be held in 2027. In our first planning meeting with Marlborough College, where the event will again take place, we agreed the provisional date of 20 Sept 2027. We will of course inform you all on any changes to the date, but meanwhile, u3a in Kennet members may wish to add this to their diaries.

Members are also invited to suggest possible speakers/titles on the theme of 'New Frontiers' (or similar) which will cover a range of topics related to the Arctic, Antarctic and similarly critical regions. Please contact David Pocock: Vice Chair with suggestions: [vicechair@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

## MORE ON MAX WALL by PAUL FOXALL

Sometime ago I wrote a piece on my friendship with Max Wall. My memories have taken on fresh significance thanks to a new book on Max ([see attached](#)). During my long career as a film and television director I'm left recalling many star names. These include Albert Finney, Alison Steadman, John Thaw, Ken Dodd and perhaps best is Max Wall the music hall actor. I knew him for over twenty years and was fortunate to have directed him in a South Bank Show documentary commissioned by Melvyn Bragg.

This exciting era has been brought back to life with the recent publication of the latest book *'There and Back - Twice'*. I was honoured to contribute to many chapters. The author borrowed the title from Max's friend John Le Mesurier who reacted with such feeling whenever they met. They were especially close when both starred in the Monty Python inspired feature film *'Jabberwocky'*.

This fine new book covers Max Wall's eccentric comedy and his final career as a legitimate actor which won him praise from audiences and critics alike. Max appeared on stage as Archie Rice in John Osborne's own revival of *'The Entertainer'*, Davies in Harold Pinter's *'The Caretaker'* and the Samuel Beckett characters Vladimir in *'Waiting for Godot'*, *'Krapp's Last Tape'* and the monologue *'Malone Dies'*. It was in these roles Max found the most fulfilling in his long and distinguished career. I relished Max's comedy routines over the years but it was as a Beckettian actor that I remember him delivering such passion.

We shared lunches together usually at Simpsons in the Strand where Max enjoyed their traditional English menu. It was whilst eating there in 1990 that Max had a fatal fall as we left. He hit his head on the stairs and never regained consciousness. He was driven by ambulance to Westminster Hospital where he died later that night. Max was buried at Highgate Cemetery after which his admirers arranged for his life to be celebrated at the Actors, Church in Covent Garden. I was among his friends who spoke of Max at this special service. Others included Jimmy Jewel, Paul Scofield and Max's son Meredith Wall. **Paul Foxall**



### PHOTO COMPETITION FOR MEMBERS - REMINDER

Alison Dewar asks for any suggestions as to what the photograph shows. It was taken when planning a u3a in Kennet walk.

Answers please (serious or funny) by the end of April to [newsletter@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@u3ainkennet.org.uk)

## OBITUARY DR ROBERT ANDREW REEKIE, OBE, 17 NOVEMBER 1939 – 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026.

### TRIBUTE FROM DR BARNEY ROSEDALE

Andrew Reekie was a partner in the Marlborough Practice I joined in 1974, along with Tim and Dick Maurice, and Bob Wheeler, and their welcome was so reassuring. Andrew was a GP in the old style where consultation was face-to-face, examination was routine, and home visits were an integral part of the work. His home visits were legendary, with a strong social element and concern for the elderly; he used to have nail clippers to deal with the toenails of those who were having difficulty getting down to their feet. His weekly branch surgeries in Avebury were amazing. He was much loved and respected.

He kept up with new ideas, new methods and new medications, and had an active interest in Tropical Medicine, having spent some time working in Jamaica before coming to Marlborough. In 1992 he left the Practice to work in Israel in a teaching role with *Medical Aid for Palestine* in the West Bank, Hebron, and in densely populated Gaza where he became increasingly aware of the cruel inequalities and growing tensions. After three years there he joined the Diplomatic Corps as doctor to the High Commission in Delhi with oversight of medical facilities in surrounding countries which took him to Bangladesh, Pakistan and many of the Silk Route capitals. He earned an OBE for this work.

In retirement, he enjoyed 'overseas', and travelled widely, and I remember going with him in the mountains of Morocco, and over the Karakoram passes from Pakistan into western China. When he could he loved to stride around our Downs and was a devoted student at Michael Hart's u3a history group sessions. He became ill and suffered his last illness with its devastating limitations with courage and civility. We miss him. **Barney Rosedale.**

Other u3a in Kennet members recall Andrew's enthusiasm, his sense of humour and lively interest in opera and history with contributions to the English History Group sessions on medical issues including the Black Death.

### OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

#### CPR AND DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING - SOME PLACES LEFT

A defibrillator and CPR training session will be held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026 from 10.00 to 12 noon at Kennet Valley Hall, Lockeridge. u3a in Kennet members are invited to attend including anyone who has attended previously. Please contact [jillturner@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:jillturner@u3ainkennet.org.uk) to reserve a place.

#### CYBER FRAUD WARNINGS

In the last couple of weeks a number of people with u3ainkennet email addresses have been receiving emails saying their passwords are about to expire, and to renew the password via a link on the email. **This is a scam** as our u3ainkennet email passwords do **not** expire. If you have changed your password using the scam email link, please inform Hamzah as soon as possible ([technical@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:technical@u3ainkennet.org.uk)).

The u3a Trust have warned all members across the country to be vigilant about the risk of cyber fraud explaining that fraudsters are using information available on the Charity Commission website to contact people. They have then been persuading them there is an issue with their bank account and defrauding people out of money.

