

**\* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June\***

Please join us at our next **Member’s Monthly** meeting.  
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> JUNE** at **SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

**The Great Storm of 1987**

**Bob Ogley**

"Don't worry, there isn't a hurricane on the way," said BBC weatherman Michael Fish famously in his forecast on October 15th, 1987. That same night, winds of 100mph battered Kent and the rest of the Home Counties.

By the morning of October 16th, 15 million trees had been destroyed and 18 people had been killed, four of them in Kent. Power lines were blown down, railway lines closed and hundreds of homes and cars were damaged. It was the worst storm since 1903.

Sevenoaks lost six of its iconic oak trees. A man who knows more than most about the "hurricane's" devastating toll on our county is Bob Ogley, author and former editor of the Sevenoaks Chronicle. It may have been 37 years ago now but memories of that awful night when hurricane-force winds blasted Kent are still fresh for most of us



**\*Save the date for next month: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July\***

*“The Life of Women on the Isle of Sheppey during the First World War”*

*Janys Thornton*

**COMING UP...**

<b>David’s Slice of Life</b>	Page 2	This month David looks back over his years as a journalist and editor to a time when grammatical accuracy was essential and highlights some of today’s messages on signs and hoardings in comparison.
<b>Interest Groups &amp; Activities</b>	Page 3	See what members have been doing recently. Register for any groups you are interested in joining
	Page 4	Update on ‘Their Finest Hour’ project – now live online
<b>Local Community Events</b>	Page 4	Some upcoming community events around the Island
<b>Regional Events</b>	Page 5	Summer School – University of Chichester
<b>National u3a</b>	Page 5/6	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
<b>Keep Smiling</b>	Page 7	A little humour.
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## David's Slice of Life

One of the crosses I have to bear after more than half a century as a journalist and editor, when high standards of grammatical accuracy were crucial, is that I am constantly on the look-out for spelling mistakes of any kind on signs or hoardings and punctuation errors wherever they are to be found.

My wife thinks it's developed into a bit of an obsession, but at least it keeps me amused. After all, punctuation is important. There's a very big difference between Let's eat, grandma and Let's eat grandma.

Or this one, which made me smile, from a wedding speech report: "I'd like to thank my parents, Susan, and God." Remove one comma and it becomes, well, just daft: "I'd like to thank my parents, Susan and God."

The necessity for accuracy in spelling and grammar is in all journalists' DNA, as indeed it should be. I've lost count of the number of times I've seen the word potatoe or tomatoe, it's instead of its or family's instead of families. Next time you pass an off-licence, take a look at the signage. More often than not, it will read off-license, which is incorrect, and not off-licence, which is correct. License is a verb, as in James Bond, Licensed to Kill, whereas licence is a noun. Confused?

The sheer number of errors on shop signs has to be seen to be believed, even within a mile of where I live. OK, I accept that not all signwriters are spelling experts but you'd think the business commissioning them might check what they propose to write before it's too late.

A quick tour of Sheppey can reveal some illuminating examples. Close to my home is the new Halfway Fish Bar. The signage on the front and the side of the shop advertises fish and chips, burgers and .... Not chicken, but chickens, a glaring error which caused much amusement on social media when



the Halfway Fish Bar opened about a year ago. I have been tempted to pop in and ask for a Rhode Island Red or a bantam, but I don't think the owners would be amused.

It's a classic example of a signwriter not appreciating the world of difference between "chicken" and "chickens" on a takeaway sign. And, clearly, no one bothered to check the words he intended to write.

A few hundred yards further on in Queenborough Road you will find Queen News, off-licence and newsagents. Two signage spelling mistakes here, "confectionary" instead of "confectionery" and "convinience" instead of "convenience." But at least they got off-licence right!

Travel down further Halfway Road to the top end of Sheerness High Street and you will find a sign indicating the "entrance" to the car wash. Always risky when you employ a dyslexic signwriter! There are plenty more examples, but you get the picture.

The golden rule, if you're a car wash or even a giant corporation, is to always get a third party, preferably someone who can spell or spot silly errors, to read what's written before it's too late. Most people (me included) only see what they thought they had written, not what they actually wrote.

Finally, a word about daft slogans dreamt up by marketing "experts" who have never been anywhere near the place where their handiwork appears. They are all too common. Take Tesco, where a large sign near the entrance proclaims that Tesco is "serving Sheerness's shoppers a little better every day."

An arguable claim, to say the least, but that's another story! Not only is the wording extremely clumsy, but it assumes that every Tesco shopper lives in Sheerness, which, as locals know, is nonsense. Nil out of 10 for their homework!

Yes, I know that my rantings about grammatical errors and spelling mistakes can make me sound smug, even a little nerdy, but I have always taken the view that the English language is too precious to be abused and messed about with. I asked my wife to read this Slice of Life extremely carefully and I believe our chairman, Heather, also proofreads my contributions. I have relied on them both to ensure I haven't shot myself in the foot!

## 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](mailto: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](#)

### REALLY USEFUL GROUP (RUGS)

There have been significant discussions locally and nationally on how we as an organisation can move forward for the future, and how individual u3a's can improve their offer of activities. If you have attended our recent monthly meetings, you will have noticed that several members have kindly come forward to help with events and trips.

