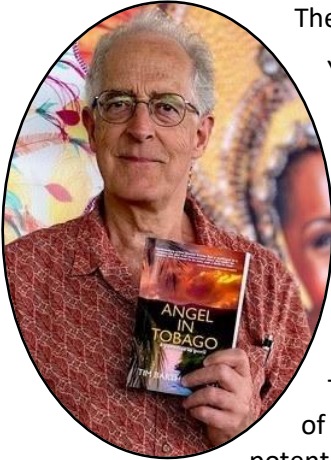


**\* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 27<sup>TH</sup> November\***

Please join us at our next **Monthly Members’ meeting**.

It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November** at **THE SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

***The Acting Lark – Tim Baker***



The speaker this month is a man of many parts – literally!

You may just have caught a glimpse of Tim Baker on TV in one of his numerous roles. He describes himself as a tall, balding and wrinkly actor, author, comic novelist – and wildlife photographer. He has just finished his fifth novel, a thriller called “Angel in Tobago.”

Tim has appeared in many TV commercials, including as a “Posh Santa” for M&S, a dotty granddad for ASDA and Scrooge for Curry’s PC World. On TV last year, Tim was cast as a vicar in Warner Bros’ “Pennyworth,” as well as an appearance in Sky’s “This England,” starring Kenneth Branagh.

Tim encourages audience participation – even heckling – as he reveals the secrets of the acting trade during his humorous talk entitled “The Acting Lark – The rise and potential fall of a commercial actor”.

We’ll have to wait to discover which part he will be playing on the day!

**\*Save the date for next month: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December\***

***Christmas Social with a Christmas Afternoon Tea & Entertainment with Isle of Sheppey Singers***

**COMING UP...**

<b>David’s Slice of Life</b>	Page 2	This month, David looks back at a time before mobile phones and computers were part of everyday life.
<b>Interest Groups &amp; Activities</b>	Page	Information about our groups
<b>u3a Excursions</b>	3/4	Last chance to join our excursion to the London Christmas Lights
<b>u3a Christmas Sundry Lunch</b>		Last chance to book your place at our Christmas Lunch including bring your non-member partners/friends
<b>Community Events</b>	Page 5	There are lots of local upcoming Christmas events. Support our local councils, groups and artisans this festive season.
<b>National u3a Online Learning Events</b>	Page 6	There’s a wide range of national online talks, included in your membership for FREE!
<b>u3a National Programmes</b>		.
<b>u3a Radio Podcast</b>	Page 7	December’s edition deals with online scams, pop songs and Munitionettes.
<b>u3aFriends Extra</b>	Page 7	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>u3a Friends Newsletter</b>		
<b>A Little Light entertainment</b>	Page 7	A little humour & some interesting facts about Space.
<b>Information &amp; Contact details</b>	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

There's been a great deal of debate recently around the issue of schoolchildren and mobile phones. Should they be allowed to have them and, if so, should they be allowed to take them to school?

If I say that the majority of the members reading this newsletter are old enough to remember a world without mobile phones, computers and the internet I won't be wide of the mark.

Do you remember what life was like before there were mobile phones or before most households had landlines? If you wanted to send a message to someone, pen and paper or a typewriter would be required.

In case you've forgotten, they were called letters.

Of course, you may have been extremely lucky to discover a functioning red phone box, always assuming you had the required number of coins with you. You were even more lucky to get your money back after pressing button "B" if your call did not connect.

We would go on holiday, but relatives would not know whether we were dead or alive until the obligatory postcard reached home, usually a week after we got back.

The same applied if you were going on a journey. No pressing a WhatsApp button to say you had arrived safely or were setting off back home.

Some would argue that instant communication has helped to make life rather more predictable. Never being out of contact also has its disadvantages. There may be some people in our lives we might prefer to occasionally (or permanently) be out of contact with. On the other hand, instant messaging has removed much of the stress which existed when most forms of communication were so cumbersome.

Mobile phones and laptops now play a huge part in family life. You can talk to Auntie Flo in Australia by video call at the press of a button, instead of writing a letter which took weeks to get there, with more weeks for the reply to arrive.

Some 70 years ago, I had a mile-long walk to my primary school, obviously with no way of keeping in touch with my parents.

Times have changed, and for the better. Which brings me back nicely to the issue of children and mobile phones. My son and his wife have just bought a phone for our 11-year-old grandson. It's a basic model which cannot connect to the internet. He uses it to keep in touch with his parents and friends. Only the oldest pupils at his primary school are allowed to take mobile phones into class. They are then securely stored by their teacher until going home time.

