

* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 23rd July*

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

It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 23rd July** at **THE SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

The Life and Death of Amy Johnson – Jane Delamaine

Along with American flier Amelia Earhart, who disappeared over the Pacific in 1937 while attempting a round-the-world flight, English pilot Amy Johnson can stake a claim to be the world's best-known pioneering female aviator.

In 1930, Amy Johnson earned a place in the history books by becoming the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia. But eleven years later, in June 1941, she, too, died a mysterious death while ferrying an aircraft from Scotland to an RAF base near Oxford. Her plane plunged into the Thames Estuary, between Sheppey and Herne Bay, and her body was never found, despite an heroic rescue attempt which claimed another life.



Our speaker, Jane Delamaine is the founder and director of the Amy Johnson Project and we shall be learning much more about this iconic aviator at our meeting.

The photograph depicts, Amy Johnson with the Gipsy Moth aircraft in which she flew solo to Australia in 1930.

Save the date for next month: Thursday 27th August 2026

Sea Shanties performed by Steve Harding & Geof Reed

COMING UP...

David's Slice of Life	Page 2	In this edition, David examines rebranding – do you remember Consignia?
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 3/4	Information about New group and current groups
Community Events	Page 5	Local community groups
National u3a	Page 6/7	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
u3a Radio Podcast		Listen to the monthly podcast
Just for Fun	Page 7	
Information & Contact details	Page 7	Let us know if you want to join our u3a General WhatsApp Group. Apply to join our members only Facebook Group

David's Slice of Life

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

I'm a non-smoker, and always have been, but I'm old enough to remember the cigarette ad from the early Sixties which managed to shoot itself in the foot spectacularly.



"You're Never Alone with a Strand," ran the ad.

Snappy – in theory. But the ad men who dreamt it up failed to realise that it merely projected an image of a pathetic, friendless and lonely figure smoking a cigarette on a foggy street corner. It was an advertising disaster.

The moral here is that snappy titles, especially if they're replacing a long-established brand, can be really dangerous. Ask the Post Office.



In 2001, the Post Office Group spent a fortune changing its corporate name to Consignia. I remember it well, because I was an editor at the time and my wife and I, along with about 20 other senior journalists, were invited to a slap-up Champagne dinner at Leeds Castle. We had an hour-long presentation from some senior Post Office director extolling the virtue of the name change. It was a most enjoyable evening, especially as the Post Office was footing the bill!

But just a few weeks later, the Consignia re-brand was abandoned because the public was baffled by the name, which was also widely ridiculed in the national press. Twelve months later, Royal Mail was born from the wreckage of Consignia.

Too many businesses – the Consignia fiasco being a classic example – employ expensive marketing consultants, who end up contemplating their navels and lose touch with external realities.

All of which brings me back to Royal Mail. A leaflet dropped through my letter box last week informing me that from this year 2nd class letters and cards will in future only be delivered every other weekday instead of every day – and not all on Saturdays.

"Small changes for more dependable deliveries" ran the headline on one side of the leaflet. And on the other side: "To deliver a better all-round service." In other words, a tacit admission that the previous 2nd class mail service was unreliable. It's the Strand advert all over again. But we already knew that 2nd class deliveries were rubbish, didn't we?

Twenty years on from the Consignia debacle, Royal Mail has become quite expert at "doublespeak," the ambiguous or evasive language popularised in George Orwell's novel, 1984.

Last year I spotted a notice pinned to the Royal Mail post-box outside the Tesco supermarket in Sheerness, I mentioned it in this column. The notice informed customers that collection times would in future be earlier but had the cheek to promote it as a "benefit." A benefit, yes, but for Royal Mail, not its customers.

Sadly, this is the way of the world these days, where negatives are dressed up as positives, when bad news becomes good news, and the truth can be bent in numerous directions. Ask Donald Trump!

George Orwell was nearly 80 years ahead of his time when he wrote 1984. Thankfully, we are not the totalitarian state at the core of his novel, but nevertheless "doublespeak" is alive and well in 2026.

Even on Sheppey!

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Heather Thomas-Pugh	<i>Chair</i>	Celia Perrett	<i>Publicity</i>
Val Spoor	<i>Vice Chair</i>	Lynda Oldfield	<i>Group Co-ordinator</i>
Pam Fauchon	<i>Treasurer</i>	Steven Charnock	<i>Recruitment Co-ordinator</i>
Sally Charnock	<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Ken Pugh	<i>Member</i>
Lynda Jones	<i>Speaker Secretary</i>	Brian Spoor	<i>Member</i>

INTEREST GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

Find out more about our groups on our website:

[Isle of Sheppey u3a Interest Groups information](#)

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

GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

TO THE GROUP LEADERS FROM YOUR GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

I will be at the monthly meeting on Thursday, so, if any of you have any questions or concerns, please come and talk to me.

