

*** Monthly Meeting – Thursday 26th June***

Please join us at our next **Monthly Members’ meeting**.
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 26th June** at **THE SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

A Solo Walk across Africa

Fran Sandham

Here’s one trek we hope our Monday walking group leader Heather won’t be adding to her list. It’s slightly more challenging than a walk around Milton Creek Country Park!



Critically- acclaimed author and public speaker Fran Sandham took on his own challenge of a lifetime, by walking across Africa from Namibia’s Skeleton Coast on the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean near Zanzibar. He was completely alone - no back-up, no support team, no one to carry his gear, no sponsors, no film crew, no journalists, no fuss, no cheering crowds, and no strings attached. Above all, it had to be on a one-way ticket; no safety nets, no get-out clauses and nothing to fall back on.

So why did he take on this foot-slogging epic, which must have posed some risks? No doubt Fran will be answering this question on Thursday. Sounds like a fascinating talk in store.

Save the date for next month: Thursday 24th July

Mary Smith – A Schoolgirl’s War

COMING UP...

David’s Slice of Life	Page 2	This month, David reflects on the progress from cash and cheques to internet banking.
Activities u3a Excursions	Page 3	Information for our upcoming excursion to Hastings & Tenterden and some proposed excursions
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 4	See what members have been doing recently and what’s coming up. Register for any groups you are interested in joining.
Kent Region u3a & Research	Page 5	Find out about the u3a stand at the Kent County Show and the opportunity to join some research with Oxford University
National u3a Online Learning Events u3a National Programmes	Page 6	There’s a wide range of national online talks, included in your membership for FREE! 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.
u3a Radio Podcast u3aFriends Extra u3a Friends Newsletter	Page 7	June’s edition of the radio podcast is out. 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.
A Little Light entertainment Some Interesting Facts	Page 7	A little humour Did you know this?
Meeting Dates Information & Contact details	Page 8	Let us know if you want to join our members only Facebook Group and/or u3a General WhatsApp Group?

David's Slice of Life

I can't remember the last time I wrote a cheque. In fact, I can't remember if I've still got a cheque book. I haven't been to a bank for years, though on reflection I have been once or twice to cash in the piggy bank full of loose change we keep in the kitchen.

These days, all my banking and payments are done through the internet. I was using internet banking apps well before technology sounded the death-knell for banks in virtually every small town. It's quick, efficient and 99.9% risk-free. I have never had a problem and don't know anyone who has.



Nevertheless, I understand why some people are deeply suspicious of electronic banking. Since 2023, nine major banks and building societies have had around 803 hours of outages, in layman's terms a failure in the internet banking service they provide. Only last month NatWest Bank had to apologise to customers for a major outage which left them unable to access their accounts. But don't confuse an outage with an internet banking error.

Not for one moment did I ever consider resorting to a cheque book or a trip to some back street banking hub. No system is foolproof, but I am perfectly happy to accept the infinitesimal risks of internet banking to the alternative – a clunky, time-consuming step back in time. Life's getting too short for that kind of hassle.

In my view, the real dangers lie not with internet banking but with the widespread use of credit or debit cards to pay for goods or services – a payment for a restaurant meal, a hotel stay or a holiday downpayment, for example. You know the scenario – your screen freezes and so you click again and end up paying twice, even though you have been assured this couldn't possibly happen. Once my account was debited three times for a London hotel room after a glitch which, once again, I was assured couldn't possibly happen.

Then there are the scam emails – and phone calls – which now arrive with increasing frequency. I don't know about you, but I receive at least a dozen scam messages each day in my junk email. Some are laughable – like the one I regularly receive encouraging me to purchase the same product Masai tribesmen use every day to improve their sex lives – while others appear possibly genuine on first read.

Then there are the really dangerous scams where a website of a real bank or company is cloned but with a fake email address or phone number incorporated. These can lose you a fortune. All of these scams pose a far greater risk than internet banking.

I accept that for a chunk of society, internet banking has meant more, not less, hassle. I really have sympathy for the elderly who are not computer literate and do not own a mobile phone. We have a lady in her nineties living close to us and I know she owns neither a computer nor a mobile phone. Fortunately, she is one of the lucky ones, as she receives regular visits from her family. The less fortunate are now increasingly isolated from the rest of society.

Sadly, for these individuals, and for others who distrust internet banking, the clock is not going to be turned back.

Meanwhile, back to the Masai tribesmen. I have never had the courage to open up the aforementioned email, but I can't help wondering if they take the risk of ordering the product – whatever it is – using internet banking or do they send a cheque?

PS: I can guarantee 100% that I received no payment whatsoever from my bank, Lloyds, to write this column!

