



Newsletter

MAY 2026

CHAIR'S WELCOME

I hope you are enjoying the Spring; my favourite time of year with so many different blooms to enjoy, lighter evenings, and the promise of a long, warm summer to come.

Hopefully, the improved outlook also awakens ideas. We, in the committee, do not have a monopoly on how to run our u3a so we also look to you, our members, for inspiration.



Therefore, if you have any thoughts as to how our u3a can be improved or enhanced, please let me or any committee member know .

Meanwhile, please enjoy this latest newsletter.

Mike Morison, Chair, u3a in Kennet

Photo: Susan Turner



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Coffee Exchange:

10.15am 21st May 2026,
Town Hall, Marlborough.
The Wilts and Berks Canal,
Martin Hollis

Coffee Exchange;

10.15am 25th June 2026,
Town Hall, Marlborough

Coffee Exchange:

10.15am 16th July 2026,
Town Hall, Marlborough

Kennet Talk:

2.15pm 22nd July 2026
Kennet Valley Hall

The copy date for the next Newsletter will be 18th June 2026 with contributions to:
newsletter@u3ainkennet.org.uk

Other useful links
u3ainkennet.org.uk and
www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet

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

COFFEE EXCHANGE, 23rd APRIL 2026

Just for a change there was live music at the Coffee Exchange in April. The Pewsey Vale u3a Country Dance Music Group played country tunes from both the UK and the USA. Six members of the group came to entertain. They played variously a hammered dulcimer, a recorder, a mandolin, two guitars and an unusual drum instrument combining the sounds of several drums and cymbals. The group also includes several fiddle players who unfortunately were not available to play on that morning.



The audience of over 80 greatly enjoyed the lively tunes which were introduced by Pete Bromwich. The group was only formed last year and must be congratulated on their professional and smooth performance. When questioned, the group also talked knowledgeably about their instruments.

Photo: Hamzah

As there is a reciprocal arrangement with Pewsey Vale, any member of u3a in Kennet who plays an acoustic instrument would be welcome to join the group. They can be contacted via the Pewsey Vale u3a site under the Country Dance Music Group (<https://pewsey.u3asite.uk/>).

KENNET TALK, 5th MAY 2026

Second Kennet Talk 2026 – Tuesday 5th May 2026



The second Kennet Talk at Lockeridge Village Hall was attended by over 120 people keen to hear from Martin Lloyd on Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies.

Martin spent 24 years with HM immigration Service and this provided a strong basis for his interest in passports and related matters. He told three thrilling stories which caused changes to the passports that are used today.

Photo; Hamzah

The first about the Orsini plot to kill Napoleon III, the second about Carl Lody who spied for Germany in 1914 and finally William Joyce, usually referred to as Lord Haw Haw. Martin spoke for

about 45 minutes without a note. He delivered the stories with style and characterisation. The audience were enthralled. It was a bravura performance.

Martin has also written books on a variety of subjects – France, Spanish artists, history, passports and stories of his adventures on a bicycle as well as a detective story based in Bangladesh. These are all available from Queen Anne's Fan books on queenannesfan.co.uk

GROUPS NEWS

ADVANCED FRENCH GROUP

Following the call for interest in a second advanced French group in the April Newsletter, Group Leader Cathryn Shakeshaft is pleased to report that the first meeting has been held and plans are being developed for the future.

The group will meet at the Parade Cinema café in Marlborough (with the hope of encouraging them to put on some French films!) on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 11:00, initially. Please note that the time and location may change in future in line with members' availability.

Additional members would be most welcome. If you are interested please contact Cathryn using the following email address – français2@u3akennet.org.uk.

The group also uses WhatsApp as a means of communication

MOTORCYCLE GROUP

Elan Valley – A midweek, three day trip, organised by group member Barry Adams

Six of us met at Three Trees Farm Cafe at Chiseldon – one Harley, three BMWs and a Voge. Pat's Harley had thrown a wobbly, so she positioned by car to ride pillion on day two. Coffee, then off up the A419 for a swift ride to Hereford Garden Centre for lunch.

