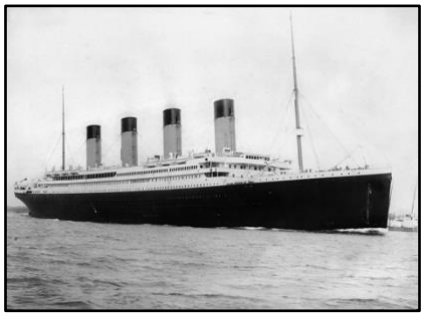
* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 26th November *

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

The Titanic – Eddie Asquith



The 52,000-ton "unsinkable" liner Titanic, pride of the White Star Line, sailed from Southampton on April 10th, 1912, on the first leg of her maiden voyage.

Five days later, in the early hours of April 15th, the Titanic struck an iceberg near Canada's Newfoundland coast. What followed was the world's worst peacetime shipping disaster, with around 1,500 lives lost, including numerous millionaires and hundreds of immigrant families hoping to settle in the United States.

In popular culture, the name Titanic has become a lasting legacy and a byword for any venture or undertaking which unexpectedly reaches a catastrophic end.



We shall be learning much more about the disaster, the vessel itself, the people involved and the weather conditions at our meeting.

Come along and hear our speaker, retired airline pilot Eddie Asquith, outline all the factors which combined to contribute to this enormous tragedy.

Save the date for next month: Thursday 10th December 2026

Christmas Social with a Christmas Afternoon Tea & Entertainment

Santa Claus will be visiting to present the prizes from our annual FREE raffle

COMING UP…

David's Slice of Life	Page 2	David gives us his "Slice of Wildlife" this month
New Register Procedure	Page 3	Have you read the new procedure and will you remember?
Christmas Sunday Lunch	Page 4	Our Christmas Sunday Lunch will be on 13th December
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 5/6	Information about new groups and suggested activities to expand our members opportunities: Feedback required please
Community Events	Page 7	Lots of upcoming local Christmas community events
National u3a **u3a Friends Newsletter** **u3a Friends Extra** **u3a Radio Podcast**	Page 8/9	**u3a Online Learning Events & u3a Learn & Share** Look out for interesting online talks and events Find out how to save money as u3a Friend Listen to the monthly podcast
Information & Contact details	Page 9	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



Sly, cunning, devious and hard to guess what they will do next. Sounds just like some of the politicians we love to hate, doesn't it?

But I'm not talking about politicians. I'm referring to Mr Fox. Mr Red Fox, that is.

I could easily have re-named this month's offering David's Slice of Wildlife. Our garden backs on to an open area of farmland, punctuated by some areas of thick scrub, brambles, and dense bushes. Over the last few months, I have been doing battle, if that is an apt term - though I can't think of anything more appropriate - with one or more foxes. And I am losing.



Now I know why Mr Fox has a reputation for being sly, cunning and extremely clever. They are the born survivors and have learned to exist even in the most urban and challenging environments for wildlife, Central London, for example.

So, Minster Road was never going to be too much of a hurdle for them to overcome.

We have caught fleeting glimpses of foxes over the years, but this time they have our garden firmly in their must-visit list of favourite locations.

It was a couple of months ago that we first noticed their "calling card" left on the lawn at the rear of our house. I knew it wasn't a cat and dogs have no way of getting into our garden. To make matters worse, our visitor(s) had left a series of small, egg-sized holes at various points on our lawn.

At first, I could not work out how Mr Fox and his pals were getting into our garden, which is surrounded by 6ft high fences with concrete gravel. Then I noticed a small, well-hidden tunnel through a section of privet hedge at the very bottom of the garden. This was clearly Mr Fox's entry point and escape route. One evening at dusk we saw him (or her) arriving and departing through the tunnel.

Then I had a brainwave. I blocked off Mr Fox's tunnel with a length of portable fencing, held in place by a couple of hefty flower pots. But, guess what, this made absolutely no difference. Mr Fox continues to come and go but I have absolutely no idea how he is getting in. It remains a mystery. Cunning is the word ...

One amusing moment came in the middle of the summer heatwave, at three in the afternoon, when I saw a fox sitting on the lawn staring at my wife as she sat on a sun lounger reading. He was off like a rocket and through his little tunnel in a flash the moment I opened our kitchen door.

We now find his calling card on our lawn every morning and we have learned to live in harmony with our visitor, as recommended by the RSPCA. I have now accepted that I have lost the battle.

In case you're wondering, the little holes in our lawn are caused by Mr Fox digging for worms, which, I have just learned, are one of their favourite foods. Unbelievably, they can get through more than 100 worms a night! And that's just their starters!

We have resisted the temptation to leave food out because that will guarantee that Mr Fox and his relatives will be with us for a very long time and, worse, make them dependent on us for survival, which is not how nature should work.

