

* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 28th May*

Please join us at our next **Monthly Members’ meeting**.
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 28th May** at **THE SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

A Year in the Life of a Vineyard – Richard Goodenough

There’s one little corner of Kent (and a couple of others) where the soil matches exactly the unique combination of factors which enable the Champagne region of France to produce the world’s best known sparkling drink.

So, what better place to start a vineyard than the village of Chartham in East Kent! This family-owned enterprise, on part of Burnt House Farm, started comparatively recently in 2013. It is already producing an award-winning selection of white, red and sparkling wines for sale in its shop and in many local shops and restaurants.



Running a vineyard is hard work, as we shall be hearing from our speaker, retired University of Kent lecturer and co-owner Richard Goodenough, when he tells us all about “A Year in the Life of a Vineyard” at our meeting.

Members of our wine appreciation group enjoyed an excellent day out at Chartham Vineyard last year, so we’ve got grape expectations for the meeting and we hope Richard will be Goodenough.

Sorry, couldn’t miss the golden opportunity for two awful puns!

Save the date for next month: Thursday 25th June 2026

The Betrayal of Concorde – Guy Bartlett

COMING UP...

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Community Events	Page 6	Look out for a month of community activities for the Festival of Sheppey 2026 – June 2026
National u3a	Page 7/8	u3a Online Learning Events & u3a Learn & Share Look out for interesting online talks and events
u3a Friends Extra		Find out how to save money as u3a Friend
u3a Friends Newsletter		Sign up to find out all the latest national information
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Just for Fun	Page 9	The Swimming Costume – something a little different
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David's Slice of Life

Our Slice of Life comes each month, courtesy of our member David Jones.

David is a retired newspaper editor who previously worked on the *Sheerness Times Guardian* and the *Sheppey Gazette* (originally the *North East Kent Times*) in Sheerness High Street. He later became the editor of the *Kent Evening Post* and the deputy/business editor of the *Medway Messenger*.



Have you ever been thinking about a friend, relative or a work colleague when suddenly out of the blue you get a phone call or an email from them?

The eminent psychologist Carl Jung had a word for it – synchronicity. His theory was that the human psyche and the outside world are linked and that such occurrences are beyond mere chance. Believe that if you will, but it's odd how often coincidences occur in the most unexpected of places, hundreds, even thousands of miles from home. I always get a spooky feeling that these events happen too frequently to be mere accidents of time and place.

Take a recent trip of ours to Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. The guide giving us a tour of a Roman fort asked members of our group where they were from. There were Americans, Australians, a Dutch lady, a Canadian and a husband and wife who announced they were from ... Sittingbourne. "That's a coincidence," I said, "We're from Sheppey." But it got spookier as he told me he worked on the island, as an accountant in Blue Town.

To add to the mix, I found out later that one of his clients is my local garage. A chain of coincidences linking three of us. What are the odds of this couple and us being in the same place at the same time 350-plus miles from Sheppey and Sittingbourne and having yet another mutual link.

I've had my own experience with synchronicity, thinking about a friend or work colleague and then bumping into them on a shopping trip. Spooky once again, but, no, I don't have any special powers!

My wife Lynda and I have had many spooky such experiences. Most people have had a few. One of our strangest was on a visit to Egypt. The "hello" greeting on the steps of Queen Hatshepsut's Temple came not from a guide but an acquaintance my wife knew from work.

On another occasion, at the entrance to Disneyworld in Florida, we bumped into our next-door neighbour's brother, also from Sheppey. Or the time on a Majorca holiday when I was startled to hear a familiar voice on the sunbed next to me. It turned out to be another KM Group editor. The coincidences are never ending...no matter where we seem to go in the world. Finally, a cautionary tale. A former work colleague of mine from a village near Maidstone booked a Swiss lake cruise with a woman from the same village who was not his wife. Naughty boy! His wife (later, unsurprisingly, ex-wife!) thought he was on a business trip! To his horror, on the same cruise were members of his village's Women's Institute, several of whom he knew. He got away with it, after spending much of the cruise in his cabin and keeping a very low profile at mealtimes.



The moral of this story: Be careful who take on holiday with you. You never know who you might meet! Synchronicity or not, million-to-one coincidences are worryingly common.

The truth is out there... (with apologies to the X-Files).

AGM - May 2026

We will be holding our AGM prior to the main meeting. Members should have received the agenda and supporting documentation by email. We do not expect this part of the meeting to take too long and will be followed by the usual member's monthly meeting.

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

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

PAYMENT DETAILS

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

Bank Transfer: You can pay by bank transfer at any time, please enter the reference as instructed so we can apply your payment correctly.

