

* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 27th August*

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

It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 27th August** at **THE SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

Sea Shanties performed by Seaward

You'll be able to smell the salt and feel the sea breezes wafting through the hall at our meeting. Well, not literally, of course, but our guest entertainers, Seaward, will be taking us on an imaginary trip across the ocean with a selection of sea shanties.

Seaward, composing popular maritime folk duo Geof Reed and Steve Harding, are regulars on the Sheppey entertainment circuit, including the Criterion Theatre in Blue Town.



Steve also holds free Wednesday morning jam sessions at the theatre.

Come along - it'll be nautical but nice!

Did you know there are thought to be around 200-400 sea shanties, though as our meeting only lasts a couple of hours Geof and Steve won't have time to sing them all! Some are up to 30+ verses long, usually sung during the long process of hauling up the mainsail. The best-known sea shanty of all is "What shall we do with the drunken sailor?" Who knows, we may even all get a chance to sing along!

Save the date for next month: Thursday 24th September 2026

The Bayeaux Tapestry – James Dickinson

COMING UP...

David's Slice of Life	Page 2	In this edition, David makes his feelings known about the illegal e-bikes and e-scooters and the inconsiderate riders who are making our pavements and roads more dangerous for us all
u3a Sunday Lunch	Page 3	Book for our upcoming Sunday lunch
Excursion Information	Page 4	Payment details for upcoming excursions
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 5/6	Lynda, our new Groups Co-ordinator gives up information on our Interest groups
Community Events	Page 7	Upcoming local community events
National u3a	Page 8/9	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 9	See if you can work out our Emoticonundrums
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David's Slice of Life

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

There are days when I feel like turning the clock back 50 years, and not because I just want to be 30 again. To be fair, I wouldn't mind knowing then what I know now. Who wouldn't want to hang on to the knowledge and life skills they have acquired over the last five decades if it were possible to step into a time machine.



That's just about all of us, isn't it?

Imagine transporting yourself back to an earlier era, when people were (mostly) polite to each other and loutish behaviour and a total disregard for others were comparatively rare traits.

I know what you're thinking: this is just another rant by a senior citizen longing for the "good old days." Well, partly, I suppose. I'm not pretending things were perfect half a century ago, but then we were not at risk of being drowned in a tidal wave of yob culture.

Wherever I turn now, someone is selfishly doing something which impacts on my life, my family and, of course, on the lives of others. On Sheppey, the illegal and uninsured use of e-scooters and e-bikes has reached epidemic proportions. The police, apart from the occasional token seizure of an e-scooter, appear strangely unwilling to launch the kind of crackdown which has already taken place in Medway and Gravesend (see photo). I don't suppose we would get away with it for long if we all drove our cars around uninsured.



Some retailers are, in part, to blame as they fail to make it clear that the use of e-scooters in public places is illegal.

Meanwhile, a gang of masked yobs has been intimidating shoppers by riding e-scooters up and down Sheerness High Street, just a stone's throw from the police station. Hardly a day goes by now without me encountering some form of anti-social behaviour or total absence of parental responsibility which beggars belief.

On a recent visit to The Leas at Minster, I saw a youth on an e-scooter riding along the crowded promenade at 30mph. Even worse, a boy of about eight was riding a miniature motorbike along at around 20mph. His mother was oblivious to the risks, to the boy and everyone else.

Similar thoughts went through my mind a couple of weeks ago when I saw a group of boys riding e-scooters on the very busy A249 near the Morrisons/Aldi roundabout. They couldn't have been more than 10 or 11. Unbelievable that any parent would allow their kids to risk their lives in this way.

We've had some roadworks near our home recently. We are deafened every few minutes by idiot drivers who open their windows and blast out music at ear-splitting maximum volume. We've even had rap music at 5am, so loud it pervades our double glazing. I could go on, but you get the picture.

This total lack of consideration for others by an increasingly large moronic minority is blighting all our lives and has impacted on me a number of times over the last month,

which is why I feel the need to get it off my chest. I also realise I'm not telling you anything you don't already know.

