



Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2026

CHAIR'S WELCOME



Photo: Susan Turner

The last week of this month sees this year's Open Day in Marlborough Town Hall, where we open ourselves to the public and hope to recruit a number of new members. A representation of our groups will be present, so may be an opportunity for you to join a new group – who knows?

I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Mike Morison, Chair, u3a in Kennet



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Open Day

10.00am – 1.00pm 30th
September 2026, Town
Hall, Marlborough.

Annual General Meeting

2.00 pm 20th October
2026, Town Hall,
Marlborough. Followed by
the Kennet Talk: The
Seven Wonders of the
Ancient World
Stephen Carr-Smith

Coffee Exchange

19th November 2026
10.15 Town Hall,
Marlborough

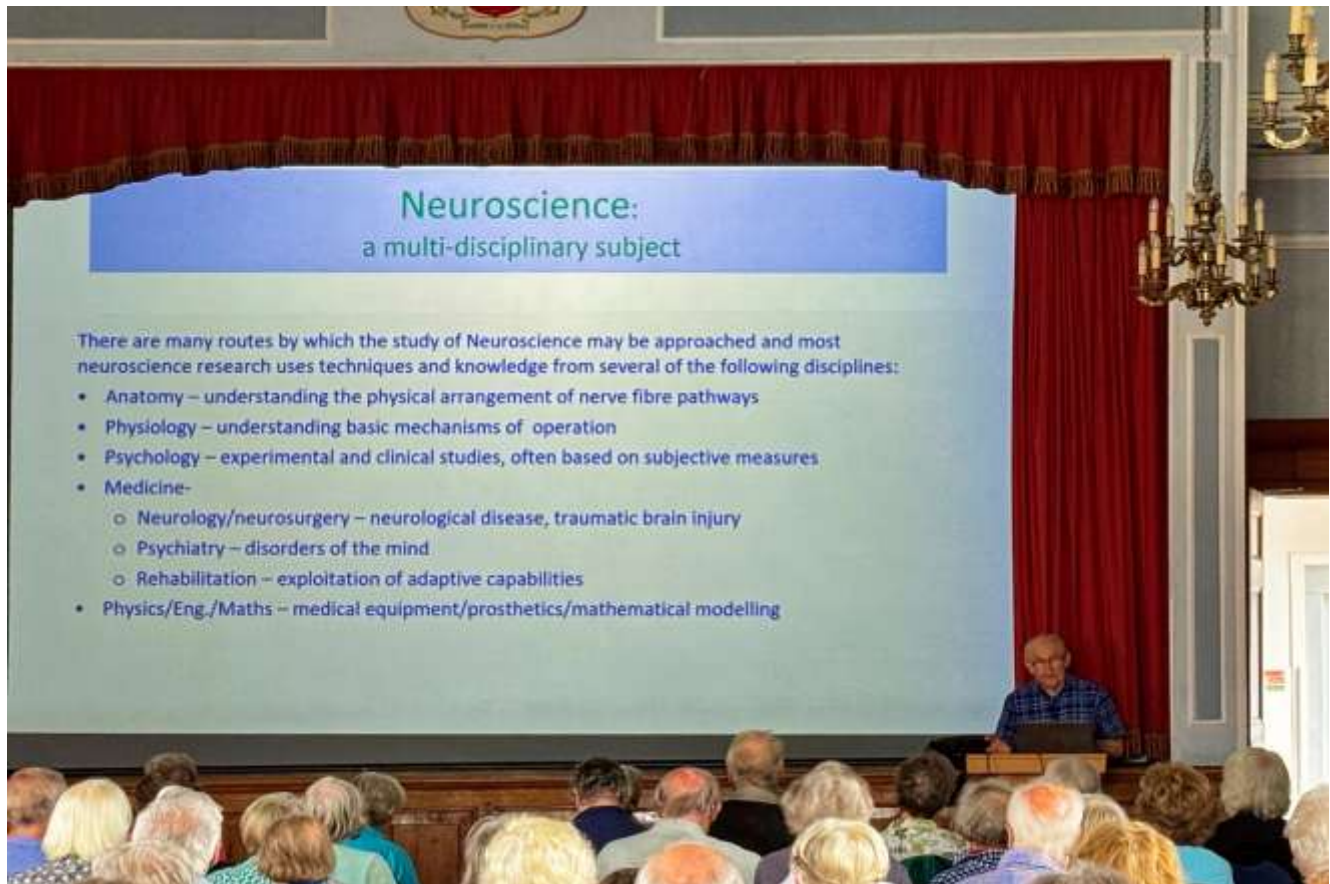
The copy date for the
next Newsletter will be
25th October 2026 with
contributions to:
newsletter@u3ainkennet.org.uk

Other useful links
u3ainkennet.org.uk and
www.facebook.com/u3ainkennet
Please "control and
click" on links to visit
suggested webpages

COFFEE EXCHANGE, 27th AUGUST 2026, MARLBOROUGH TOWN HALL

Neuroscience : Exploring the Brain

A capacity audience gathered at the Town Hall to hear Dr Graham Barnes, Emeritus Professor in Neuroscience, talking about the mechanics of our brains. Graham had a distinguished career in research both for the MOD and the Institute of Neurology in London. He is also a former Chairman of u3a in Kennet and now runs the Life Sciences Group.