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

Reference: (As instructed so we can identify the purpose of the payment)

EXCURSIONS – COMING UP**Kentish Lady, with Fish and Chips - Tuesday 21st July**

Due to the fantastic response for this trip, we are in the position to be able to REDUCE the price of this excursion. The balance now due for those of you who have already paid the £10 deposit is £42 (Total £52) - a saving of £5. It goes to show that the more these trips are supported by our members the cheaper we can do them.

The balance is due by the June meeting (25th June), although it would be helpful if we could receive all monies as soon as possible please. You can pay at the coming meeting on Thursday 28th May.

Please note that we are no longer able to take card payments for the excursions. This is due to accounting issues regarding the charges made for these transactions. So, going forward payments can be paid in cash, cheque or Bank Transfer (**Reference: Kentish Lady**) which is the preferred method.

There is a possibility that Julie and I may not be at the meeting so arrangements will be made for someone else to take your payments.

MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP - Sharon

Sharon Bishop has started a MOTO (Members on Their Own) Sunday Lunch group.

Lunches will take place approximately monthly across various venues. The group is open to single members, both men and women, to give them an opportunity to spend a pleasant few hours together and enjoy a companionable Sunday Lunch. Car sharing can be arranged, if required.

Communication will be by WhatsApp and Sharon will use it to organise each lunch and give you the opportunity to reply if you wish to attend that month.

If you wish to be a member of this group, please reply, with your mobile number, so Sharon can add you to the WhatsApp group.

SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP – David

The Social History Group Humour Through the Ages

Picture the scene. Our common ancestors of humans and apes are lounging among the trees of the ancient forests gently grooming each other, some 14 to 18 million years ago. One's hand strays onto a sensitive part of another's body, prompting the drawing back of the latter's lips and a chattering sound emanating from its mouth indicating, in modern parlance, "Stop it - I like it!" Thus was born laughter and, gradually, humour was created out of the need and desire to generate that laughter.

The members of the u3a Social History Group were tickled pink to have the opportunity to give not too serious thought and consideration to the development of **Humour Through the Ages**, when they met on Friday 15th May at the Sea Cadets HQ, at Barton's Point, Sheerness. From the clever subtlety of the medieval court jester, whose very existence depended on his skill in making his master laugh and think on demand, to the manic comedy of The Goons on mid-20th century radio, humour has functioned as a coping mechanism in difficult times, and as a tool to challenge authority and religious hypocrisy, whilst simultaneously subverting and upholding social structures.

In the 20th century, comedy went global with cinema, radio and television, and humour became universal, making comedy accessible to everyone everywhere. The 21st century has ushered in the digital era, where humour is faster, sharper and more viral than ever. Humour has never been more democratic - you no longer need a stage, just Wi-Fi. If comedy and humour were not such a serious element of today's existence, it could be considered a bit of a joke.

Has humour changed much over the centuries? What do you think?

Medieval humour: A man was going along the street wrapped in thought and melancholy. A friend enquired the motive of his concern. He replied that he owed money which he could not repay. The friend responded, "Leave that anxiety to your creditor."

1940s humour: Advice to young ladies around American military camps: Look before you Jeep!

1960s humour: My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's now ninety seven and we don't know where the hell she is.

Perhaps humour is more unchanging than we think.

SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH @ The Masonic

Twenty-seven members and friends gathered at the Masonic Club in Sheerness for a lovely Sunday Lunch and social get together on 10th May. The carvery meal was followed by dessert, cheese and biscuits, tea/coffee and mints. At a cost of £22 per person everyone enjoyed the meal and thought it was excellent value for money.

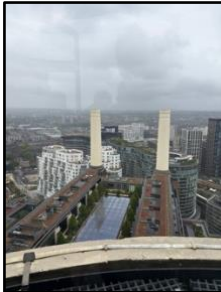
We have a Sunday Lunch group so those registered will receive information of the next lunch date by email. If you would like to be added to the communications list just let us know.

SAVE THE DATE - Our next Sunday Lunch will be *Sunday 19th July.*

EXCURSIONS – Review

Battersea Power Station

This excursion was a great success. Everyone was picked up and accounted for and we left the Island a little early. We had a good journey to Battersea and were all dropped off just outside one of the entrances to the power station and made our way inside. We had some free time to look around the building and the shops prior to meeting at the chimney lift entrance area in the Turbine Hall. Here, there was an interesting exhibition, of industrial history, design and the iconic architecture and history of the Battersea Power Station, to look around prior to going up in the lift.