I'm certainly not suggesting Sheppey is in any way a special case. Communities up and down the UK are being blighted in the same way. What really worries me is that all of this anti-social activity is now so prevalent it is in danger of being "normalised," if I can put it that way.

What better example could there be of an illegal act being "normalised" is that other "epidemic," the riding of bicycles on pavements. This is great if you are a cyclist looking for a safer alternative than riding on Sheppey's busy roads, but not so great if you are an elderly pedestrian or child running a daily risk of being knocked over on the pavement by a bicycle being ridden recklessly and mindlessly at 25mph. A campaign to reclaim our pavements for legitimate pavement users would be a great idea, but I fear it's too late for that. "Normalisation" has made that impossible.

It's a sad reflection on the state of society in 2026, and a depressing thought on which to end.

Not quite the end, as I've just realised how much I would leave behind in 2026 if I went back 50 years. On reflection, I'll stay where I am, e-scooters and all! All I want is for the authorities to clamp down on all this brazen law-breaking, instead of just paying lip service to the problem.

u3a SUNDAY LUNCH

SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH @ The Masonic – Sunday 13th September

The Sunday lunch group is open to all members and their guests. The next Sunday Lunch is on Sunday 13th September. We meet in the bar at 12.30pm for a relaxing and sociable drink and then move into the hall ready for our lunch at 1pm.

These lunches always prove popular with our members and at £22 per person are excellent value for money. The meal is a carvery with a choice of meats, a wide range of vegetables including cauliflower cheese and the usual accompaniments of Yorkshire pudding, stuffing and pigs in blankets. Alternative diets can be catered for when pre-booked. There will be a variety of desserts to choose from, plus cheese and biscuits followed by tea/coffee and mints. Wine and drinks can be purchased at the bar at a very reasonable cost.



There is plenty of space so if you would like to go, please email us to be added to the

Sunday Lunch group and to confirm your place. Bookings should be made by

Monday 7th September to order for the meals to be booked with the caterer, although it may still be possible to add a few extra people after this date.

SUNDAY LUNCH DATES FOR 2026

Sunday 25th October

Sunday 13th December – u3a CHRISTMAS SUNDAY LUNCH



EXCURSION INFORMATION

Greenwich with Thames River and lunch at The Horse and Groom, Wilmington

Date: Sunday 27th September
Cost: £60 pp
Reference: Greenwich
Pickup Points: Abbey Hotel & Sheerness East Working Men's Club
Final payment Due by: Thursday 27th August
Spaces Available: YES

We currently have 30 definite names for this excursion, so the final cost will be £60 per person. Final cash or cheque payments will be taken at the u3a general meeting, on Thursday 27th August, or can be made using BACS, quoting 'Greenwich' as a reference, to identify your payment. BACS is the preferred payment method, where possible.

We will be taking the coach to Greenwich, for some free time, then a Thames River Cruise to Westminster. From there the coach will pick us up and drive us to Wilmington, for an included 2-course lunch. If any other members would like to attend, you will be more than welcome to join us, please let us know. In this case payment will be needed in full, by 27th August.

Hever Castle 2 course Christmas Lunch & tour of Festive Castle Grounds

Date: Wednesday 2nd December
Cost: £65 pp
Reference: Hever
Pickup Points: Abbey Hotel & Sheerness East Working Men's Club
Deposit Due: Thursday 24th September
Final payment Due by: Thursday 22nd October
Spaces Available: YES

We will go by coach to Hever Castle, where we will have a 2-course lunch, main and dessert, followed by a tour of the festive castle grounds.

We will be collecting cash or cheque deposits for this excursion at the u3a September general meeting, BACS deposits may be made at any time, using the reference 'Hever'. Final payment for this must be made by the October general meeting, as this is a very popular excursion and we need to pay Hever in advance. We would be pleased to welcome any members who would like to attend.

NEXT OF KIN DETAILS

We would ideally like to have next of kin details for members to be held on our database in case of any problems, particularly during our excursions. In case of medical matters, we would, of course, contact the emergency services in the first instance, however I am sure you would like us to be able to contact your next of kin for you if you are not able to.

If you have not already supplied us with next of kin details (other than your spouse if they are a member) please let us know at the next meeting. If you are not sure or your details need updating you can check with us at the meeting or you can email us.