I am updating my records so that I can keep new members informed about the different things the Isle of Sheppey u3a do, over and above, the monthly meeting and day trips out. If you could let me know what you do and where and when you do it, that would be great.



Additionally, we have been informed by Minster Parish Council, that they are making one of their beach huts along the Leas, in Minster, available to some community organisations free of charge to use for a day at a time. Whilst a beach hut would not be appropriate for a large u3a gathering, it may appeal to a group for a small event, perhaps a picnic by the sea. You do need to be aware that there is no water or electricity in the hut and that the public toilet is a fair distance away. Also, due to the sloping land, access may be difficult for anyone with mobility problems. However, if any group would like to use the beach hut for a day, it is available but must be booked in advance. I have more information if any group/potential group is interested. See you on Thursday, Lynda.

MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP

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

The first lunch took place last month at the Red Lion in Bluetown, everyone said that they really enjoyed the get together. Further lunches are planned, so if you wish to join the group, please let us know.

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.

SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH @ The Masonic

This group has been running since 2024 and is open to all members and their guests. We have a Sunday Lunch group set up, so those registered will receive information of the next lunch date by email closer to the date. If you would like to be added to the communications list just let us know.

SAVE THE DATE: Our next Sunday Lunches will be **Sunday 13th September & Sunday 25th October**

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY LUNCH: **Sunday 13th December**

SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP – David

The History of the British Village

The July research topic of the Social History Group

There is a poetic vision of a British village: of cottages crowded around a tree-fringed green; wispy wood smoke rising high above thatched roofs. Church and manor house standing together by a three-arched bridge spanning the limpid brook. At the parish pump, village women gossip while their men folk complete their day's noble labours in the hedgerow fields alongside their trusty shires. Soon they will return to quaff copious ale in the welcoming pub.

On the other hand, there is a 14th century antidote by Piers Plowman: "*... the poor in their hovels, over-burdened with children and rack-rented by landlords. For whatever they save by spinning, they spend on rent or to make gruel to fill their children's bellies, while they themselves are often famished with hunger and wretched with the miseries of winter. The despair of these folk who dwell in hovels is too pitiful to read or describe*".

These images certainly reflect extreme concepts of village life and its struggles over the centuries. Add to these portraits sudden cataclysms, invasion and disease, famine and fire, let alone political action, and the fabric of village life, which appears so secure and ageless, immediately proves transient. Many of our village communities have had their struggles through Saxon, Viking and Norman invasions, bubonic plagues and cholera, civil wars and wondrous variations of Government taxation, beyond even the imaginative experiences of the occupants of that most famous of villages, St Mary Meade, and its most celebrated resident, Miss Marple.

The general, everyday, historical facts are usually more prosaic, yet still fascinating. The Angles and early British tribes rationally established their villages near to reliable water supplies, on good, fertile land and close to useful woodland. Along came the Romans, with their straight roads, who took no account of the existing small communities, leaving them stranded, away from the increasingly important highways. The villagers' descendants therefore spent several centuries gradually moving their villages closer to these roads, to share in the benefits brought by these vitally important trade routes. Their churches, however, had to be left behind and remote from the resettled villages because of their stone structure and difficulty in moving. Local examples of villages separated from their churches are Teynham and Ospringe.

Seaside villages, such as Clovelly, Port Isaac and Robin Hood Bay, expanded thanks to their fishing industries, with as many secret passages as roads and lanes, as a result of historic trade, both above board and of the more clandestine genre. Other communities developed as a consequence of their surrounding environment. Lavenham, in Suffolk, is a prime example of a village benefitting and growing in response to the local wool trade cottage industry.

If history had not provided a convenient local workforce for the entrepreneurs of the industrial revolution and those that followed, then the likes of Richard Arkwright, at Cromford in Derbyshire, and the creators of Saltair, Port Sunlight and Bourneville built their own instant villages. These still represent the highlight of the true British village concept; a more down-to-earth and decidedly less attractive variant of this was the pit villages of the coal mining areas of South Wales, Yorkshire and the Midlands.