We had discovered just before the trip that there were 39 steps to access the chimney lift and that the disabled access lift was restricted and had to be booked. All was well though, as with a bit of sweet talking by Julie and Sue, those who need the lift were able to use it.

We ascended the northwest chimney in the glass lift – named Lift 109 as it ascends 109 meters – then eventually we popped up out of the top where we could spend a while looking over the 360° view of Southwest London and the city skyline from this distinctly unique vantage point.



Following this, those of us going to the Rameses II exhibition walked the short distance to entrance and made our way in. The exhibition was surprisingly large and we could take as long as we liked looking round and the many exhibits including several interactive displays. This was a unique chance to experience over 3,000 years of Ancient Egypt featuring over 180 rare artifacts from Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities.



We explored iconic sites like Abu Simbel and the Valley of the Kings whilst discovering the legacy of Rameses the Great including his coffin, ancient jewellery and preserved mummies.

Click here if you wish to see a short YouTube walk through of the exhibition from 2024: [Ramses II & The Gold of The Pharaohs | Sydney Exhibition 2024 Walk Through](#)

MONTHLY MEETING DATES

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.

25th June

23rd July

27th August

24th September

22nd October

26th November

10th December

Christmas Meeting

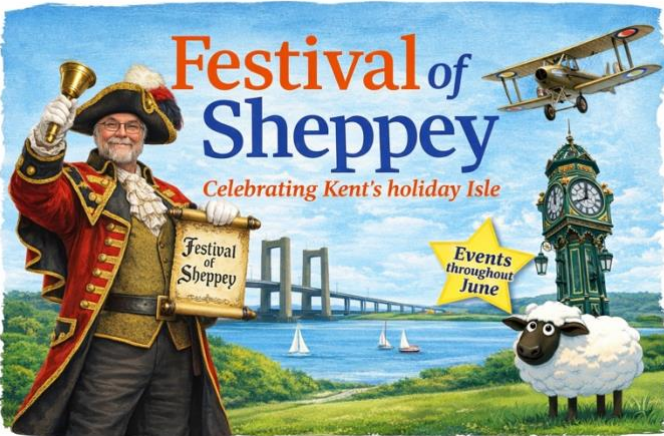
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

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. Deadline for inclusion in the **JUNE** newsletter is **Friday 19th June**. Website Publish date Sunday 21st June

COMMUNITY EVENTS

FESTIVAL of SHEPPEY – The month of JUNE



Celebrating Kent's holiday Isle

The first Festival of Sheppey will take place throughout the month of June.

There is a group organising the event coordinated by Jenny at the Criterion and it is being supported by the Town Councils as well as many other organisations.

There are already many events organised and a programme is being circulated so we hope to be able to get some copies to give out.

SHEPPEY MATTERS - RETRAIN THE PAIN

Retrain the Pain
You asked, we listened!
Friday 29th May

BETTER TOGETHER - LET'S CHANGE THE NARRATIVE AROUND PAIN!

Now at the new time 10 - 12noon
at the Masonic Hall, Sheerness ME12 1QX

Supporting Mental Health
Introducing our neuroscience workshops on Stress, Pain, and Identity with Teresa

Discover how the nervous system adapts when the body changes
Explore how long term stress or health changes affect identity confidence and trust in the body
Discover methods you can use right away to help your nervous system to work WITH you

For more information text Indre on 07541 995740 or Email juliec@sheppeymatters.org.uk

Joy

Are you living in pain from a health condition or injury? Then why not come along to the Retrain the Pain meetings on the last Friday of each month

Date: Friday 29th May at 10am -12pm
Location: Masonic Club, 1-3 St Georges Avenue, Sheerness ME12 1QX

No need to book, you are welcome to turn up

For more information call or text Indre on 07541 995740 or e-mail: juliec@sheppeymatters.org.uk

RETRAIN THE PAIN
Are you living in pain from a health condition, or injury?

Are you looking for holistic and educational support to help improve your mental and physical health? We are a friendly social group with a purpose!

For 2026, we have some great activities and sessions planned for you - including how Neuroscience can improve your mental and physical health impacted by pain, vibration therapy - sound bath and movement, meditation, Qi gong (adapted Tai Chi) and much more...