Banks and the police will **never** ask you to move money. Read about spotting fraud on the government [Stop Think Fraud website](#)'

### COFFEE MIGHT BE GOOD FOR YOU!

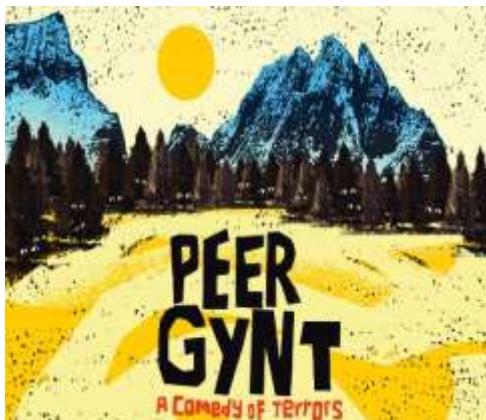
So reported the scientific journal '**Nature**' in February this year. Thank you to Nick Stedman of our Science News Discussion Group for sharing the article.

Coffee is also amazingly great value for our u3a members. Your £12 annual membership fee enables you to enjoy 15 cups of coffee or tea (and 'seconds'). Plus meeting and chatting with other u3a members. All you need do is come along to the talks at our Marlborough coffee exchanges and in Lockeridge's kennet valley hall. The next one is on 23 April.

We serve all this (well over 1000 cups each year) from cramped kitchens with some fairly limited kitchen equipment. Next time you admire all this volunteer effort, please consider joining our wonderful band of helpers. By contacting [alisondewar@u3aikkennet.org.uk](mailto:alisondewar@u3aikkennet.org.uk)

*Nature Briefing 10 Feb 2026: 'Caffeine might reduce dementia risk and slow cognitive decline' [Indicative findings from observational evidence]*

### MIRACLE THEATRE PRESENTS 'PEER GYNT- A COMEDY OF TERRORS', OGBOURNE MAIZEY, 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2026 AT 7.30pm.



The Miracle Theatre Company from Cornwall will make a return visit to Ogbourne Maizey this year to perform an adaptation of Ibsen's "Peer Gynt – A Comedy of Terrors" on **24th June 2026** at 7.30pm. The charity which has been chosen to benefit from this event is "Read for Good".

Guests are invited to bring their own chairs and a picnic. The gate will open at 6pm) A bar/coffee/ice creams/WC/parking will all be available at the venue: Maizey Lodge, Ogbourne Maizey, Marlborough SN8 1RY.

Tickets in advance only: Adults £17, children (under 16) £9, Family £45 (2 adults and 2 children). Tickets: 01672-512125 or email [maizey50@gmail.com](mailto:maizey50@gmail.com).

'Read for Good' is a UK children's charity in reading for pleasure. Children who choose to read are more likely to do well at school, get jobs they love, and lead happy, fulfilling lives. By providing them with the tools and resources, they will be able to discover a life-long love of reading.

For more information please see: <https://readforgood.org/>

## BATH OPERA

Bath Opera invites members of Kennet U3A to a matinee performance of Donizetti's comic opera *The Elixir of Love* at the Bouverie Hall, Pewsey on Sunday 5th July at 3pm with other matinees at the Strode Theatre, Street, on Sunday 28th June at 2.30pm, and at The Mission Theatre, Bath on Saturday 27th June at 2.30pm.



The poster for Bath Opera's Summer Tour 2026 features a blue background. At the top center is a red heart-shaped logo with a crown and the text 'THE ELIXIR OF LOVE'. Below it, 'BATH OPERA' is written in white, with 'SUMMER TOUR - 2026' underneath. A yellow starburst in the top right corner says 'Early Bird Discount until 18th May Book now!'. The main text describes the opera as 'Love, jealousy and a mysterious potion... A joyful, romantic comic opera in 90 minutes'. It lists the following dates and venues: '26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> June: The Mission, Bath (eve & matinee)', '28<sup>th</sup> June: The Strode Theatre (matinee)', '3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> July: Great Chalfield', '5<sup>th</sup> July: Pewsey (matinee)', '10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> July: Wincanton', and '12<sup>th</sup> July: Seend'. At the bottom, it says 'Book now!' and provides the website 'www.bathopera.com/elixir-of-love' and 'www.bathopera.com'. There is also a QR code and a small image of a book titled 'BATH OPERA'.

The production offers a 90 minutes performance with a 30-minute interval, with a cast of 8, sung in English and accompanied by piano. It is packed with romance, humour and glorious melodies, including the famous aria *Una furtiva lagrima*.

Discounts are available for groups of 10+ from £16. As a thank you for organising a group booking one complimentary ticket and programme for every 6 Group tickets booked will be provided.

Tickets and full Summer Tour details are available at [www.bathopera.com/elixir-of-love](http://www.bathopera.com/elixir-of-love) where an early bird discount on individual standard priced tickets is available until 18th May.

## MARLBOROUGH LIT FEST GOLDING SPEAKER



The 2026 Golding Speaker for the Lit Fest has been announced. Novelist Sebastian Faulks, will join already confirmed authors Sir Anthony Seldon and Kit de Waal for the 2026 event. The full 2026 LitFest programme will be available in late June; the festival box office opens in early July.

The Lit Fest will holding a quiz night with St Peter's in Marlborough on Friday 15 May to support both LitFest (a charitable arts organisation) and St Peter's. See here for details:

<https://stpetersmarlborough.org.uk/events>

## LAUNCH OF THE GREEN VALE EVENT AT BURBAGE VILLAGE HALL, 21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2026

Members are invited to attend the launch of the 'Green Vale' event which helps communities tackle flooding, nature loss and home energy issues.

For details see here: <https://www.pewseycap.org.uk/event-details-registration/green-vale-project-launch-1>

**u3a IN KENNET EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE [u3ainkennet.org.uk/executive-committee/](http://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  
Speaker Secretary**



**Alison Dewar  
Groups and Really Usefuls**



**Jeff Hide  
Compliance**



**Georgie Neville  
Groups**



**Hamzah  
Technology**



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



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