

* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 27th April*

Please join us at our next members' meeting.
It will take place at **2pm** on **Thursday 27th April** at **Minster Club**

SHEPPEY HULKS AROUND THE ISLAND

Dave Brown

When the transportation of prisoners to the North American colonies ceased in 1776, the Prisons in England quickly reached bursting point. Decommissioned Royal Navy vessels were brought into service as Prison Ships with many moored off the coast of the Isle of Sheppey. Conditions aboard were dreadful with overcrowding, starvation, neglect and filth, disease ran rife in the populations onboard with 1 in 4 expected to die. Remains of convicts were interred on Deadman's Island, a watery grave just off the coast of Queenborough.

Non-members are welcome – Come and see how we “learn, laugh and live”

Save the date for next month: Thursday 25th May - AGM

Chris Reed – Lost communities around the Island

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2023/24

Subscriptions for the year 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 are now due and are £20. We would like to thank our members who have already paid – a confirmation of renewal email has been sent to you all. We will be pleased to receive subscriptions at our April meeting, where you can pay with cash, cheque or by card.

Members can also renew by bank transfer at any time, please enter your name as reference and confirm by email that you have paid so that we can track the payment more easily.

PAYMENT DETAILS

Cheques payable to: Isle of Sheppey u3a

Bank Transfer: Account Number 33003361 Sort Code 20-54-25 Reference: Your Name

COMMITTEE NEWS

AGM – MAY 2023

The committee wish to give advanced notice that they have agreed to hold the 2023 AGM on Thursday 25th May at Minster Club at 2pm. This will be followed by the usual member's monthly meeting.

Our Isle of Sheppey u3a can only continue with the support of our members. Expressions of interest from members who feel that they could contribute to the running of our u3a either by joining our committee or more informally will be gratefully received.

BRING YOUR REUSABLE COFFEE CUP

You might remember, before covid, we asked you to bring your reusable coffee cups and many of you did so. Now we are back to collecting our own tea/coffee, we would be grateful if you could do this where you can. Not only is it more environmentally friendly to reduce our use of these single use cups, but reusable cups are also nicer to drink out of and can save our u3a some money on the increasing cost of these consumables. We will, of course, continue to have plenty of disposable cups on hand.



David's Slice of Life

One of the best sci-fi novels of all time (in my view, anyway) is Day of the Triffids, by John Wyndham. The villains of the piece are large plants, which have developed the ability to “walk,” and are equipped with fatal whip-like stings.

In a world where most of the population has become blind after staring at a spectacular meteor storm, the triffids look set to eradicate the human race.

All of which brings me to my next question: Do weeds have brains?

Most weeds have an innate ability to survive, but the little blighters I've been tackling in my garden now that Spring has arrived are especially sneaky.

I've discovered they're called wild onions, with slender greenish tops and little bulbs at the bottom which smell of, yes, you've guessed it, onions. They're everywhere and spread like wildfire in clusters. They're near impossible to pull out because the tops snap off, leaving the bulbs in the ground, ready to grow again.

Worse still, they have an irritating habit of springing up bang in the middle of other flowers, making them difficult to remove completely without also digging up the flowers. Clearly, the streetwise wild onions have a survival plan.

They also have an amazing ability to “jump” to another part of the garden or to somehow cross a concrete path and spring up on the other side. One has even managed to make its way into a flowerpot full of geraniums. They have now even spread on to my lawn. Surely, they can't have been transported by birds or other wildlife, so the mystery of how they arrived remains. Perhaps our gardening expert, Helen Knell, knows the answer.

I'm not saying that my little triffids are going to eradicate the human race, but they're doing a pretty good job of winning the war in my garden. Currently, the score is David 0, Wild Onions 20.



A triffid, not a wild onion!

My faith in human nature has been restored. Earlier this month we visited Whitstable for a restaurant meal with friends.

We parked in a large car park near the harbour, but I became slightly stressed as I attempted to enter my car registration on the touchscreen pay-on-exit machine, the letters and numbers of which only worked when thumped, not touched!

I thought no more about it until, a few days later, I was astonished to receive a call from my bank to tell me that some kind soul had found my debit card lying on the ground near the payment machine and taken it into the bank's Whitstable branch. Obviously, I had dropped it after finally managing to punch in my registration details and paying the required fee.

My Good Samaritan remains anonymous, so I have been unable to thank him or her.

The thought crossed my mind that had my contactless swipe card been found by some less than upstanding individual I could have been defrauded to the tune of hundreds of pounds. Thankfully, in these times of depressing news about crime and anti-social behaviour, there are still plenty of honest folk about.