INTEREST GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

U3A EXCURSIONS

We are organising a day coach excursion, through NK Holidays. This is exclusively for Isle of Sheppey U3A members so will only have pick-ups on the island, from The Abbey Hotel and Sheerness East Working Men's Club. Julie will request permission for parking in their car parks, for the day.

HASTINGS & TENTERDEN - Tuesday 26th August

This trip will first take us to Hastings, where we will stay for a few hours. There will be the opportunity to purchase lunch there (the cost of this is not included in the price). We are then moving on to Tenterden where we will join a Steam Train, for a return journey to Bodiam, a cream tea on board is included in the price. *(Please notify us of any allergies for the cream tea)*. The coach pick-ups will be at 9am and 9.15am and we expect to return about 7pm.



The cost is £47 per person. We are asking for a £10.00 non-refundable deposit, to secure a place.

Some individuals provisionally expressed interest at the last monthly meeting, they will now need to pay the deposit to secure a place. For anyone who was not at the last meeting and would like to attend you please register your name and pay the deposit at the monthly meeting on 26th June. **The balance will be required by the meeting in July, at the latest.**

If you are not attending the monthly meeting but still want to apply for the excursion you can do so by sending your deposit to: Isle of Sheppey u3a, 4 Lynmouth Drive, Minster, ME12 2HS

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

Bank Transfer: You can also pay by bank transfer

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

Reference: H&T Trip

Please include the names of the travellers and any allergies with your payment. If you pay by bank transfer, please send an email confirming names of the u3a members travelling.

The balance is required by 24th July and can be paid at the July meeting by cash or card as well as by cheque or bank transfer.

We will do our best to accommodate everyone who wants to attend, but it will be on a first come basis. If there are too many names we will keep a reserve list, in case anybody drops out. If you have booked and are later unable to attend you can transfer your booking to another u3a member and get the cost of the excursion back from them, but you will need to give us their information.

PROPOSED EXCURSIONS

MAIDSTONE RIVER CRUISE WITH FISH & CHIPS

Unfortunately, we were unable to book the minibuses for the suggested river trip in June. There is a possibility we may be able to do this on 1st October, as the boats are fully booked until then and do not do group bookings during the summer months. This will be confirmed if we are able to go ahead.

LONDON CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WITH FISH & CHIPS

We are also considering doing another excursion in December, again with NK holidays. This will be confirmed at a later date.

Julie & Sue say, "Please bear with us and be patient with us, this is the first time we have organised an excursion on this scale, so it is trial and error on our part!"

SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP

The u3a Social History Group gathered again for another lively and absorbing discussion, on an historical subject of their own choosing, at the Sea Cadets Unit, at Barton Point, at 2.00pm on this third Friday in June. Their chosen subject was the delightful and historic one-time city of Rochester; its location, its people, its buildings, and how these elements of social history have shaped, and been shaped by, the pressures of national and local history.

The Romans first saw it as a place to cross the River Medway – on their way to Londinium, so they built a bridge and a fort to protect it; William the Conqueror thought it important enough to get his bishop to build a cathedral and a castle; King John knocked it about a bit in his squabbles with his barons; King Henry VIII first met “the Mare of Flanders” – his 6th wife, Anne of Cleves – in Rochester Castle, and despite his displeasure, considered the city worthy of being educated, so he re-established an ancient school here in his name, and Charles Dickens liked it enough to live near it and make it famous as the location of many of his tales.

Clearly, it was agreed, Rochester has a fair bit of history to its name and it was fun and fascinating, digging into its history, many of the anecdotes coming from personal associations of the Group’s members with Rochester, which made its story come alive.

Our next topics for research and discussion are:

- Friday 18th July **The Creation of The Union of the United Kingdom**
- Friday 15th August **The History of the Lifeboats**
- Friday 19th Sept **Jobs that no longer exist**
- Friday 17th October **Entertainment Throughout History**

*All u3a Members are welcome
Just Turn Up*

FLOWER ARRANGING

The Flower Arranging Group once again produced a superb display of flowers for the Queenborough Church’s Flower Festival that took place on the weekend of Queenborough Independence Day. The theme was War & Peace. Members got together to decide what arrangements



they wanted to create and a plan for how to integrate into the theme. Hopefully you will agree that they have all done a great job.

CRAFTY IDEAS GROUP

Several of the group members enjoy knitting and crocheting. We have a local midwife who has asked if we could provide some hand knitted cardigans for premature babies born at Medway hospital. Members have been busy over the last few months and have produced a range of beautiful little jackets in varying sizes and colours.



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](#)

PICNIC IN THE PARK – AUGUST MEETING

The committee have decided that our August meeting will now be held in The Sheppey Hall. Some previous attempts at holding the Picnic in the Park have resulted in cancellations due to the unpredictable weather so we have decided to hold a similar event but inside.