Many of our villages are under even greater pressure today as a result of politics, rather than conflict. A decision made in the ivory towers of Westminster can cause villages to mutate into dormitory towns and communities to lose all sense of identity. We are told that the Isle of Sheppey now only has only one identifiable village – Eastchurch. What on Earth happened to the village of Minster-on-Sea, last seen sinking under a sea of housing?

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 or Just for Fun articles. Send them to isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com. Deadline for inclusion in the **AUGUST** newsletter is **Friday 21st August**. Website Publish date Sunday 23rd August

MONTHLY MEETING DATES

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

27th August
24th September
22nd October

26th November
10th December - Christmas Meeting

COMMUNITY EVENTS

CRITERION BLUETOWN



All are welcome at the little gem hidden in Blue Town, Sheerness.

The Criterion Bluetown encompasses; Bluetown Museum & Heritage Centre, Criterion Theatre & Music Hall, Criterion Friday Film Club, Tea Rooms & Licensed Bar.



For more information: <https://www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk/>

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
METRICK ROAD SHEERNESS

Kiss the Teacher

4 PIECE
ROBBY TROTT & BAND
NOMINATED WINNERS BRITISH ACT OF THE YEAR 2025

Sat 15th Aug 2026
7.30pm £20

Shedding Tears Church Hall
04770 524666
Mon - Fri 10am - 3pm

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
METRICK ROAD SHEERNESS

Shadowing HANK

"PHENOMENAL!"
★★★★★
"A born entertainer!"
"The most entertaining!"
"A remarkably proficient guitarist...
He not only sounds like Hank Marvin,
but could almost be him onstage!"
"The best Hank Marvin
lookalike lead guitarist!"
"Award winning regular"

Sat 12th Sept 2026
7.30pm £15

Shedding Tears Church Hall
04770 524666
Mon - Fri 10am - 3pm

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
METRICK ROAD SHEERNESS

COUNTRY MEETS ROCK

Fri 9th Oct 2026
7.30pm £18.00

Shedding Tears Church Hall
04770 524666
Mon - Fri 10am - 3pm

Contact Us : info@sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk

SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE
METRICK ROAD SHEERNESS

DAME DOLLY'S SPOOKTAGULAR PIRATE SHOW

Written & Performed by Joe Meloy

Fri 30th Oct 2026
2pm £10

Shedding Tears Church Hall
04770 524666
Mon - Fri 10am - 3pm

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 – Highlights

This summer, over 1,000 members of the u3a community got together at the *University of York* for the u3a Festival 2026. Activities spanned from flower arranging to wine tasting, via tai chi and handbell ringing. Watch the highlights youtube video and see just some of the fun, learning and community that took place: [Highlights from the festival](#)

See more highlights on the u3a website [u3a Festival highlights](#)

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

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

- A few small nips: Frida Kahlo and the art of pain
- A virtual tour of the Watts Gallery and Artists' Village
- Everything you need to know to get published
- The History Man virtual walk, Scoundrel (Dick Turpin)
- The climate crisis and the National Emergency Briefing
- AI news: July
- Staying Safe Online – A u3a Presentation with Q&A
- Secrets of the human brain: vision
- Flight inspirations aviation meeting: August with Flt Colin Bell, WWII Mosquito Pilot
- Building the world's most advanced airliners
- Digital hobbies for the third age
- Deepfakes demystified; understanding the risks and staying safe
- Cryptic crosswords in context
- The Scottish colourists on Iona
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie
- Laughter Yoga with Judith

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 – Deadline for submission 12 noon Friday 31st July (Max 1,000 words)
“The Most Incredible Journey”

Enter Your Photography & Art

- The “Still Got It” Photography Project
- Paint or Draw – New theme each month
- u3a Eye – Themed Photography Project

Writing Competitions

Essay Competition 2026 – Deadline 31st July
The Most Incredible Journey

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

Puzzles & Games

- Logic Puzzles
- Maths Challenge
- Aileen's Game
- The u3a Quiz Library

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.

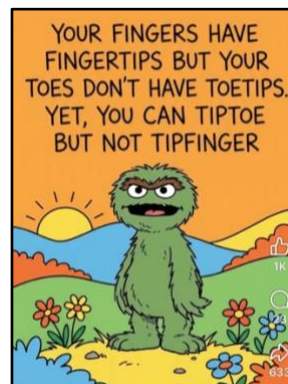
Find out more here: [u3a Friends Extra Presentation](#)

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



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.