

**\* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February\***

Please join us at our next **Member’s Monthly** meeting.  
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** at **SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

**Under Billowing Sails – The Romance of Tall Ships**

**Wilf Lower**

Time for us all to get our sea legs as we listen to the speaker at our next meeting.

Wilf Lower has twice visited us before, once to talk about TV’s golden years and on the second occasion to tell us about the last days of music hall and variety.



It’s difficult to know where to begin with Wilf, who has an astonishing CV. He had a long career with BBC TV as a manager working on some of the station’s most popular programmes, including EastEnders. Subsequently, he became a consultant to TV, film and theatre, including a spell as a National Theatre director.

Wilf also has a life-long love of ships and matters maritime. In the 1990s he embarked on a new career organising maritime festivals and boat shows throughout Europe. On numerous occasions he has arranged for tall ships and historic vessels to visit British ports and has become a popular champion of Britain’s marine heritage. He is especially passionate about the River Medway and its history.

For good measure Wilf is also a journalist and the author of Medway Tales: Life on the Dividing River.

**\*Save the date for next month: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March\***

*Melanie Gibson-Barton – Eva Braun*

**COMING UP...**

<b>David’s Slice of Life</b>	Page 2	Something a bit different this month, David provides a trio of recent observations.
<b>Volunteers Required</b>	Page 3	Our u3a needs volunteers
<b>Interest Groups &amp; Activities</b>	Page 4	Register for any groups you are interested in joining. See what our members have been up to lately
<b>National u3a</b>	Page 5	The wide range of national online talks, workshops and courses available, included in your membership for FREE!
<b>Keep Smiling</b>	Page 6	A little humour.
<b>Information &amp; Contact details</b>		Let us know if you want to join our members only Facebook Group and/or u3a General WhatsApp Group?

**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Our membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Membership is currently £20 per year and includes entry to the monthly meetings with refreshments and a national magazine ‘Third Age Matters’ delivered to your home, five times a year.

Our next renewal date will be 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and the committee have agreed to keep the subscription at £20 for the year 2024/25, despite rising costs and we hope you agree that this is excellent value for money. We will be collecting subscriptions at our March meeting.

## David's Slice of Life

### Out of the mouths of babes ...

I had just paid for a purchase in B&M at the Neats Court retail park with a £20 note and, as I left the till, I clumsily dropped about £5 worth of change on the floor as I attempted to put it in my wallet. Most of it rolled under a display.

A young lad aged about 12 appeared out of nowhere and offered to get it for me. He lay flat on his stomach on the floor and managed to reach under the display and retrieve most of it except, he told me, for a 20p piece he couldn't reach.

I thanked him and mentally promised to take back all my negative thoughts about today's youth.

Then, I heard him say proudly to his mum: "I've just helped an old man out."

He wasn't being nasty but just telling the truth. I think it was my grey hair and grey stubble that gave it away!

Sometimes the truth hurts, especially when you're heading for 78 but still think you're 25!

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Now here's a sign which could be wheely, wheely confusing for cyclists, especially if they don't know this area.



This baffling bit of advice is on a signpost in Bridge Road, Sheerness, right opposite the railway station.

There's no indication which route is the shortest or whether there any cycle paths.

And you can't blame cyclists visiting Sheppey for the first time for wondering whether there are actually two Queenboroughs on the island!

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### Question: What's green and doesn't last long on Sheppey?

Answer: Any field, wherever it is, which developers think is ripe for housebuilding.

I have a great deal of sympathy for residents in the Drake Avenue area of Minster, who have lost a battle to prevent 44 houses being built on farmland near their homes.

They say the development will shatter their lives and ruin their tranquillity. Swale planning committee councillors agreed and refused planning permission, arguing that the scheme "would be to the detriment of a much-loved landscape."

Parish councillors in Minster also objected, saying the new homes would "ruin historic long-distance landscapes of Minster village from the Lower Road and ruin local residents' quality of life."

Housebuilders, Provectus Developments, appealed against the refusal and the committee's decision was overturned by a government planning inspector.

To rub salt in the wounds, Swale council taxpayers – that's us - will now have to pay the developers' costs.

This was not just another case of Nimbyism, but a battle to preserve one the few remaining attractive green areas of Sheppey with sweeping landscape views of the island's highest point.

So much for local democracy. No one disputes that more houses are needed, but surely not at any cost?

**VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED**

**Isle of Sheppey u3a Committee – Expressions of Interest**

Enthusiasm and or experience - Please consider joining our local Committee. Our AGM will be coming up shortly so we will be looking forward to nominations.

U3as are run entirely by volunteers and all members are invited and encouraged to get involved and supporting their local u3a where they can. Our committee members are only in office for a limited period and we need members to replace these positions to keep our committee fresh and vibrant and keep our u3a moving on into the future. Lots of support and training is available.

Our AGM is coming up in May so now is a great time to indicate that you are interested in stepping up and joining the committee. There are also other ways that you can volunteer as the committee frequently requires help with small tasks on an occasional or regular basis.

**Kent Network Committee:** <https://kent3anetwork.weebly.com/>

Nominations are also invited for the Kent Network Committee. If you are interested in being nominated, please contact us at [isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com) before 27th February.

