

**\* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April\***

Please join us at our next **Monthly Members’ meeting**.  
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April** at **THE SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

**A Supersonic Cover-Up? The Concorde Crash**

**Guy Bartlett**

Concorde was the fastest passenger aircraft of all time. When it flew past, people stared skywards to see it. It was a never-to-be forgotten experience.

But when an Air France Concorde crashed in flames at Charles de Gaulle airport, Paris, in July 2000, killing all 109 passengers and crew, it was the beginning of the end for the Concorde dream.

An extensive investigation revealed that a strip of metal which had fallen from another aircraft burst one of Concorde’s tyres. But, according to aviation historian Guy Bartlett, the speaker at our April meeting, the truth is far more disturbing.



**\*Save the date for next month: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May\***

**The History & Restoration of the Medway Queen – Mark Bathurst**

**COMING UP...**

**Membership subscriptions 2025/2026**

Due on 1<sup>st</sup> April; please see section below for information on how to pay if you have not already done so

<b>David’s Slice of Life</b>	Page 2	This month, David discusses his relationship with dancing in his usual humorous manner.
<b>Interest Groups &amp; Activities</b>	Page 3	See what members have been doing recently and what’s coming up. Register for any groups you are interested in joining.
<b>AGM 2025</b>	Page 4	Advanced notice of our upcoming AGM
<b>Membership Subscriptions</b>		Details on how to pay your membership fee.
<b>Meeting Dates</b>		
<b>u3a Radio Podcast</b>		Have you listened to the latest podcasts?
<b>National u3a</b>	Page 5	There’s a wide range of national online talks, included in your membership for FREE!
<b>Online Learning Events</b>		
<b>u3a National Programmes</b>		National u3a Learn and share activities cover a wide range of interests for all u3a members to get involved in - from challenges and projects to competitions.
<b>u3aFriends Extra</b>	Page 6	Join the “u3a Friends” to access discounts on products and services. Sign up for the newsletter to for all the up-to-date national u3a information.
<b>Newsletter</b>		
<b>Keep Smiling</b>		A little humour.
<b>Information &amp; Contact details</b>		Let us know if you want to join our members only Facebook Group and/or u3a General WhatsApp Group?

## David's Slice of Life

It seems that the number of viewers watching Strictly Come Dancing, back on TV again in the autumn for its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, is continuing to fall. The novelty is wearing off.

Not that I have ever liked the programme, or even like dancing, but I admit to watching it once, when former Maidstone MP Anne Widdecombe took part, surely one of the most unlikely contestants ever. I have met Ms Widdecombe before and was curious to see how she got on. Unsurprisingly, she didn't get very far.



You might think that I'm a sad person, but I have never seen the point of dancing. I find the sight of people dancing, especially at discos, well, just ridiculous.

My earliest encounters with dancing were some 60 years ago, when my parents visited a local club, which held dances on a Saturday night. They always dragged me along and, despite my protests, I was encouraged to learn a few dances. I can still recall that one was the Valita and the other was the Gay Gordons, a title which surely must have undergone a name-change by now.

My wife loves dancing and will start jigging about at the drop of a hat. Once or twice, she has managed to drag me on to a dance floor, but it always ends in mutual embarrassment, mostly for her because I look a complete prat. Where dancing is concerned, I think my wife and I are the classic examples of opposites being attracted.

There have been occasions when I have been unable to avoid taking to the floor, most notably when we were invited to a barnyard dance with friends.

"Grab your partners and away we go," shouted the caller. It was some impossibly complicated routine, which involved twirling one's arms in a circular motion above one's head while grabbing both hands of the dancer next to you as they raised their arms above their heads. In this way, or so the plan went, each dancer took the place of the dancer next to them. The idea was that you did this ludicrous manoeuvre in a complete circle around the hall, eventually ending up where you started. In my case, however, none of the dancers got very far because the caller shouted "All Stop" after about two minutes. I had become confused with all that arm-twirling and was at risk of throttling the unsuspecting female next in line. Red-faced, I returned to my seat.

For a long time, I don't think I did dancing of any kind. Recovering from a sprained ankle was always a good excuse to avoid embarrassment at any function which included a disco.