Photo; Hamzah

The minute passages and pathways carrying messages around each and every skull in the room were tested as the story unfolded. Graham told how movement and speed of movement affect sight. His work, at one stage, had involved researching this so that test pilots could "teach their brains" to pass the messages faster so that their sight was not impaired by the extraordinary speeds and acrobatics that the planes were achieving. (This would also apply to ballerinas, ice skaters and probably whirling dervishes!).

The subject is highly technical and intricate but Graham's brightly coloured illustrations and explanations opened up a new area of understanding for many in the audience.

COFFEE EXCHANGE, 17th SEPTEMBER 2026, MARLBOROUGH TOWN HALL

Folk culture in Wiltshire

The Director of Wiltshire Museum, David Dawson came to the Town Hall to talk about the collection in the archives in the Wessex group of museums which give us an insight into the folk lore and traditions of the area.

His talk was based on a recent exhibition which toured the five museums. He split it into various categories: Songs and Stories, Making and Meaning, Magic and Myth and he also referred to contemporary artefacts which are creating the present and future folklore.

If you were unable to be there you can watch the recording on <https://youtu.be/zC8-J2env84>

The Wiltshire Museum is situated in Long Street, Devizes where it was established in 1874. David was keen to share the details of the project to move the museum to the old Assizes building in Devizes. He was able to show the audience in the Town Hall plans of the renovations planned and AI drawings of how the rooms will look in the future. This project which is planned to be complete in 2030 has the dual benefits of restoring the neglected – and impressive – Assizes Building and providing a modern improved environment for the very valuable Museum. The total planned cost for the project is £14 million and has already attracted grants and donations of £12.5 million. There are further details on the Wiltshire Museum home site which has a section called Assizes for Devizes.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

U3A IN KENNET OPEN DAY, 30th SEPTEMBER 2026, TOWN HALL, MARLBOROUGH



Our 2026 Open Day will be held on Wednesday 30th September at the Town Hall, from 10am to 1pm.

Our Open Day is our opportunity to share information about what we do and what we offer to the local community.

In addition members are welcome to attend to re-discover our range of over 70 Groups and consider trying out some new activities.

Please do invite any of your friends who are not already members and who might be interested in joining us

u3a IN KENNET ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2026 Annual General Meeting will be held on 20th October 2026 from 2.00 pm at the Town Hall in Marlborough.

Members have already been sent the formal notification of the meeting and the full set of papers are provided here: <https://u3ainkennet.org.uk/u3a-in-kennet-agm-2026/> including the accounts, Chair and Trustees' report, and the draft AGM Minutes from 2025.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM so that we have the necessary quorum (currently approximately 75 members).

The AGM will be followed by the Kennet Talk which will be presented by Stephen Carr-Smith on the interesting subject of '**The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World**'.

MARLBOROUGH HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAY, 3rd OCTOBER 2026

The annual Marlborough Health and Wellbeing Open Day will be held on Saturday 3rd October 2026 from 10am – 1pm in the Town Hall in Marlborough.

u3a in Kennet will be represented along with other local organisations providing health and wellbeing services and support for all age groups.

For more information please contact jill.turner@u3ainkennet.org.uk



GROUPS NEWS

u3a Baristas!

We have over a hundred members at our coffee exchanges. Ever wondered how the 'cafe' happens?

u3a members just like you buy supplies: good ground coffee, tea and biscuits. Sometimes cakes.

u3a members just like you brew the drinks, get out the cups and saucers, turn on the dishwasher and prepare for your arrival at 10.15am

Could you join us? Would you like to? Please do! We're on the lookout for a few more helpers.

Chair Mike Morison confirms that 'The Usefals are an essential part of the u3a in Kennet. Our monthly meetings, which are now so popular, could not happen without them.'

You wouldn't have to volunteer for every event. We ask our volunteers to choose what suits them. Come and join the happy band. Say hello at a coffee exchange or email usefals@u3ainkennet.org.uk

OTHER NEWS AND INFORMATION

u3a TRUST ONLINE TUTORIALS

The u3a Trust provides a wide range of online activities which are available on their website here: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities>

SAVERNAKE PARK COMMUNITY FARM -VOLUNTEERS

Further to the short article about the Farm in our August Newsletter and the presentation by Mark Jankovich at our Coffee Exchange in April 2026, the Farm manager has invited u3a in Kennet members to volunteer to assist with some light horticultural tasks under supervision and with tools supplied. Light refreshments and water will be supplied.

The opportunities include ongoing roles in the orchard, loosening the ties around the small trees as their trunks expand, assessing tree hydration/health, and later, roles in the Market Garden, planting, watering & weeding in assigned volunteer plots (TBD).

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

ADVICE ON DOMESTIC FIRE SAFETY

The Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service offers free advice on domestic fire safety and security including home visits and the information is available here:

<https://www.dwfire.org.uk/> and <https://www.dwfire.org.uk/safe-and-well-visits/>

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 Lacey Co-opted
member: Membership
Secretary