**Kent Community Energy (KCE) 2024**

*Are you interested in the climate or the environment? Can you offer experience in fund raising or graphic/writing skills? If so Kent Community Energy 24 would like to hear from you ...*

For more information:

<https://mailchi.mp/c05d31ec3293/kent-community-energy-in-2024?e=cfa05e8a61>

**MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2024**

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2pm until 4pm (except in December). Refreshments are included. Our meetings will be held at the Sheppey Hall in Queenborough (except for August). Doors open 1.40pm.

28<sup>th</sup> March

**26<sup>th</sup> April – Please Note this meeting is on a Friday**

*\*Apologies, the meeting date has been moved as the hall is unavailable on our usual day*

23<sup>rd</sup> May

27<sup>th</sup> June

25<sup>th</sup> July

22<sup>nd</sup> August – **TBC**

Picnic in the Park at Sheppey Sea Cadets – Barton’s Point Coastal Park

26<sup>th</sup> September

24<sup>th</sup> October

28<sup>th</sup> November

12<sup>th</sup> December

(Christmas 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](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

If you would like help to start up a group or arrange an outing, please let us know.

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

**SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH at the MASONIC – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

Sally has booked the Masonic Club for Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March - 12.30pm to sit down at 1pm. The meal will be 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. There will be a variety of desserts to choose, plus cheese and biscuits followed by tea/coffee and mints. We think you will agree that this is excellent value for money at £20 per person. Wine and drinks can be purchased at the bar.



If you have already put your name down you will receive an email to book your place. 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.



**CEMENT FIELDS & ART PROJECT – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March**

Cement Fields are working collaboratively with artists and communities to create new art along the Thames Estuary. They have asked us to partner them on a Project Day "Bird Wise". Meeting at Minster Leas with a loop of approximately 2.5 miles with the chance of seeing skylarks, pipits and birds feeding on the incoming tide. More will be told to us on the day. If you are interested in joining us, please let us know at [isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com) - there are still a few places left.

**TRIP TO CHARTWELL – Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

This trip is self-drive/car share and is arranged for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March. There are still places available so if you're interested, please let us know at the meeting or email us.

**VISIT TO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June**

The visit to the Houses of Parliament has had to be postponed as the original date was cancelled. Ken has arranged for this to now take place on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June** and is arranging transport. The original trip was fully booked and the members have been emailed to ask if they wish to keep their place on the new date. We do have a waiting list and if places become available, we will notify members accordingly. If you were on the original list and have not yet confirmed your place on the new date please do so as soon as possible.

**CRIB GROUP**

Colin is our group facilitator for this new group that started in the January, the Crib group and has got off to a great start. Beginners and more experienced players all had a great afternoon at the Abbey Hotel recently.



**NATIONAL u3a**

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

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.

**ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS**

There are numerous and wide-ranging learning events and short courses (usually free online using zoom), **Coming up in February/March:** [u3a online events](#)

- Artificial Intelligence News
- Secrets of the Human Brain
- David Hockney & the Theatre
- 'Safe bind, safe find' Locks & Keys
- Advances in Public Health
- Aviation Network Meeting: Time is money, Concorde was Prestige
- From Pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks
- Exploring World Faiths: Women in Faith
- Science Network Event
- Introductory Session for u3a members: How to have more influence in your community
- Cryptic Crosswords in Context
- More Number Fun with Dr Knott
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie
- Laughter Yoga with Judith

**NATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

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 any of our Isle of Sheppey u3a members. Get involved by clicking here: [u3a National Programmes](#)

Take part or just browse other members' submissions.

- All our Yesterdays
- Poetry Competition 23-24
- Paint or Draw
- Found in Nature
- U3a Eye – Themed Photography Project
- Cake Decorating
- Repurposing & Upcycling
- Crafts
- Extreme Crochet & Knitting
- Write a Letter to your Younger Self
- Short Story Competition 23 – Shortlisted Stories
- Hadrian's Wall Postcard Art Competition
- Battle of Britain & the Blitz
- Kindertransport
- Bird Track - Results
- Logic Puzzles
- Maths Challenge
- Aileen's Game

**NATIONAL u3a 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.



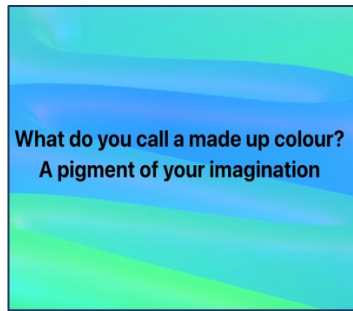
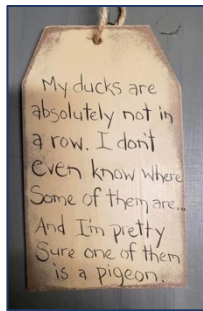
**RADIO PODCAST**

Have you listened to the latest monthly **u3a Radio podcasts** on YouTube? Each month on 17<sup>th</sup> a new episode is uploaded. Click here for the full list of radio podcasts since they started: [u3a Radio Podcast Playlist](#)

**KEEP SMILING**



Sometimes I like to mess with my husband and hide his stuff where he can't find it. Like I put his shoes in the shoe closet, his jacket on the hanger and his keys on the key hook.



**Information & Contact Details**

You can contact us here:  
[Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.