We then took the A44 towards Rhayader and our base for the two nights at a Llanidloes pub. The Mount Inn is a very atmospheric, traditional Welsh pub built in 1280. The place was continually busy with bikers, hikers and locals giving a tremendous ambiance.

Thursday, we routed via the sublime Llyn (Lake) Clywedog to Morfa Borth for a cafe lunch near the beach.

From Borth we did one of my favourite Welsh routes via Aberystwyth, Devil's Bridge and Hafod Arch to Rhayadar following the incredibly beautiful Afon Ystwyth river valley. Sweeping turns and an unfettered view of the road ahead meant that, for some, the horns came out and the throttles took a twist. Fabulous views; biking at its best!



Photos: Members of the Group

On Friday, we enjoyed a convivial breakfast before parting ways; some to do more sight seeing, David off up towards Harlech, Mike and myself back to Marlborough via the old Severn Bridge.

By mutual agreement, it had been an excellent midweek ride out.

Many thanks to Barry for making it all happen.

Greg Shakeshaft. Motorcycle Group Leader

OBITUARY

MALCOLM PIPER



It was with great sadness to learn about the death of Malcolm Piper on 14th April on the Isle of Skye. Malcolm and wife Sue settled in Marlborough a few years ago while their house was being built in the Isle of Skye.

Malcolm soon got involved in the community joining the u3a to play Table Tennis Group and occasionally helping out with u3a Really Useful group; he is remembered as a very cheery presence and an expert at washing up! Being an experienced choir singer, singing with the Lichfield Cathedral Chamber Choir 20 years, he was also singing with Marlborough Choral Society.

He loved playing table tennis with the u3a and always with a good sense of humour. He will be missed by those who knew him.

NEW MEMBERS

I took up the post of Membership Secretary in February this year and would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since then:

From Marlborough: Alina, Bev L, Bev W, Jane, Helen, Peter, Christine and Kevin, Bob, Patsy, Rosalind, Nancy, Malcolm and Anke, Russell, Sylvia, Julia, Philip and Catherine. Also, Juliet from Manton, Jonathan from Ramsbury, John and Nick from Hungerford, Debbie from Broad Hinton, John from Broad Town, Carole from Chiseldon, Brian from Christian Malford, Fi and Shirley from Swindon, David and Lynda from Liddington and Jim from Calne. Thank you to them for bringing the U3a in Kennet's membership total to 794.

So far, our new members have boosted numbers in the following groups: Aviation, Thursday Walkers, Day Trips, Table Talk, Life Sciences and three are on the waiting lists for Wine Appreciation and Family History.

A variety of groups is an important part of the u3a and new ideas from members are always welcome.

Kate Morrison, Membership Secretary

OTHER NEWS FOR MEMBERS

STRENGTH AND BALANCE COURSE – 3rd COHORT

Following the success of the first two u3a in Kennet Strength and Balance courses at the Jubilee Centre planning is underway now for a 3rd course of 5 weeks beginning in summer (exact dates to be confirmed).

Any member is welcome including those who have attended previously. Our trainer; former Paralympian Chris Skelley, MBE tailors each session to suit the abilities and requirements of the group.

If you are interested please contact jillturner@u3ainkennet.org.uk

CYBER FRAUD WARNINGS. SCAM EMAILS

Please be wary of emails which are apparently sent by people known to you but whose email addresses are not their usual ones. Such emails often begin with ' Hello. Are you free at the moment?' Please email me as I have lost my voice due to severe laryngitis' They frequently ask the recipient to buy Amazon vouchers.

WHATSAPP ACCOUNTS – WARNING FROM WILTSHIRE POLICE

Wiltshire Police are warning residents about a significant increase in WhatsApp accounts being taken over by criminals. This commonly occurs when individuals are tricked into sharing a one-time passcode (OTP) sent by WhatsApp.

Once an account is compromised, offenders frequently contact the victim's friends, family, or community groups, impersonating them and requesting money, vouchers, or personal information.

How These Scams Work

Criminals may:

- Pretend to be a friend, family member, or trusted contact
- Claim they are locked out of their account
- Say they have accidentally sent you a code
- Pose as WhatsApp support or a business

They will ask you to share a 6-digit WhatsApp verification code.

👉 Sharing this code allows the criminal to take control of your WhatsApp account.