NEW INTEREST GROUPS

Two very good coffee afternoons were enjoyed by members interested in joining the new Social History Group and Singing for Fun.

For more information, please contact Heather or Sally: isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

SINGING FOR FUN INTEREST GROUP

Pam Boston is the facilitator for this group and following the coffee afternoon they have agreed to focus on songs from the musicals. The group will be meeting on the first and third Wednesday afternoons at the main hall in Minster Working Men's club at 2pm – 4pm. There will be a small fee charged to group members to cover the cost of hiring the venue.

SOCIAL HISTORY INTEREST GROUP

This group is facilitated by Celia Dutton and will meet on the third Friday afternoon each month from 2pm- 4pm at The Abbey Motel (now the Abbey Hotel) Minster. There will be a small charge for the venue and will include tea/coffee and biscuits.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

FLOWER ARRANGING DEMONSTRATION – Tuesday 23rd May 2-4pm – Minster Working Men's Club

We still have some spaces available on this workshop so if you are interested, please let us know. Donations at the end of the demonstration to the **Wisdom Hospice** would be appreciated.

WILDLIFE GARDENING WORKSHOP - Monday 22nd May (All Day)

There are a few spaces left on this workshop, so if you are interested in learning about how to make your own garden more wildlife friendly why not join this workshop. Check out our March newsletter or website for more information: <https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=1093&page=105999>

FREE WORKSHOPS

Several of our current and future events and workshops are part funded by grants we have been able to secure and are open to all members. These events and learning opportunities are supported by our successful, local grant applications to Minster Parish Council and Swale Borough Council for improving cultural and leisure opportunities for seniors.

Workshop places are limited so please let us know if you are interested in any of the advertised events/activities: Email us on isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES

COBHAM HALL VISIT – Thursday 13th July

This visit is currently fully booked. Lynda, who is coordinating this visit has been able to confirm that the venue will be able to accept 45 visitors with 3 guides, we are also holding a waiting list. We will be sending out a confirmation email to all those who have requested tickets in the next few days and will be accepting payments at our meetings over the next couple of months.

OPEN GARDEN

Helen, our wildlife garden, enthusiast is taking part in a series of open gardens in conjunction with Kent Wildlife Trust. Her garden will be open to visitors on Sunday afternoon 14th May. More information about these events can be found on the Kent Wildlife Trust website:

<https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events>



UKRAINE & TURKEY

We have continued to receive knitted new baby hats from our members. We have also recently been able to pass on donations of knitted toys and blankets from our members to our charity partners Minster Rotary Club to be sent to Turkey following their devastating earthquakes.

LOCAL SERVICES & EVENTS



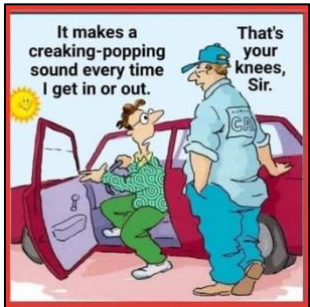
SHEPPEY MATTERS

Are you disabled and have difficulty using public transport to get to your hospital appointments or local services? Then Miles and Smiles can help. Sheppey Matters in partnership with Swale CVS has a volunteer Transport Scheme with fully accessible minibus and friendly drivers There will be a contribution towards costs for the booking, but to see if you are eligible or for more information Contact the Miles and Smiles team on 07842 244949 or email milesandsmiles@Sheppeymatters.org.uk

KEEP SMILING



a malapropism walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.



MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2023

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2pm until 4pm at Minster Working Men's Club, (except in August & December). Refreshments are included.

25 th May -AGM	27 th July	28 th September	23 rd November
22 nd June	24 th August	26 th October	14 th December

NATIONAL u3a - <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>



Have you listened to the monthly **u3a Radio podcasts** on YouTube? Click here for the full list of radio podcasts since they started in September 2020: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsB2t41TNozHSJ4fvod_yjxrUJDzqbDD

Have you signed up for the NATIONAL u3a NEWSLETTER? Get the most up to date news from National Office and find out about learning events as they are added. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/contact>

Information & Contact Details

You can contact us here:

Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

Find our website here:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/isle-of-sheppey/home>

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:

Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

Our Facebook Page is:

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

Our members only Facebook Group is:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/384159678869515>

Interact with u3a members around the country on the
u3a: Keeping in Touch Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/U3AKeepingInTouch>

u3a YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a/videos>

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