

*** Monthly Meeting – Thursday 28th November**

Please join us at our next **Member’s Monthly** meeting.

It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 28th NOVEMBER** at **SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

Good, Bad or Ugly - 160 Amusing Years of Public Libraries in Kent

Christoph Bull

Don’t panic – we won’t have to talk amongst ourselves! Unfortunately, Andy Smith, who was to have been our speaker this month is unable to attend due to an unexpected illness. Our speaker secretary Lynda Jones has been busy looking for another speaker who could attend at short notice.

Christoph Bull, a former librarian, has visited us twice before, giving talks on Pocahontas- the non-Disney story and Dickens in Kent. Those of us who have seen Christoph in action will remember that his talks are always delivered in an entertaining, stand-up comedian style and there are always plenty of laughs.

Christoph who is a tour guide, speaker and historical advisor has an astonishing repertoire of more than 25 talks, most delivered without the aid of a single note. His brain must be like one of non-fiction shelves in the libraries he used to manage!



Save the date for next month: Thursday 12th December

The History of Champagne – Peter Griffiths

ISLE of SHEPPEY u3a 5th Anniversary

Linda made us this beautiful 5th Anniversary cake for last month’s meeting. It tasted great too. We had a



COMING UP...

David’s Slice of Life	Page 2	This month David looks at the way technology has changed our lives over the last few decades
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 3	See what members have been doing recently and what’s coming up. Register for any groups you are interested in joining.
National u3a	Page 4	There’s a wide range of national online talks, workshops and courses available, included in your membership for FREE! These change monthly so register for the u3a Friends newsletter for all the up-to-date information
Keep Smiling	Page 5	A little humour.
Information & Contact details	Page 5	Let us know if you want to join our members only Facebook Group and/or u3a General WhatsApp Group?

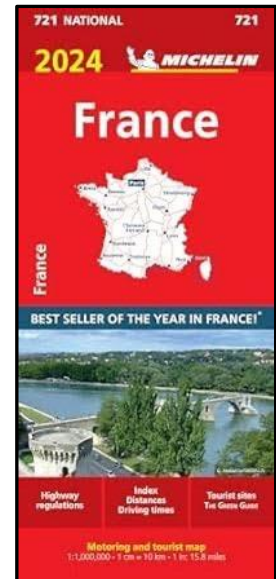
David's Slice of Life

When our children were small, we spent many happy summer holidays camping in France. On our first trip, we soon discovered that France is an extremely large country, making Britain feel small and cramped by comparison.

This was an age long before satnavs, Google maps, mobile phones and iPads had been invented. Funnily enough, we all survived without any of them.

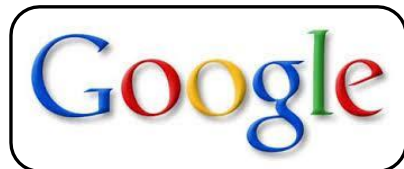
We had great fun using maps (remember those?) to find our way to Brittany, the Loire, the Dordogne, or wherever we had chosen to set up our tent for two weeks that summer. My wife was in charge of navigation while I drove, and every so often she would study the map and say: "Just another half inch to go before we reach our campsite."

Navigating our way around France using Michelin maps was an integral and enjoyable part of our camping trips. The arrival of satnavs and all the other gizmos which aid navigation have made long journeys more efficient but much less fun. Button-pressing has made us all lazy.



The speed of technological advance in the last few decades has been astonishing. It's not that long ago that all we could do if we wanted to check a fact or discover the symptoms of this or that disease was to visit our local library or invest in a complete set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, much of which would be out of date before you'd finished paying for it.

Of course, there were always dictionaries to check the spelling of a word, though that could be difficult if you had no idea how to spell it in the first place.



Today, Google makes fact-checking instantaneous. We can consult Dr Google and even tell our GP what's wrong with us and suggest the right course of treatment, though generally not a good idea unless you want to start looking for another surgery.

Letter writing is a forgotten art, killed off by social media, emails, WhatsApp and the like. Remember postcards? We would go abroad and send an "Arrived safely, having a lovely time" postcard back to Blighty. It usually dropped the letterbox a week after we got home. Now we can send a WhatsApp or a text and they will know within seconds that everything is fine. Great. But the downside is that we can now be pestered every day by messages about problems and assorted trivia we don't want to hear about while we're on holiday.

And, as it has in nearly all walks of life, technology has taken over in the workplace. Complicated or time-consuming tasks have now been made so much easier, and especially so in the media, a profession in which I worked for more than 50 years. I certainly don't miss having to load more carbon paper into my ancient Imperial typewriter because I made a couple of typos or written a clumsy sentence.

But even in my profession, technology has inadvertently created a backward step. A recent survey by a journalists' training body revealed that a substantial proportion of new recruits to the media industry have no idea how to conduct a face-to-face interview because they have no experience of this essential part of a journalists' toolkit other than via social media. Face-to-face contact is often crucial if you want to build up a rapport with your interviewee, especially in a challenging situation.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not a Luddite, but too much these days is far too easy. We have lost the ability to be inquisitive. The joy of discovering something for ourselves without pressing a

button has, I fear, gone for ever. The mystique surrounding so many of life's challenges and mysteries has also vanished. Messrs Google and Wikipedia have all the answers.