The group met recently at the Abbey Hotel to discuss the way forward and my thanks go to Ken and Rosemary Grant; Colin and Julie Alderman; Derek and Mary Gray and Rita Timmons. They will hope to gain the views of members and undertake opportunities to expand and support our "learn, laugh and live" ethos. We are of course all volunteers, so will welcome any help you can give.

At this coming monthly meeting we will be asking for your views as to how and what we can do to improve our "offer", whether it be trips or events or perhaps some other more imaginative way of doing "something different."

### u3a SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH @ The Masonic Club

The next Sunday lunch will be Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July. If you have already put your name down for the Sunday Lunch group you will have received an email to book your place already. There is plenty of space for these lunches so if you would like to be added to the Sunday Lunch group, please email us.

### FLOWER ARRANGING GROUP

This group, organised by Sharon, agreed to put on a display at the Queenborough Church Flower Festival held at the weekend 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> June, to coincide with Queenborough Independence Day. The overall theme was "Celebration". All the Isle of Sheppey u3a arrangements were designed around their chosen theme of "Ascot". The picture of a horse was painted by our Art group co-ordinator Jan and the cross-stitch picture was created by Janet. Here is a photo of the final display of all the arrangements grouped and in place in the church – they certainly look fabulous.



## THEIR FINEST HOUR

### KEEPING FAMILY TALES OF WWII ALIVE

“Their Finest Hour” is a free on-line war archive, published on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 as part of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day commemorations.

Their Finest Hour is a University of Oxford academic project that has collected and digitally archived the everyday stories and objects of life during the Second World War. U3a members around the country have contributed valuable memories of the Second World War alive by recording personal and everyday aspects and individual experiences of life in wartime communities.

Several members of Isle of Sheppey u3a have contributed to the project and these have been collated and submitted by Betty Allsworth and David Goodin from the Social History group they have now been added to the archive.

There is an article on the recent edition of u3a matters (“A Date to Remember” - page 15) and a further article on the national u3a website: [Their Finest Hour](#)

You can see all the contributions of the project on the University of Oxford website: [Their Finest Hour Archive](#)

## LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

### KENT WILDLIFE TRUST – Gardening for a Wilder Kent

We have a whole section on our website dedicated to Wildlife Gardening. One of our members Helen has provided us with several articles to support and encourage diverse wildlife into our gardens. Click here to see these articles: [Wildlife Gardening](#)

Here is a poster advertising an event at Goodnestone Park on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July



## ART ON THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY

### National Gallery Art Road Trip – 19<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024



The National Gallery has an Art Road Trip mobile studio visiting places across the UK in celebration of the National Gallery’s bicentenary. Partnering with local arts charity, Ideas Test, a mobile art studio is hosting a series of free events and workshops in Sheppey this month. The studio is at Beachfields Park, Sheerness ME12 1RE until Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June.



### ROSE STREET COTTAGE MUSEUM SUMMER OPEN EXHIBITION

We have a lot of talented artists on the Isle of Sheppey. There is an exhibition of works by many artists from 14<sup>th</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 11am – 3pm.



**SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE**



The theatre is run by a volunteer section of Sheppey Entertainment Association. It has regular shows and is the venue for rehearsals for several local groups. Here are some of the upcoming events.

More information on their website <https://www.sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk/>



**REGIONAL u3a EVENTS**

**SE u3a Forum Summer School 2024**

The annual Southeast u3a Region Summer School will be taking place Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September to Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September at the University of Chichester.

This event is open to all u3a members and there will be many subjects on offer:

- |             |                  |                         |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Crochet     | Art & Mythology  | Illuminated Manuscripts |
| Mah Jong    | Latin Remembered | Mathematics             |
| Bridge      | Living History   | Science                 |
| Patchwork   | Politics         | Cycling                 |
| Photography | Philosophy       |                         |

More information is available on the Southeast Forum website: [Southeast u3a Forum Summer School](#)

**NATIONAL u3a**

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

**"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.

**RADIO PODCAST**



Have you listened to the latest monthly **u3a Radio podcasts** on YouTube? Each month on 17<sup>th</sup> a new episode is uploaded.

Click here for the full list of radio podcasts since they started: [u3a Radio Podcast Playlist](#)

**NATIONAL u3a**

**ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS**

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

- Flight Inspirations: The History of Royal Flying
- Future Lives Webinar
- Boost your digital confidence: How to overcome your mobile or tablet issues
- Secrets of the Human Brain: Brain Research, Imaging & Scanning
- Exploring World Faiths: Forgiveness
- Numbers with Shapes with Dr Knott
- Modern Britain: A Story told through Stamps with Diana Laffin
- Celestial Marvels: Demystifying the Cosmos
- Darkness on the Edge of Town: Bruce Springsteen and the American Dream
- Rembrandt at 34: A Mirror to the Soul
- The Harlem Renaissance 2
- Live Cookery Demonstration – Summer Recipes
- 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 of our Isle of Sheppey u3a members. Get involved by clicking here: [u3a National Programmes](#)

Take part or just browse other members’ submissions.

**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

**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](#)

**MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2024**

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 (except for Picnic in the Park). Doors open 1.40pm.

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|--|---|
| 25 <sup>th</sup> July  | 24 <sup>th</sup> October                      |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> August – Picnic in the Park - Sheppey Sea Cadets at Barton’s Point Coastal Park | 28 <sup>th</sup> November                     |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> September   | 12 <sup>th</sup> December (Christmas meeting) |

