



Newsletter

JULY 2026

CHAIR'S WELCOME



As I come towards the end of my first year as chair of the u3a in Kennet, I would like to thank you all for your encouragement and kind words, but particularly the committee members and group leaders for your unstinting support and hard work.

Photo: Susan Turner

I do hope that you have continued to enjoy your membership of the u3a as well, whether it is in your group activities, listening to the fascinating presentations at our Coffee Exchanges and quarterly Kennet Talks, or just getting together with our wide membership of like-minded people.

It is that time of year, though, that we will be asking for renewal of your membership and I do hope that you will! Kate Morrison, our Membership Secretary, will be writing to you at the beginning of next month, and I do ask that you follow her clear instructions carefully for paying into the correct account. Also, if you decide not to renew, could you please give her a short reason why.

Mike Morison, Chair, u3a in Kennet



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Kennet Talk:

'Antibiotic resistance; the 'ticking time bomb'.

Graham Cope

2.15pm 22nd July 2026

Kennet Valley Hall

Coffee Exchange:

10.15am 27th August 2026,
Town Hall, Marlborough

The copy date for the next Newsletter will be **20th August 2026** with contributions to:

newsletter@u3aikkennet.org.uk

Other useful links

u3aikkennet.org.uk and
www.facebook.com/u3aikkennet

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

COFFEE EXCHANGE, 25th JUNE 2026, MARLBOROUGH TOWN HALL

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION



Tony Hearn, a volunteer with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), came to the Coffee Exchange in June to talk about the work of the Commission. The CWGC is a global organisation run by a multinational and multilingual workforce of about 1300 – most of whom are gardeners and stone masons. It cares for war graves and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries commemorating almost 1.7 million individuals.

Tony's career was in the Civil Service and he volunteered as an RAF reservist for over 30 years and was deployed at one point in Afghanistan. This commitment and his interest in military history and battlefields combine to make him an enthusiastic and coherent advocate for

the cause. *Photo' Mark Saunders*

NEWS OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST FOR MEMBERS

ADDITIONAL TALK – DATE TO FOLLOW

We are hoping to arrange a talk soon by Grant Ford from the 'Little Gallery' in the Parade, Marlborough about Ken White described as a 'Great British Swindon painter' Grant has an exhibition about Ken White at the Gallery from 24th July to 12th August 2026. Further details will follow.

WHITE HORSE BOOK SHOP SUMMER SCHOOL LECTURE, DAVID du CROZ



"1776: War of Independence or Revolution" lecture by David Du Croz will be held on Friday 31st July 10am – 1pm at the White Horse Book Shop in Marlborough.

250 years ago 13 American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain in the midst of a bloody war. What gave rise to this and what were the underlying causes of this war initiated by the "shot heard round the world"? Tickets are available from the White Horse Bookshop: 01672 512071.

Website : <https://www.whitehorsebooks.co.uk/the->

[white-horse-summer-school-2026](https://www.whitehorsebooks.co.uk/the-white-horse-summer-school-2026)

GLOBAL HISTORY GROUP – MORE DETAILS OF 'THE ODYSSEY' AT THE PARADE CINEMA

The U3A Global History Group has arranged a special showing of the new film: **The Odyssey** at the Parade Cinema, Marlborough on Tuesday August 18th 2026 at 10:00. u3a in Kennet members are welcome to join both the film showing and discussion afterwards over lunch whether or not they are members of the Global History Group.

The ticket price is £8 for 'seniors' and £10 for 'adults', as usual and bookings are now open on the website allowing plenty of time to choose a seat and pay for tickets in advance. The website is here: www.theparadecinema.com. Open 'Showtimes' and select the date (18th August), click on Odyssey and either book a seat as a Guest or using your account. Alternatively visit the cinema to book and pay, or leave it to the day and pay on arrival. With the full total of 106 seats there is ample room for friends & family too.

The film duration is 2 hours 52 minutes and before the start there will be some trailers (What's coming') and adverts starting at 10am. We are pleased to confirm that the cinema staff have agreed to include a short interval during the film especially for us. The film will not be shown with subtitles and therefore if members would like to use hearing headsets please contact the cinema.

The Parade have offered their full menu for guests to pre-order. This can be done on arrival and payment taken at the till so that the meal will be ready after the film. The menu details are here: <https://www.theparadecinema.com/food-menu/> 4 tables in the courtyard have been reserved for us each with approximately 10 chairs.

If members have any questions please feel free to contact Caroline Wrench on mobile 07860 482927 or email: caroline@theparadecinema.com.

GROUPS NEWS

MESSAGE FOR GROUP LEADERS

Gentle reminder: we will be preparing our next yearbook soon. We base this on beacon records – please check that all the data and descriptions for your group remain accurate. It's also helpful to review membership lists, as this helps us to manage vacancies.. Thank you.

A MISCELLANY OF MUSIC

Do you know why the year 1685 is of particular interest in music of that time?

The answer is that Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel and Domenico Scarlatti, all famous composers, were all born in that same year.

What about another famous composer who was also a King's Royal astronomer? William Herschel composed 24 symphonies and 12 concertos for oboe, violin and viola and other music.

He also fundamentally revolutionized astronomy by doubling the known size of the Solar System, discovering infrared radiation and he built the largest and best telescopes in the world. With them he discovered one new planet (Uranus), four new planetary moons, and numerous double stars. He lived in Bath until required by King George III to move closer to Windsor.

These and other arcane trivia together with an associated selection of music educate and entertain members of the Musical Miscellany Group. There is currently a waiting list, but vacancies do sometimes come up.

Group Leader: Jeff Hide.