We have solved one mystery, but we now have another – a fox's calling card on our front lawn as well as our back lawn, and we have arrived at the conclusion that Mr Fox and his family (or probably a different family) have launched a two-pronged "assault" on us. This is not as daft as it sounds. Early one morning as we were waiting to be picked up for an airport trip, we saw a fox stroll nonchalantly across Minster Road and walk past our front gate. No surprise, then, that they are born survivors with little fear of human proximity.



We do have one other, small, wildlife problem. Squirrels have also taken a liking to our garden but, of course, this is not unusual. Many gardens are also blessed/cursed with visits from Mr Squirrel. It may sound harsh but squirrels are classed as vermin and the novelty of having them as visitors to your garden soon wears off once they start digging up your prized bulbs and turning your bedding plants into a tangled mess.

I did think about attempting to catch at least one of them but they move like lightning and even Usain Bolt couldn't run fast enough. One option would be a squirrel trap, but a neighbour who knows about these things tells me it is illegal to transport a grey squirrel from one location to another and release it.

The only other option is to leave it in the trap and... well, you can guess but I draw the line at that.

So, it looks like we're going to have to live in harmony with Mr and Mrs Squirrel, in addition to Mr and Mrs Fox.

At one with nature, so to speak, but, as with any partnership, things can sometimes get a little strained...

MONTHLY MEETING DATES

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month (*except in December- see below*) starting at 2pm until 4pm, at The Sheppey Hall in Queenborough. Refreshments are included. Doors open 1.30pm.

2026	2027	
10th December - Christmas Meeting	**28th January**	**22nd April**
	25th February	**27th May**
	25th March	**24th June**

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 **DECEMBER** newsletter is **Friday 4th December**.
Website Publish date Sunday 7th December

MONTHLY MEETING ATTENDENCE REGISTER

REMINDER: We have decided that we will trial a different system for the monthly meeting attendance register. There will be a blank register at the entrance to the hall for you to record your name (legibly please), this will free Sally up to be available for discussions with members prior to the meeting and to ensure new members are greeted and made welcome – Celia will also be on hand to greet new members/visitors.

We do like to make sure our new members feel included from the very start so if you are seated with a new member(s) please try to engage them in conversation, if you feel you might run out of seats at your table for your group, please let us know so we add more chairs rather that turn people away.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY LUNCH

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH @ The Masonic – Sunday 13th December

Our Christmas Lunch is coming up next month. Members are welcome to bring their non-member partners/friends along to enjoy our u3a get together.

Members on the regular dining list will be sent an email closer to the time to remind them to book their meals. If you are not on the dining list and are interested in joining us, then please let us know as soon as possible.

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 £27 for the Christmas meal they are excellent value for money. The tables and hall will be decorated so it will look very festive. 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 other drinks can be purchased at the bar at a very reasonable cost.

Bookings should ideally be made by Monday 7th December, so that the meals can be booked with the caterer, although it is usually possible to add a few extra people after this date.

INTEREST GROUPS

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 Lynda at: lynda.oldfield52@gmail.com

If you have any questions about the groups or would like help to set up a group, please email Lynda or phone her on 07599302946.

NEW GROUP – BOARD/CARD GAMES

Several members have shown an interest in having a regular group for a wider range of board/card games. We are hoping to be able to start this in the new year. If you are interested in this group please let us know so that we can see what type and size of venue we would need.

WORKSHOPS – FEEDBACK REQUIRED

We have in the past been able to provide some one-off workshops e.g. Flower Arranging demonstrations, an Art class and a How to create a Wild Garden get together.

The committee has agreed to apply to some of our local councils for some funding to help us provide more of these opportunities for members to get together and try out new skills and we would welcome suggestions and help to organise these where possible.

This is a good way for members to get involved and learn a bit more about the volunteer side but not be committed to a longer-term group or project. Workshops normally involve locating someone with a bit of experience/expertise in the subject to demonstrate or present the subject/topic and to pass on some hints and tips. The grants will enable us to pay for the instructor and a venue to try out these workshops.

Suggestions we have so far are:

Pottery	Creative Writing	Yoga/Tai chi
Art	Singing for Fun	Sound bath

If you have any further suggestions, please let us know. Also, please provide feedback if you are interested in any of these suggestions so that we can gauge the numbers involved.

POP-UP GROUPS

Pop up groups are one-off or short duration groups that are facilitated by members and are also a great way to get involved with a limited project.

If you have suggestions for anymore workshops or pop-up groups, please let us know.

CRAFT GROUP

Sally has identified a local business owner who has said she is available to demonstrate and help members to try out a range of crafts as a beginner on a one-off basis each time. Hopefully this will be a series of different craft ideas and suggestions from members for craft ideas will be welcome. Please let us know if you are interested in these workshops so that we can find a suitable venue for the numbers involved.