Then, mid-way through my journalistic career, I was invited to give a talk to a local ballroom dancing club, mostly comprising pensioners. I can casually mention the Valita and the Gay Gordons, I thought, just to show off my vast knowledge.

Unfortunately, this rebounded on me badly, as I was invited to take the lead in the opening waltz with the club's ballroom dancing champ, a charming lady of about 80. I was so appallingly bad that she soon took control to save me. That was the end of my dancing "career," though I do recall that a couple of years ago I was forced on to the dance floor at someone's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

True, I may have been a saddo and always in the kitchen at parties, but there is, I must point out to all you dancing aficionados, an upside for me. While you were doing your John Travolta bit, I was always just an arm's length from all the booze and the food. One quick step ahead of the crowd, as you might say.

## 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](#)

### SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP – Next Meeting 2pm Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May

The next subject for discussion on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May is **Toys through the ages**. All members are welcome to join us at the Sea Cadets Unit at Barton's Point, Sheerness, to enjoy a lively discussion, mingled with humour, from which we all feel we have learned something, and refreshed with coffee or tea and biscuits.

### CRAFTY IDEAS

Crafty Ideas is a small group of members who get together to chat about their crafty projects and ideas over a cup of tea or coffee. It doesn't matter what type of crafts you are interested in, you can join the group. Sometimes members actually do some crafts or help each other at the meeting so it is all very casual and friendly. Recently the group were asked if they could make some cardigans and hats for premature babies born at Medway Hospital. If you'd like to join, please let us know, they meet at 1.30pm on the third Thursday afternoon each month at Sheerness East Working Men's Club in Halfway.



### ART

The Art Group meet regularly at Milstead. The group is open to all levels and Jan, the group organiser is available to help members with their watercolour paintings. Many of the members are very talented and some have recently exhibited their paintings at Sittingbourne Library. Some members have even sold some of their paintings. Art group member, Mike Perrett, sold two of his paintings at the recent exhibition and the proceeds were donated to Colitis UK.



Painting by Peter Paskell

### OUTINGS ORGANISER – JULIE

Many thanks go to Julie Alderman who has agreed to take on the role as the lead to organise some outings for our members. Any members wishing to help out will be welcome.

### OUTING TO THE BLUETOWN HERITAGE CENTRE & CRITERION MUSIC HALL

The outing to Criterion Music Hall was a great success. Nearly 40 members met at the Criterion on Tuesday afternoon, 8<sup>th</sup> April where we were treated to a talk about a brief history of the Music Hall and how it became a museum, community theatre and cinema. Jenny Harkett, the owner of the Criterion (along with her husband) and the driving force behind the transformation of the building and the development of the museum, gave us all a great insight into the creation of this local gem. The talk was followed by a film about the Swale Crossings throughout history, showing different types of crossings, including a detailed look at the building of both the Kingsferry Bridge and the new Sheppey Crossing. We were then invited to view the museum with its many exhibits. The top floor was filled with maritime artifacts and the middle floor with memorabilia from the locality and mock ups of rooms from the past (far more than we could possibly see in one go, so I can foresee a lot more return trips will be required). This was followed by tea/coffee and a choice of cake, all for a bargain price of £6. We would like to say a particular thank you to Val and Brian Spoor who organised it for us and to Jenny and her volunteers who gave us so much information and made us feel so welcome.



**AGM - May 2025**

The committee wish to give advanced notice that the 2025 AGM will be held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at Sheppey Hall at 2pm. This will be followed by the usual member’s monthly meeting. Nomination Forms and the Agenda will be forwarded on to all members at the beginning of May.

With our AGM coming up in May, we are in urgent need of new committee members. Our committee members are only in office for a limited period and we need members to replace these positions to keep our committee fresh and vibrant and keep our u3a moving on into the future. Our current committee members have been in post for several years so we need volunteers to join the committee enabling us to have a smooth planned handover as existing committee members stand down. Without more volunteers our u3a is in danger of stalling.

U3a are run entirely by volunteers and all members are invited and encouraged to get involved in supporting their local u3a where they can. Our Isle of Sheppey u3a can only continue with the support of the members. Expressions of interest from members who feel that they could contribute to the running of our u3a either by joining the committee or more informally are now required and will be gratefully received.