Much of what I have said in this column will resonate with our membership, who have mostly been there, done that, and today have plenty of time for a bit of detective work if they so choose instead of pressing buttons! For younger generations it might all sound a bit trite and unrealistic. They are too busy with their lives to start writing letters or study a map at the start of a journey.

I realise that we can't step in a time machine and turn the clock back. Technology is here to stay. But it's rather sad that so much of what was technology-free and enjoyable in our younger days has been consigned to history's dustbin.

INTEREST GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

Each interest group has its own communications list so, if you are interested in joining any of our interest groups, please sign up at one of our meetings or email us at: isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

If you would like help to start up a group or arrange an outing, please let us know.

Find out more about our groups on our website: [Isle of Sheppey u3a Interest Groups Information](#)

U3A CHRISTMAS SUNDAY LUNCH @ MASONIC CLUB - Sunday 1st December

The next Sunday lunch is on Sunday 1st December and will be our Christmas Carvery Lunch. The lunch will be £25 and you will have a choice of several different meats with all the accompaniments, followed by a variety of Christmas desserts, cheese and biscuits, tea/coffee and mince pies.

There are some places left so if you wish to book, please let me know as soon as possible. The committee have decided to allow this group to be open to guests of members, so add them to your booking if you are interested.

SCRABBLE – Spaces available

If you would like to join the Scrabble group, please let us know. The Scrabble group is run by Val and is on the first Thursday morning each month. Beginners through to more experienced players are welcome.

OCTOBER MEETING – YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO PLAY GAMES!

The October meeting was extended for an hour so members could look at our groups new displays, try out some wine tasting and play some games.



LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Isle of Sheppey singers will be performing 'Merry Christmas to us all' on Friday 6th December 7.30pm at The Church in Hope Street, Sheerness.

NATIONAL u3a – RADIO PODCAST



Have you listened to the latest monthly **u3a Radio podcasts** on YouTube? On the 17th of each month a new episode is uploaded. Click here for the latest edition as well as the full list of radio podcasts since they started: [u3a Radio Podcast Playlist](#)

NATIONAL u3a

Have you looked on the National u3a website? There's so much u3a members across the country are getting involved with

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

There are numerous and wide-ranging learning events and short courses (usually free online using zoom), **Coming up soon in November/December:** [u3a online events](#)

- What is Social Class?
- The Paradigm of Plate Tectonics – A Lesson in Geology
- The Hard Science of Herbal Medicine
- Illuminating Hope: The Transformative Power of Christmas
- Planning for later life without “someone you trust”
- Exploring the Universe with the James Webb Space Telescope
- Flight Inspirations: December meeting
- Artificial Intelligence News: Present and Future
- Artificial Intelligence News: December – Review of 2024 and looking forward to 2025
- Live Cookery Demonstration – Christmas Special
- Meditation & Mindfulness continuation sessions
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie
- Laughter Yoga with Judith
- Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Enter your poetry and short stories in the competitions, submit your paintings/drawings and photographs to be featured in the online galleries. See what other members across the country have already submitted and see if you can spot anything from our Isle of Sheppey u3a members. Take part or just browse other members' submissions. Get involved by clicking here: [u3a National Programmes](#)

Enter Your Photography & Art

- Paint or Draw – New theme each month
- u3a Eye – Themed Photography Project
- Found in Nature – Photo Gallery of all things weird and wonderful in nature

Puzzles & Games

- Logic Puzzles
- Maths Challenge
- Aileen's Game
- Where Am I?

Share Your Memories

- Write a Letter to your Younger Self
- All our Yesterdays
- Photos of World War II War Memorials

Writing Competitions

- Poetry Competition 23-24
- Short Story Competition 24 – Theme 'Escape'

Connect with Members

- u3a Air Fryer Community
- u3a Walkers' Exchange

u3a SOURCES

Read the u3a blog dedicated to sharing, inspiring and learning. Interesting and thought-provoking articles from around the country, giving insights into other u3as doing what all u3as do best ‘Learn, Laugh, Live’. Find the blog on the national website, click here: [u3a Sources](#)

“u3a Friends” NEWSLETTER

Sign up to get the most up to date news from National Office and find out the latest news and learning events as they are added.

Click here to find out more about what there is on offer nationally [National u3a](#). New events added monthly so, have a look and see if there’s anything interesting that you’d like to join with in the next few weeks.

KEEP SMILING

WATCH OUT FOR THE NAUGHTY ELF ON THE SHELF THIS CHRISTMAS



Information & Contact Details

You can contact us here:

Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

Find our website here:

<https://isle-of-sheppey.u3asite.uk/>

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:

Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

Our Facebook Page is:

<https://www.facebook.com/isleofsheppeyu3a>

Our members only Facebook Group is:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/384159678869515>

Interact with u3a members around the country on the u3a: Keeping in Touch Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/U3AKeepingInTouch>

u3a YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a/videos>

MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2024-2025

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2pm until 4pm (except in December) at the Sheppey Hall in Queenborough. Refreshments are included. Doors open 1.40pm.

2024

12th December (Christmas meeting)

2025

23rd January

27th February

27th March

24th April

22nd May

26th June

Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Isle of Sheppey u3a recognises that everyone is different and aims to create an environment that values and treats all members fairly. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and to ensure that u3a membership is as accessible as possible to different groups within the community.