FURTHER PLACES AVAILABLE – DOUBLE BOUNCE TENNIS AND TABLE TENNIS GROUPS

The **Double Bounce Tennis group** meets weekly on a Wednesday morning at 10am at the Marlborough Tennis Club, and is designed for those who probably cannot, or do not wish to, run around the court as fast as maybe they were once able to! The tennis is played on a normal sized court, but a double bounce is allowed before hitting the ball. The sessions last for one hour. The cost is £4 per session which includes coffee and cake. Equipment can be provided if needed. Do come along and try as it's great fun and good exercise.

The **Tuesday Table Tennis group** hires tables at Marlborough Leisure Centre. All levels of ability are welcome, including beginners. As well as improving your co-ordination and reactions, table tennis is a lot of fun, so do come along and try it. Equipment can be provided if needed. There is a small charge of £1 per person to cover the cost of the table hire, which is great value considering the benefits of playing for an hour!

PLACES STILL AVAILABLE IN THE ART HISTORY GROUP

I started the Art History Group twelve years ago, and in that time we've covered a range of topics from Turner to Surat and printmaking to stained glass.

In June 2026 we successfully started a Group 2, to offer space to members on our ever increasing reserve list. So far Group two's programme of talks has included Desert Island Art, Childe Hassan, Ken Done, Gabriel Munter, Euan Uglow, and Carl Larsson.

The topics are chosen by individual members. We don't follow a fixed curriculum or study a specific period or school. This approach has enabled the group to explore some unusual topics and artists. Discussions are prepared and led either by individuals or a small group. No experience necessary! Some members are new to the subject while others have a longstanding interest. We all learn from each other.

If anyone would like to join either of the groups there are spaces available in both. Group 1 meets on the 2nd Friday of each month and Group 2 on the 4th Friday. Both meet in the mornings at The Friends Meeting House on the Parade, Marlborough. For more information please contact Group Leaders:

We look forward to welcoming some new members. **Jane Fox, Group Leader**

NEW MEMBERS LUNCH

The latest new members' lunch was held on Friday 26th June, and was felt by all to be very successful. All those who had joined u3a in Kennet between last September and mid-May were invited, and although some were unable to attend – inevitable with such an active membership, particularly at holiday time – the Kennet Valley Hall in Lockeridge was full, and, thankfully, was pleasantly cool despite the outside temperature. Chair Mike Morison welcomed the diners, and group leaders along with members of the executive committee were present to discuss the experiences and possibilities of u3a membership. As always, helpers from the Really Useful Group were on hand to give their invaluable assistance, and caterer Dan provided his usual tasty spread.

These lunches, offered free of charge to new members, require a lot of organisation and could not take place without the time and effort of volunteers. However the catering has to be paid for by u3a, so it is important that we are able to calculate attendance in advance, in order to avoid food wastage. Thanks therefore to all those who replied either positively or negatively to the invitation, and who let us know if they were forced to cancel.

We hope to hold another lunch sometime in early 2027.

SAVERNAKE PARK COMMUNITY FARM

On a very hot day in July a group of members of u3a were privileged to be among the first to have an arranged visit to Mark Janovich's project in the Savernake Forest. Mark came to a Coffee Exchange in March 2026 to talk about his ideas for community farming that he wants to spread around the world.

Kathy Bell, who works at the project, introduced the group to the enormous range of fruit trees that have been planted and which have begun to bear fruit. There are also acre size market garden plots on the site. These plots will be run in conjunction with high end catering companies – probably based in London – where the chefs and the gardeners will work together to grow the products that are going to be directly used in the kitchens.

The project has just been established and it will be fascinating to follow its development.

WEDDING BELLS

u3a in Kennet member Rob Mitchenall married Libby (Elizabeth) Park on 18 July 2026 at her home in Bellingen New South Wales (Australia) where they will continue to live. Rob was the u3a in Kennet Charity Commission Contact until he stood down after 9 years at the Annual General Meeting in 2017. Rob has been an active member of our theatre, walking and cycling groups



Rob and Libby first met in 1977 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia when she and her husband Jamie came to live on the same housing compound as Rob and his wife Elinor. They became best friends quickly and had many holidays and adventures together during the three years that they were together. They maintained their close friendship despite moving to separate parts of the world. By 1992 Rob and Elinor were living in Wootton Rivers and Libby and Jamie, with their four children had moved to Sydney Australia, Jamies's home country.

Sadly Elinor died in 2020 and Rob and Libby became closer in the past two years following Jamie's sudden death. They corresponded regularly and spent some time together during Libby's visit to the UK in 2025. Rob visited Australia earlier this year in March this year and on his arrival in Sydney found, to their great delight and surprise, that they had fallen in love. Not wishing to waste any time they agreed to marry and to live in Australia. Rob shared the photo taken at their engagement.

Rob says 'I shall of course miss my family and friends in Wootton Rivers, Marlborough and the UK in general but I am excited about embarking on my 4th Stage of Life, living in a new country with a new family'. He will return to the UK to sell his home and then move permanently to Australia.

OTHER NEWS FOR MEMBERS

STRENGTH AND BALANCE COURSE – SEPTEMBER 2026

The third Strength and Balance 5 week course will begin on 25th September 2026 from 3 – 4pm at the Jubilee Centre in Marlborough at a cost of £30.00

A few places remain available and **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.

FUND RAISING GARDEN PARTY IN SUPPORT OF MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERS
30th AUGUST 2026 in MARLBOROUGH

Please see below for details of the 2026 fund raising garden party in support of the medical charity Medecins sans frontieres.



MARLBOROUGH LIT FEST

For the latest news about the Lit Fest please see here: <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