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS April 2025/March 2026**

Thank you to all our members who have already paid, you should have received an email confirming receipt of your renewal. Members who have not yet paid have been sent a reminder email. We will be pleased to receive any outstanding payments at our April meeting where you will be able to pay by cash, cheque or card, we will also be pleased to receive your renewals at any time before then.

Please make **Cheques** payable to: **Isle of Sheppey u3a**

**Bank Transfer:** You can also pay by bank transfer at any time, please enter your name as reference.

**Account Name: Isle of Sheppey u3a      Account Number: 33003361      Sort Code: 20-54-25**  
**Reference: Your Name**

*Bank transfers are encouraged as they are very convenient for our u3a.*

**MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2025**

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

<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May - AGM</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> November</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Meeting</b>
<b>24<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> October</b>	

**NATIONAL u3a – RADIO PODCAST**



Have you listened to the latest monthly **u3a Radio podcasts** on YouTube? On the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 April/May:** [u3a online events](#)

- What the Future Changes in Landlines will mean for you
- Understanding Online Content, Misinformation and Disinformation
- Setting up a New Windows 11 PC or Laptop
- Staying Safe Online – A u3a Presentation with Q&A
- Simple adjustments for making your device easier to use and staying safe on social media
- Editing Long Videos on PCs & Laptops for Sharing on Social Media
- Artificial Intelligence News: April
- Artificial Intelligence News: AI and the Law
- How Generative AI Works
- Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: May
- Secrets of the Brain: Talk Four
- Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Five
- End of Life Doulas and How They Can Help you
- Life on a Smallholding. Is it as idyllic as it sounds?
- A life living and exploring with the most exciting wildlife on the Galapagos
- Poverty: A Sociological Perspective
- Mass Extinction: Causes and Consequences
- The Assassination of President Kennedy
- From the Soviet Gulag to Arnhem
- On This Holy Island
- The History of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Ruff: From frilled collars to lace trimmed monstrosities
- Exploring World Faiths: Chaplaincy
- Turner and Impressionism
- Cryptic Crosswords in Context
- Meditation & Mindfulness continuation sessions
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie
- Laughter Yoga with Judith

**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

**Share Your Memories**

- Photos of World War II War Memorials

**Connect with Members**

- u3a Air Fryer Community
- u3a Walkers' Exchange

**Puzzles & Games**

- Logic Puzzles
- Maths Challenge
- Aileen's Game
- Where Am I?
- The u3a Quiz Library

**Writing Competitions**

Essay Competition 2025 – Submit your case for a person, policy, invention or idea having a positive impact on society

**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 EXTRA**

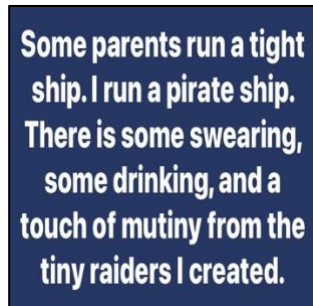
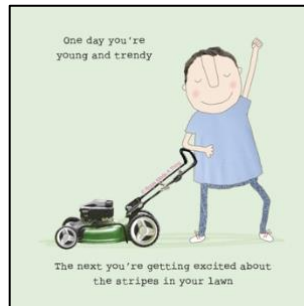
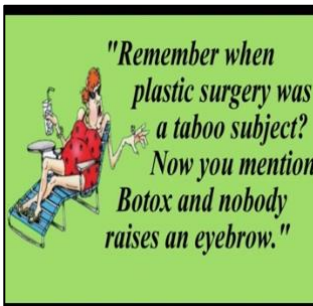
u3a friends is a community open to all our u3a members. As part of this community our members have access to a wide range of offers, discounts and additional services. Friends can make savings on well-known brands, shopping, travel, day out and much more. Find out more here: [u3a Friends Extra Presentation](#)

**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. You will also get a link to the FRIENDS EXTRA benefits website.**

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**



**Information & Contact Details**

You can contact us here:  
[isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:  
[isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

Find our website here:  
<https://isle-of-sheppey.u3asite.uk/>

Our members only Facebook Group is:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/384159678869515>

Our Facebook Page is:  
<https://www.facebook.com/isleofsheppeyu3a>

Interact with u3a members around the country on the u3a: Keeping in Touch Facebook group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/U3AKeepingInTouch>

**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.