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.

2026

24th September

22nd October

26th November

10th December - Christmas Meeting

2027

28th January

25th February

25th March

22nd April

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 - Lynda

I will be at the monthly meeting on Thursday, so, if you have any questions about our groups 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 Group Leaders could let me know what you do and where and when you do it, that would be great. Photographs of your groups in action are appreciated. Here is the first round up.

**The Art Group**

This group is facilitated by Jan Britton Mosley. They normally meet at Milstead between 2 - 4pm on either Wednesdays or Thursdays each week. They enjoy an afternoon drawing or painting anything that takes their fancy giving each other help and advice along the way. They are open to anyone who would like to join them and will initially help with paint, paper and paints if you would like to give it a try.

The French Conversation Group

This group is facilitated by Helen Knell. They meet every Thursday at members' homes, except when there is a monthly meeting. They enjoy French conversation about various subjects, such as shopping, a meal in a restaurant, a journey. They sometimes listen to a recording and try to understand it. It is light-hearted and fun.

They welcome new members but you do need a certain level of existing French to be able to hold a conversation.

My thanks to Helen for providing me with the information.

The Walking Group

This group is facilitated by Heather Thomas-Pugh. They meet every Monday at around 10.15am to walk at 10.30am. They walk various routes for approximately an hour to an hour and a half. It is a lovely way to get some fresh air and exercise and see places around the island and the surrounding areas. It is a very social occasion, not too strenuous and they usually finish with a visit to a coffee house. All members are welcome. Photos are frequently posted on our members Facebook group and on our general WhatsApp group.

I hope that you find this information useful. Watch this space for more updates on your groups.

Social History Group August Topic THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT

The concept of a 'talking shop' for leaders to make their demands of their people is said to have come to these islands, in the form of the 'Witan' with the Vikings. They would gather under a favoured tree and dispense their business. King Alfred must have done similar, hiding in a damp field on the Somerset Levels, with his defeated Saxon army around him, sulking over their thrashing by the Norse invaders and thinking up nasty ways of getting their revenge.



The legendary King Arthur went for greater creature comforts and had made a round table with set seats round it for each of his knights, to save himself having to shout down the table. William the Conqueror brought along his own 'Hommes des Oui' (Yes Men) when he crossed the Channel, and later Kings Henry III and Edward I chose their own 'Community of the Realm' who, if they didn't like the king's policy, could at best be only passively awkward. Later confrontations got a little more heated. Simon de Montfort lost his head for Parliament, who later drew level when reducing the Royals' lead by a head - that of King Charles I. Prior to this, Guido Fawkes had discovered that Parliament wasn't quite the barrel of laughs he had hoped for.

After all of the foul play of several civil wars, the commoners gradually gained the upper hand as the rules of engagement were changed, and confrontation became limited to only verbal battles in two indoor chambers. At long last the Palace of Westminster eventually became the talking shop for which it is now recognized. Nevertheless, it still had one drama to play out when, on 16th October, 1834, the staff of Westminster, while destroying old, redundant tally sticks, in the basement furnaces, managed what Mr Fawkes had failed to do, by burning down the Houses of Parliament. The current Palace of Westminster dates from 1860, although it looks much older, having been designed and built in the Gothic style, much beloved of the Victorians.

Parliament's story is the history of the British Isles, complete with its idiosyncracies. Members can only talk to the 'Speaker' and not address their protagonist by name during debates; the sovereign is not allowed to enter the Commons Chamber, even though the land and buildings of the Palace of Westminster belong to the Crown, and will even get the door slammed in his face and have to send messages through a Black Rod. And still they won't let him in! Try explaining that one to your grandchildren when trying to teach them good manners!