How to Protect Yourself

✅ Never share a WhatsApp verification code

- WhatsApp will never ask for this code
- No legitimate person or organisation needs it
- Anyone requesting a code is attempting to compromise your account

✅ Enable Two-Step Verification

This adds an extra layer of security to your account.

To enable:

- Open WhatsApp
- Go to Settings → Account → Two-step verification
- Set a PIN and add a recovery email address

✅ Be alert to unexpected or urgent messages

Criminals often create urgency or ask you to keep requests secret.

✅ Verify unusual requests

If a contact asks for money or codes:

- Check using another method, such as a phone call or in-person conversation

✅ Do not share unsolicited codes

If you receive a WhatsApp code you did not request:

- Do not share it
- Delete the message

🚨 If Your WhatsApp Account Is Taken Over

✅ Re-register your number immediately

- Open WhatsApp and verify your phone number again
- This action will remove the offender's access

✔ **Report the incident**

- Report the scam to Report Fraud
- 👉 <https://www.reportfraud.police.uk> or 0800 123 2040
- Reporting helps build intelligence and protect others from becoming victims

✔ **Secure your account once access is restored**

- Enable Two-Step Verification
- Set a strong PIN and recovery email address
- Review linked devices and remove any you do not recognise

✔ **Inform your contacts**

- Let friends and family know your account was compromised
- Ask them to ignore any recent messages requesting money, codes, or personal information

MERCHANTS HOUSE MARLBOROUGH OPEN GARDENS, 28th JUNE 2026 (1 – 5pm)



Take a stroll through beautiful gardens and hidden floral gems on the Open Gardens trail – all within easy walking distance of Marlborough High Street.

One of the most important fundraising events in The Merchant's House calendar, Marlborough Open Gardens helps support the ongoing care and restoration of this remarkable historic house.

Enjoy sweeping lawns, vibrant flowerbeds, and charming courtyards while helping to preserve one of Marlborough's treasured heritage buildings.

Tickets: £10 in advance or £12 on the day.

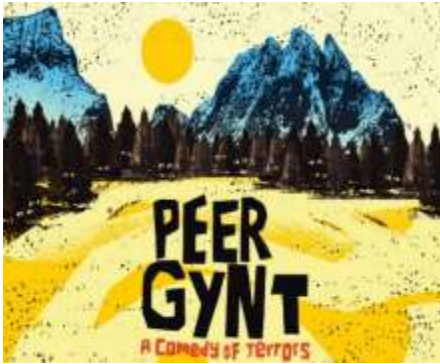
For tickets in advance book please book here :

<https://themerchantshouse.co.uk/book-now/> or purchase at the visitor desk in the House.

MIRACLE THEATRE PRESENTS 'PEER GYNT- A COMEDY OF TERRORS', OGBOURNE MAIZEY, 24th JUNE 2026 AT 7.30pm. REMINDER

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.

'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, REMINDER

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.

Other matinees will be held 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.

A blue poster for Bath Opera's Summer Tour 2026. At the top is a red heart-shaped logo with 'THE ELIXIR OF LOVE' written on it. Below the logo, the text reads: 'BATH OPERA SUMMER TOUR - 2026'. 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: '26th & 27th June: The Mission, Bath (eve & matinee)', '28th June: The Strode Theatre (matinee)', '3rd & 4th July: Great Chalfield', '5th July: Pewsey (matinee)', '10th & 11th July: Wincanton', and '12th July: Seend'. A yellow starburst graphic says 'Early Bird Discount ends 18th May Book now!'. At the bottom, it says 'Book now!' and provides the website 'www.bathopera.com/elixir-of-love' and 'www.bathopera.com'. There is a QR code and a small image of a book cover. The charity number '11335046' is at the bottom left.

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 where an early bird discount on individual standard priced tickets is available until 18th May.

WHITE HORSE BOOKSHOP SUMMER SCHOOL AND MARLBOROUGH LIT FEST

For the latest news about the Summer School and the Lit Fest please see here:

<https://www.whitehorsebooks.co.uk/the-white-horse-summer-school-2026> and <https://www.marlbroughlitfest.org/>

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
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**