Dates for your diary - Friday
30th Jan, 27th Feb, 27th March, 24th April, 29th May, 26th June, 31st July, 25th Sept, 30th Oct, & the 18th Dec
10:30-12noon at the Masonic Hall, Sheerness ME12 1QX

Better together - let's change the narrative around pain!

for more information call or text Indre on 07541 995740 or Email juliec@sheppeymatters.org.uk

Joy

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE – Entertaining Sheppey for more than 50 years

The theatre is run by the Sheppey Entertainment Association which is a registered charity. They rely on income from their shows and donations to continue to operate and the theatre is run by volunteers from the community for the benefit of the community. Here are some of the upcoming events. For more information:

<https://www.sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk/events-2/>

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
MEYRICK ROAD SHEERNESS ME12 1QX

NILLY FURY MEETS ELVIS

Sat 30th May 2026
7.30pm £18

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
MEYRICK ROAD SHEERNESS ME12 1QX

4 PIECE
ABBA TRIBUTE BAND

Sat 15th Aug 2026
7.30pm £20

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
MEYRICK ROAD SHEERNESS ME12 1QX

Shadowing HANK

Sat 12th Sept 2026
7.30pm £15

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
MEYRICK ROAD SHEERNESS ME12 1QX

COUNTRY MEETS ROCK

Fri 9th Oct 2026
7.30pm £18.00

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

NATIONAL u3a

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

u3a FESTIVAL 2026 - University of York – 1st - 3rd July

All in-person tickets are now sold out

This summer, over 1,000 members of the u3a community will be getting together at the u3a Festival 2026. Taking place at the *University of York* between 1-3 July, this is a celebration of fun, learning and the community that makes the u3a so special.

Members can take part in the *u3a Festival Fringe* – a selection of online events curated to complement the in-person event.

Find out how to take part here: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>

THE u3a FESTIVAL FRINGE

Events from 25 June – 10 July

Take part in the fun of *u3a Festival 26* from home with *u3a Festival Fringe*. This series of online events will take place in the lead up to and following on from, the Festival in York on 1-3 July. The programme includes a mixture of talks and interactive activities, giving all u3a members a chance to be part of our celebration of learning and fun.

You can find the Fringe Festival events highlighted in blue below.

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

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

- People's Collection Wales: Exploring the public archive of Welsh history
- Drones, huh? What are they good for?
- Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: June – The advent of the heavy bomber: Inception to late 1930s
- Food Tech: The technology involved in food processing and food service
- Making the most of artificial intelligence (AI)
- Learn bridge with u3a
- An ABC of Victorian painting
- Achieving lasting happiness and joy in today's busy world
- Lost and Found: Recent discoveries by Film is Fabulous
- Of Mice and Men: How experience shapes the ageing brain
- A history of Britain's roads: Why we should feel proud
- One small triangle to a man, one giant leap for mankind
- Secrets of the human brain: A tour of the brain
- **Wessex versus the Vikings**
- Islands of the Venetian Lagoon
- **The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system**
- **The technology built into modern cars and trucks**
- **Mrs Charles Dickens tells her story**
- **Watercolours with Tony**
- **The history of shoes**
- **Fusion tai qi gong**
- **Artemisa – vision or vengeance**
- AI News: Generative AI in academia and at home – practical lessons from inside the research community
- The role of women in ancient Egypt
- Exploring World Faiths: July
- A few small nips: Frida Kahlo and the art of pain
- Mindfulness & Meditation continuation sessions
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie – June
- Laughter Yoga with Judith – July
- u3a Yoga Network: Summer yoga practice
- Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance

NATIONAL LEARN & SHARE ACTIVITIES

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: [Learn & Share Activities](#)

Essay Competition 2026 – Coming soon (Opens 1 June)**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

Puzzles & Games

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

Writing Competitions

Short Story 2025/26 – Read the winning stories and final shortlist on the theme “Lost and Found”

Essay Competition 2026 – Coming soon – Essay Title to be advertised from 1 June

Connect with Members

- Missing Pieces
- Virtual Visits
- u3a Walkers’ Exchange
- Find a u3a Speaker

NATIONAL u3a – RADIO PODCAST

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

**u3a SOURCES BLOG**

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](#)

SAVE MONEY WITH 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.