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 **SEPTEMBER** newsletter is **Friday 18th September**. Website Publish date Sunday 20th September

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Heather Thomas-Pugh	<i>Chair</i>	Celia Perrett	<i>Publicity/Media</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>

COMMUNITY EVENTS

CRITERION BLUETOWN



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

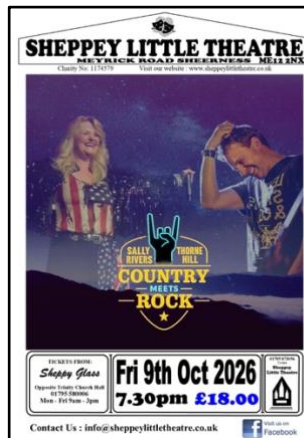
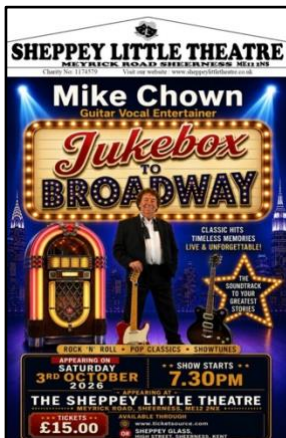
The Criterion Bluetown encompasses; Bluetown Museum & Heritage Centre, Criterion Theatre & Music Hall, Criterion Friday Film Club, Tea Rooms & Licensed Bar.



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/>



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 August/September/October:** [u3a online events](#)

- Flight Inspirations aviation group: September
- Email hosting and generic email addresses for your u3a
- Wild, edible autumn seeds
- Triumph to trauma
- Drones, huh? What are they good for?
- Exploring world faiths: September
- Introduction to cryptic crosswords
- Life in your smallest rooms: the history of personal hygiene
- "The Titanic Sails at Dawn" – punk in the 10970s
- Secrets of the human brain: sleep and dreams
- The Enchanted Archipelago – a journey through the Galapagos
- Future Lives – promoting brain health: from evidence to action
- AI News -four years of chatbots Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie
- Live cookery demonstration – try something new
- Experimental brain research: from old suppositions to modern observations
- Mods versus rockers: a 1960s 'moral panic'?
- A history of the world according to sheep
- Flight Inspirations aviation group: October
- Introducing AI and AI in Scotland
- Your guide to feeling connected in a digital world
- Laughter Yoga with Judith
- Mind fulness and meditation series

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 – Judging in progress so watch this space!
"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

Puzzles & Games

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

Writing Competitions

Essay Competition 2026 – Deadline 31st July
The Most Incredible Journey – CLOSED
Short Story 2025/26 – Read the winning stories and final shortlist on the theme "Lost and Found"

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

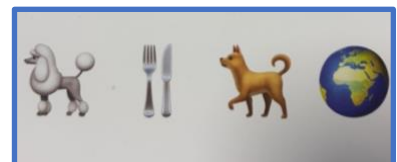
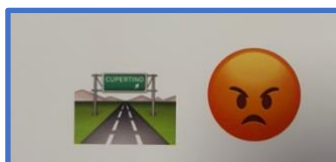
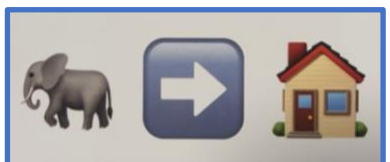
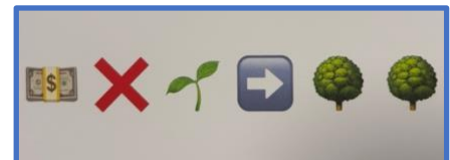
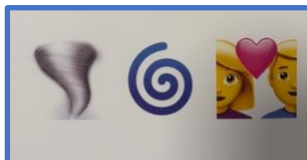
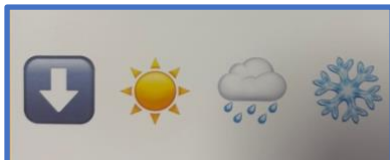
u3a friends is a community open to all our u3a members. As part of this community our members have access to a wide range of offers, discounts and additional services. Friends can make savings on well-known brands, shopping, travel, day out and much more.

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**EMOTICONUNDRUMS – GUESS THE COMMON PHRASES**

Answers at the bottom of the newsletter

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.

<i>Under the weather</i>	<i>Whirlwind romance</i>	<i>Money doesn't grow on trees</i>
<i>The elephant in the room</i>	<i>Road Rage</i>	<i>It's a dog eat dog world</i>