CRAFTY IDEAS AND FLOWER ARRANGING

These two groups are entering a decorated Christmas tree each in the Queenborough Christmas Tree festival. The trees along with many others will be displayed in the Queenborough church over the weekend 5th/6th December to coincide with the Queenborough Christmas Lights parade and the Sunday Christmas market. If you are over that way please pop in to view all the displays as they are always magnificent. Photos of the entries will be in next month's newsletter.

SOCIAL HISTORY GROUP – David Goodin

Man's Desire for Speed Through Time

Social History Group

November Meeting Topic

It is a natural instinct of most mobile life forms to try to move fast to catch one's meal or to avoid being another's food source. Mankind soon realised that , in terms of speed, he came very low in the running order, regardless of the number of legs his opponents could utilise. He therefore relied on his superior brain to think his way out of this dilemma.

For centuries he needed the cooperation of four-legged companions such as the horse, the camel, the elephant and others. It is during this long period of total reliance on our quadrupedal associates and stagnation in inventive spirit that our Social History Group took up the story. Firstly, it was pointed out that man's obsession with speed and who is the fastest of them all, could not really get anywhere fast until an accurate clock had been invented. Man could then race against time as well as his own kind. Once this was achieved, there was no stopping him, and man raced on in an attempt to excel, at least in speed and time, over all his neighbours.

Within the last two centuries, humanity has become master of its own destiny in getting anywhere faster and doing things quicker. Our research highlighted that the steam engine, followed by the internal combustion engine, brought about the demise of the horse as the sole arbiter of speed amongst humans. Within the space of the last century man's pace across land has increased from a maximum of around 30mph in short bursts to a sustained 250mph. His move into turbines and jet propulsion has increased his capacity for speeding. On rails he has, so far, reached 357mph; on water he approaches 320mph, while on land he has attained 763mph. The sky is no longer the limit for our intrepid human, who has succeeded in taking an aeroplane to 2,193mph. Space travel has taken him beyond our one-time wildest dreams with the space shuttle Columbia regularly achieving 16,600mph on its historic trips to and from the International Space Station.

On a more down-to-Earth plane, we learnt how humanity's achievements in industry and commerce have even excelled the record-chasing fraternity. Throughout recorded time, mankind has used science to help in agriculture and industry to plough and harvest faster, to produce more and to manufacture greater quantities more quickly and better. Taking account of all of his greatest successes in terms of speed, humanity's highmark has come in the sphere of communication. First, it was the telephone, followed by the computer and resulting in the internet; possibly the finest invention in history and yet the most dangerous in civilised, social history. At last man has met his match by his own hand. For all the speed that he has achieved in communicating with all and sundry, it is questionable whether mankind has benefitted a great deal from the time and freedom of expression he has gained? One thing that the Social History Group established has been lost, especially as a result of the speed of the internet, is the postal system of our parent's and grandparent's. Present day delivery times could well be improved upon by Victorian foot- and horse-based deliveries. Still, you can't have everything and, as my father taught me, life is just a series of balances.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

UPCOMING COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS 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 lately?
There's so much for u3a members across the country to get involved with!

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

There are numerous and wide-ranging learning events and short courses (usually free online using zoom – book via Eventbrite). **Coming up soon November/December/January**: **u3a online events**

- Screening to prevent stroke: do we do too much or too little
- Shaping fashion: the Elizabethan bodice, buckram and busks
- The ultimate guide to editing your creative writing
- Learn about the Lords
- Soulsville USA series – The History and Legacy of Stax Records
- AI News: November – Ethical aspects of AI in public services: the need for a code of conduct
- Learn bridge with u3a
- Flight Inspirations aviation group: December – Personal memories of Pocklington Bomber Base during WWII
- Capturing your youth: memoir writing in 12 easy steps
- "It's All in the Poems!": The Life and Work of Charles Causley (1917-2003)
- The Bayeux tapestry: embroidery or fabrication?
- A personal journey through the music in my life – from the 50s to the 80s
- What does AI know about me?
- Your guide to staying safer online: practical tips for everyday life
- The science and history of common medications for heartburn
- Christmas stories, images, music and acts of hope
- Future Lives: thinking ahead, care and support options in later life
- Adapting to man-made climate change
- AI News: December – AI and Ethical Choices for Consumers
- Flight Inspirations aviation group: January – Guardians of the Cold War skies
- Exploring world faiths: January
- Secrets of the human brain: touch and pain
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: November
- Laughter Yoga with Judith: December
- Mindfulness and meditation series: December

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**

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

Connect with Members
- u3a rewind – stories of member's youth
- Missing Pieces
- Virtual Visits
- u3a Walkers' Exchange
- Find a u3a Speaker

Writing Competitions
Enter the u3a Short Story Competition 2026/7: Theme "Out of the Ordinary"
Closing date: 22 January
Read the winning entries of previous competitions:
Essay Competition 2026: "The Most Incredible Journey"
Short Story competition 2025: "Lost and Found"

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.

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.