JUST FOR FUN

THE SWIMMING COSTUME

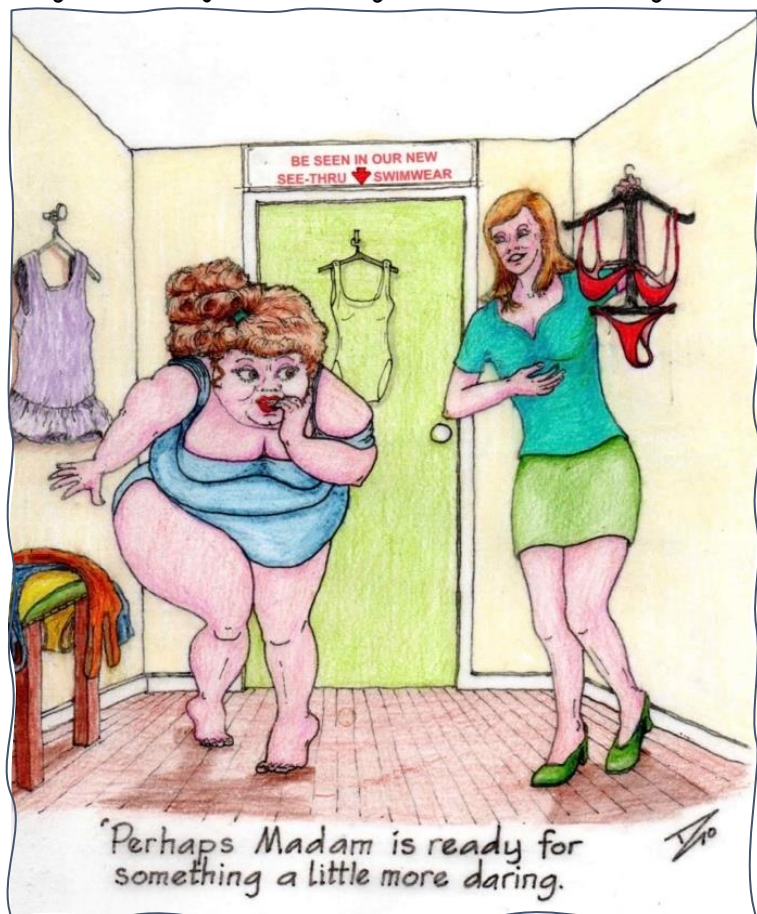
I have just been through the annual pilgrimage of torture and humiliation known as buying a swimming costume. When I was a child in the 1950s the bathing costume for the mature figure was designed for a woman with a mature figure - boned, trussed and reinforced, not so much sewn as engineered. They were built to hold back and uplift and they did a good job.

Today's stretch fabrics are designed for the prepubescent girl with a figure chipped from marble. The mature woman has a choice, she can either front up at the maternity department and try on a floral costume with a skirt, coming away looking like a hippopotamus who escaped from Disney's Fantasia, or she can wander around every run-of-the-mill department store trying to make a sensible choice from what amounts to a designer range of fluorescent rubber bands.

What choice did I have? I wandered around, made my sensible choice and entered the chamber of horrors called the fitting room. The first thing I noticed was the extraordinary tensile strength of the stretch material. The Lycra used in swimming costumes was developed, I believe, by NASA to launch small rockets from a slingshot, which gave the added bonus that if you manage to lever yourself into one, you are protected from shark attacks. The reason for this is that any shark taking a swipe at your passing midriff would immediately suffer whiplash!

I fought my way into the swimming costume, but as I twanged the shoulder strap in place, I gasped, in my horror my bosom had disappeared! Eventually, I found one bosom cowering under my left armpit. It took a while to find the other. At last, I located it flat and beneath my seventh rib. The problem is that the modern bathing suits have no bra cups. The mature woman is meant to wear her bosom spread across her chest like a speed bump.

I realigned my speed bump and lurched towards the mirror to take a full view assessment. The bathing costume fitted alright, but unfortunately, it only fitted those bits of me willing to stay inside it. The rest of me oozed out



rebelliously from top, bottom and sides. I looked like a lump of play dough wearing undersized clingfilm.

As I tried to work out where all those extra bits had come from, the prepubescent salesgirl popped her head through the curtains, "Oh, there you are!" she said, admiring the swimming suit... I replied that I wasn't so sure and asked what else she had to show me.

I tried on a cream crinkled one that made me look like a lump of masking tape and a floral two-piece which gave the appearance of an oversized napkin in a napkin ring. I struggled into a pair of leopard skin bathers with a ragged frill and came out looking like Tarzan's Jane. I tried on a black number with a midriff and looked like a jellyfish in mourning. I also tried on a bright pink affair with such high cut legs I thought I would have to wax my eyebrows to wear it.

Finally, I found a costume that fitted... a two-piece affair with short style bottoms and a halter top. It was cheap, comfortable and bulge friendly, so I bought it.

When I got home, I read the label which said, "Material may become transparent in water."

Oh, well, what the heck!

This article was found by Lynda Oldfield but the author is unknown – the drawing is by our very own talented member David Goodin so thanks to both of them for giving us a good laugh.

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>

Our members only Facebook Group is:

[Members Only Facebook Group](#)

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:

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.