Trying to turn the clock back to the pre-digital age is futile. We should embrace new technology with all its ways of making life safer for our loved ones.

We can rely on schools to act responsibly where mobile phones are concerned. If only we could say the same about some parents. But, on balance, I think it's unarguable that the positives far outweigh the negatives with mobile phones, along with all the other forms of new technology.



**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)

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

**U3A EXCURSIONS**

**LONDON LIGHTS WITH FISH & CHIPS**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

**There are still a few places left on this excursion as we now have a larger coach - £45**

This is exclusive to members of the Isle of Sheppey u3a and will pick up at Abbey Hotel and Sheerness East Working Men's Club only. We will leave the island at approximately 1pm and expect to get back at approximately 10pm.



If you would like to join us on this trip, please let us know as soon as possible, before we have to finally close bookings.

Membership is currently £10 until the end of our year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2026) in case you know anyone who would like to join to take part in this excursion.

**CRAFTY IDEAS**

Here is the latest collection of cardigans and hats ready to go to the hospital for preterm babies in the neonatal unit. The Crafty Ideas group are a creative lot and have produced many beautiful items over the last year.



**FLOWER ARRANGING**

The Flower Arranging Group will be decorating a wooden Christmas tree with baubles and other decorations filled with flowers. It will be displayed in Queenborough Church on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December as part of their Christmas tree display. Why not take a look at all the decorated trees, last year it was quite spectacular.

**CHRISTMAS SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH @ The Masonic - Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November**

Our Christmas Lunch is coming up next weekend. There are still a few days left to book your lunch. Members are welcome to bring their non-member partners/friends along to enjoy our u3a get together.

Then Christmas lunch is £27 and includes a carvery meal followed by dessert, cheese and biscuits, tea/coffee and mints. If you are interested in joining us, please let us know as soon as possible.



**SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP - November Newsletter provided by David Goodin****Oliver Cromwell and his effect on 17th Century society and beyond**

Oliver Cromwell was, undeniably, a man of great drive, intelligence and leadership who towered above his contemporaries during his lifetime. But was his influence on his 17th Century society firmly established, and did it extend beyond his death in 1658? This was the question for discussion by the **Social History Group** at its meeting on Friday 21st November.

There is no doubt that Oliver Cromwell was a unique leader; he had to be to rise from the middle ranks of English society to be Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. He was a highly visible and volatile member of Parliament from the moment he first took his seat in 1640. Given his lack of previous military experience, he was a great and inspiring planner and commander in battle. In his latter years he was a great statesman, much to the annoyance of France, Spain and the Netherlands.

The Social History Group members' researches and discussion highlighted Cromwell's greatest strength during his lifetime - his religious fervour - which turned out to be 'The Commonwealth's' subsequent failing after his death. He wanted to teach the people the responsibilities of freedom - how to turn the things of the flesh to those of the spirit. This proved too tall an order for ordinary mortals, and the parliamentary assembly surrendered power back into Cromwell's hands and even asked him to take power as a constitutional monarch, which he refused. It was abundantly clear that no other person or group could match his required standards to which he personally adhered. The stability of 'The Commonwealth', as this exercise in republicanism was labelled, was solely down to one man, which disintegrated with his death, opening the way to the Restoration of the monarchy twenty months later.

In assessing Oliver Cromwell's abiding influence on society, the **Social History Group** concluded that his achievements, though remarkable in his lifetime, were transient, and in the longer-term negative. He gave the English an abiding suspicion of religious 'enthusiasm' and soldiers in politics. He also escalated the long-term instability of Ireland by his suppressive and oppressive measures of subjugation. On the other hand, he was not averse to monarchy, in spite of Charles I's premature demise, and contrary to popular belief, he was in favour of religious liberty and Christmas, without the excesses and debauchery that accompanied this festive season in his times. He championed the accountability of rulers, leading to a constitutional monarchy, which is his lasting bequest to this nation and much of the civilized world.

One lasting legacy of Oliver Cromwell is that he has more roads named after him than any other Englishman or woman except Queen Victoria. He is a dominant figure in public memory of British and Irish history, and probably the one about whom there is most disagreement. As the meeting showed, Oliver Cromwell is still a person to arouse sentiments and inconclusive debate.

**MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2025/26**

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.