We are still in the process of considering the various options to make it as good an event as possible in the space available and have discussed the following:

- ❖ Continue with the theme of a picnic and games afternoon
- ❖ We think it would be nice to set out the long tables in a street party fashion.
- ❖ Members will be invited to decorate their tables and to organise groups together to share their food if they wish. We would expect group of members who wish to sit together would be able to reserve tables in advance to facilitate this.
- ❖ We would also ensure there is plenty of room for those who don't want to book/decorate a table or wish to just turn up on the day as usual.
- ❖ We expect to be able to provide plenty of games to play for example, Quoits, Giant Jenga, Mollky
- ❖ We will have our usual quiz courtesy of Val Spoor
- ❖ Ken Pugh will be holding a blind wine tasting event
- ❖ **Other suggestions will be welcome.**

We would love a new name for this event so please send your suggestions to us at isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

KENT COUNTY SHOWGROUND – 4th/5th/6th JULY

The Kent County Show is being held on the first Friday, Saturday and Sunday in July. This year the Kent u3a Network have organised a stand at the County Show. If you are visiting the Show this year pop along to the stand to chat with other u3a members from across Kent and maybe speak to some prospective members about the benefits of belonging to a local u3a.



OXFORD UNIVERSITY

STUDY INTO HEALTH & WELLBEING OF ADULTS WHO GREW UP IN FOSTER OR RESIDENTIAL CARE

Research has shown that care-experienced adults face a greater risk of negative health outcomes compared to the general population.

Researchers, at the University of Oxford, are holding focus groups to understand the health and wellbeing concerns of older care experienced adults and explore the types of support they would like to receive from health and social care services.



If you, or someone you know, would like to learn more, please contact Jono on Jonathan.Taylor@ndph.ox.ac.uk or 01865 617912

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 June/July/August: [u3a online events](#)

- Puzzle Solving with Pascal's Triangle
- Unseen Universe: A Safari through the Invisible World of Microbes
- The Oceans and Climate Change
- Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: July
- Upgrading Your Old PC's, Laptops and Macs to ChromeOSFlex
- Ice to Athelstan – The Emergence of England – A 10,000 year journey from the Last Ice Age to England's first crowned king.
- Artificial Intelligence News: July
- An Introduction to the Arts & Crafts Movement
- Live Cookery Demonstration - Time to get out the Barbeque
- Exploring World Faiths: Friendship
- Plants, Medicine & Magic
- Turner's Timeless Treasures
- Planning Ahead: Age-proofing Your Home
- Mass Extinction: Causes and Consequences
- Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Six
- Staying Safe Online – A u3a Presentation with Q&A
- Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: August
- 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 – Competition now closed
Winning entries will displayed on the u3a website after judging in June

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](#)

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](#)



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.

A LITTLE LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT



One of my students tried to explain today how "blink" is the plural of "wink" and I can't stop thinking about it.



Apparently this week there will be constant rane, hale, gails, drissie, thundre, litnin, hy tydes, tawnaydoes and frizzing colde.
Really bad spell of wether.
⚡️🌧️🌩️🌪️🌩️🌧️⚡️

SOME INTERESTING FACTS

- ◆ **Kangaroos** – Baby kangaroos, joeys, get into their mother’s pouch by instinctively crawling up her fur from the birth canal. The newborn is very small, about the size of a jelly bean and highly underdeveloped, resembling more of an embryo than a fully formed mammal. The joey does not yet have fully developed eyesight at this time. Inside the pouch the joey attaches to one of the nipples, where it will remain for an extended period, feeding and growing. A Kangaroo’s pouch known as a marsupium, is a unique muscular skin pocket on the abdomen of female kangaroos so the mother can control the opening and closing off the pouch. Kangaroo mothers will lick their pouches clean, sometimes putting their whole heads into the pouch. Female kangaroos can determine the sex of their offspring.
- ◆ **Octopuses** – We all know octopuses have eight tentacles, but they also have three hearts. Two of them take blood to the gills and the third brings blood to the rest of the body. Octopuses are also known to be very intelligent, maybe that because they also have nine brains.
- ◆ **Otters** - Otters have the world’s thickest coats. They are believed to have a whopping million hairs on every square inch of skin. Their fur is made up of two layers and is perfectly designed to trap air against their skin rather like a waterproof jacket. Otters are also known to hold hands. Holding hands protects them from predators and stops them drifting apart.

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.

24th July

28th August

25th September

23rd October

27th November

11th December - Christmas Meeting

Information & Contact Details

You can contact us here:

Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

Find our website here:

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

Our Facebook Page is:

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

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:

Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

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>

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.