**2025****11<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Meeting****2026****22<sup>nd</sup> January****26<sup>th</sup> February****26<sup>th</sup> March****23<sup>rd</sup> April****28<sup>th</sup> May - AGM****25<sup>th</sup> June**

COMMUNITY EVENTS

A GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS – Salvation Army

The Isle of Sheppey u3a are pleased to support ‘A Gift for Christmas’ with the Salvation Army. If you are able to donate new and unwrapped toys and gifts to reach children aged up to 18, who might not otherwise receive a Christmas present, your kindness will genuinely make a difference to a young person’s Christmas morning. Here are some suggestions for gifts:

- |             |                 |                   |             |               |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Dolls       | Train sets      | Educational games | Board games | Make up       |
| Teddy bears | Action figures  | & toys            | Toys        | Toiletries    |
| Cot mobiles | Cars/Lorries    | Hair Accessories  | Stationary  | Gloves        |
| Baby cloths | Colouring sets  | Wordsearch        | T-Shirts    | Scarves       |
| Bath toys   | Pencils/Crayons | Crosswords        | Card games  | Hats          |
| Baby toys   | Books           | School stationary | Puzzles     | Gift vouchers |

The collections will close on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December so we can accept these at our meeting this month. After that time your donations will need to be dropped off at the Salvation Army, Sheerness East Working Mens Club or any of the other advertised drop off points.

LOCAL CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRES



LOCAL UPCOMING CHRISTMAS EVENTS



MINSTER ABBEY – SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 4pm

A special service to remember the loved ones who are no longer with us. A comforting and meaningful evening of reflection, candles and remembrance.



**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 November/December/January:** [u3a online events](#)

- Staying Safe Online – A u3a Presentation with Q&A
- Are you influential? Get your voice heard in the UK Parliament
- Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Ten
- The Geology of Britain in the Mesozoic, The Era of Middle Life
- Take Ten Songs 2: How Pop Songs Work
- Safes and Safebreaking
- Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: December
- Inflammation & Cancer: Removing dying cells to control immune response
- Amazing Tunnels & Tunnelling Feats of Engineering, with u3a Let's Talk Tech
- Bridge: What's It All About?
- Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Eleven
- Boost your Festive Batteries with Qigong
- The Importance of Fungi for the Environment & Humans
- Making your smartphone easier to use – Apple
- Ways we can be happier
- What the future changes in landlines will mean for you
- Radiant Celebrations: How Festivals of Light Inspire Society
- AI News December – The Role of AI in our Social & Emotional Wellbeing
- Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: January
- Exploring World Faiths: January
- Mindfulness & Compassion meets Poetry
- How to Build Confidence in Later Life
- From Roman Britain to the Dark Ages
- Meditation & Mindfulness continuation sessions
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie - December
- Laughter Yoga with Judith - December
- u3a Yoga Network: Subject Surgery

**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**

- The "Still Got It" Photography Project \*
- 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

**Writing Competitions**

Short Story 2025 – Competition closed  
 Essay Competition 2025 – Competition now closed  
 Read the winning entries on the u3a website  
 \* *New projects*

**Puzzles & Games**

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

**Connect with Members**

- Virtual Visits \*
- u3a Air Fryer Community
- u3a Walkers' Exchange
- Find a u3a Speaker

**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 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](#)



**u3a FRIENDS EXTRA**

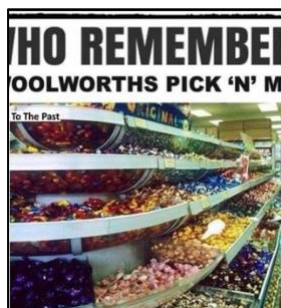
u3a friends is a community open to all our u3a members. As part of this community our members have access to a wide range of offers, discounts and additional services. Friends can make savings on well-known brands, shopping, travel, day out and much more. Find out more here: [u3a Friends Extra Presentation](#)

**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**



**Birthdays are good for your health. Studies show that people who have more birthdays live longer.**

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER**

**Thank you again to all those who have provided contributions this month.**

Please let us know if you have any other contributions, including from Interest Groups or for local community events. Send them to [isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com). Deadline for inclusion in December newsletter is **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December**.

## Information & Contact Details

You can contact us here:

[Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

Find our website here:

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

Our Facebook Page is:

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

Our members only Facebook Group is:

[Members Only Facebook Group](#)

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:

[Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

Interact with u3a members around the country:

[u3a: Keeping in Touch Facebook Group](#)

[Kent u3a Network Website](#)

[Kent u3a Network Facebook Group](#)

## 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.