

*** Monthly Meeting – Thursday 25th January***

Please join us at our next **Member’s Monthly** meeting.
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 25th January** at **SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

Forty Years of Spin & Wheezes

John Nurden



Forty Years of Spin and Wheezes is the intriguing title of the talk at our meeting on Thursday. Our speaker will be former editor, feature writer, PR company boss, NHS spin doctor and recently retired Sheerness Times Guardian reporter John Nurden.

John will lift the lid on the secrets of writing for newspapers, how to work with TV stars and relate a whole host of fascinating tales as he looks back on his career which began as a young cub reporter on the Times Guardian.

In recent years, John’s “by-line” has been a familiar sight on the Times Guardian front pages, after he returned to his “roots” in 2016 as a senior reporter in the run-up to his belated retirement.

The illustrated talk includes exclusive photographs, many never before seen in public and there will be a chance to ask John questions.

Save the date for next month: Thursday 22nd February

Wilf Lower – Billowing Sails, The Romance of Tall Ships

** We were due to hear about the Jack the Ripper murders on Thursday, unfortunately our speaker Paul Robbins, has had to cancel because of illness. We are grateful to John Nurden, who lives in Minster, for stepping in at very short notice.*

COMING UP...

David’s Slice of Life	Page 2/3	David looks forward to what the New Year, 2024 has to offer
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 3	Register for any groups you are interested in joining
Local Events		
Christmas Meeting/Raffle	Page 4	See what our members have been up to lately
National u3a	Page 5	The wide range of national online talks, workshops and courses available, included in your membership for FREE!
Keep Smiling	Page 6	A little humour.
Information & Contact details		Let us know if you want to join our members only Facebook Group and/or u3a General WhatsApp Group?

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 for the next six months.

22 nd February	23 rd May
28 th March	27 th June
26th April – Please Note this meeting is on a Friday	25 th July

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

David's Slice of Life

How are your New Year's resolutions going? We all make them, don't we? Go on a diet, eat less, drink less, lose weight, get more exercise, join a gym, spend less, save more etc etc.

Demonstrating iron willpower, some people stick to their New Year's resolutions until Easter or even later, but statistics show that most of us slip back into our old ways after just a few weeks.

Equally predictable is the way in which supermarkets go into overdrive after Christmas and New Year in an attempt to flog us healthy and diet-friendly foods. The marketing onslaught will start barely before the memory of the last mince pie has faded.

It's a sales opportunity on a plate, so to speak. We will be bombarded with slimming recipes, keep-fit suggestions and bargain-priced copies of Jamie Oliver's umpteenth weight-loss cookery book.

It's always struck me as amusing that we will also be bombarded with money-saving tips and budgetary advice at the precise time retailers are very hard to make us part with the cash we are attempting to save.

All this got me thinking about the enormous number of bandwagons retailers, supermarkets in particular, now jump on to persuade us to part with our cash. Some are not new, but what is new is the sheer amount of overkill which now goes into promoting these money-spinning "special days."

This is how the cycle goes:

Christmas is over, then it's New Year's Day, by which time we will have all piled on the pounds stuffing ourselves with festive goodies. We're sitting ducks, or should that be turkeys, for the supermarkets' keep fit, lose weight marketing campaigns.

Then Burns Night, January 25th. The supermarkets don't care whether or not you're Scottish. Have you bought your haggis yet?

We've hardly had time to reduce our hip size before Shrove Tuesday, February 13th, is upon us and we regain those lost few ounces. Have you noticed all the pancake mixes and lemons on sale these days?

Then, just 24 hours later, it's St. Valentine's Day. Gushing with cheesy sentimentality, cards and gifts for your loved one fill the shelves almost before the indigestion from gulping down a pancake too quickly has eased a little.

March 1st and it's St David's Day. We are urged to celebrate all that's Welsh even if you've never been within 100 miles of Cardiff.

Just nine days later, on March 10th, it's Mother's Day, arguably the biggest "special event" sales opportunity of the year for supermarkets apart from Christmas. And, of course, it's also a sales bonanza for all florists and card shops.

Barely has the last Valentine's Day card been recycled before Easter eggs and cuddly made-in-China fluffy toy chicks and cute bunnies fill the shelves. In fact, the commercial run-up to Easter now stretches from the beginning of January to Easter. At Tesco's in Sheerness, Easter eggs were on sale on Saturday, January 6th – that's a full three months before Easter, blatant commercialism plumbing new depths of absurdity. I'm sure it's the same in any other supermarket you care to name.



Then, the "real" Easter arrives, with Good Friday on March 29th this year, now, at least as far as supermarkets are concerned, totally devoid of any religious meaning.

Father's Day is just around the corner, according to the supermarkets' time scale, anyway. It arrives on June 16th, with all its gifts for dad and yet more sentimental cards or cards in bad taste if you prefer them.



The supermarkets will already have tried to persuade us to stock up with enormous amounts of booze and goodies for the recent May bank holidays, plus charcoal, burgers, sausages and kebabs for BBQs for those rare days when the sun actually does emerge, plus, of course the August Bank Holiday Weekend.

And just around the corner come Halloween, Guy Fawkes' Day, and then, here we are again, it's Christmas once more, by which time we would have put on any weight we lost with too much chocolate/pancakes/burgers/sausages/beer/wine over the preceding 12 months.

And so it goes on. You get the picture.

But why stop there?

Keep it to yourself, but there's a whole host of opportunities and "special days" out there for supermarkets to shift more goods. And I promise I haven't made any of these up!

What really surprises me, fortunately for the nation's waistlines, is that they haven't got wise to most of them yet.

In January there's International Chocolate Cake Day, followed in February by Yorkshire Pudding Day, National Pizza Day and Real Bread Week.

Moving swiftly on to March, there's a million calories lying in wait for us in the shape of British Pie Week, Fast forward to May when National Biscuit Day and National BBQ Week are all set to pile on the pounds.

If that's not enough for you, in the six months before Christmas there's National Ice Cream Month, World Chocolate Day and National Fish and Chips Day, more than sufficient to send our Body Mass Index of the scale. There are numerous others.



I'd like to think that, even if the supermarkets' publicity machines went into hyperdrive, we would all have the will to resist all these little-known culinary "celebrations" for the sake of our health.

Unfortunately, as the nation's collective lack of staying power over New Year's resolutions demonstrates, the opposite is much more likely.

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

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](#)

LOCAL EVENTS



The Inner Wheel Club of the Isle of Sheppey is a local charity dating back to 1937. Over the years the Club has worked hard to raise money for many charities both at home and abroad that would make a difference to so many people's lives.

They are holding a 60/70s disco in February to raise funds for their chosen charity of the year. If you are interested in attending, find out more information and use the contact details advertised on the poster.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE WINNERS



Once again Santa came to visit (AKA our member Dave Watson) to present our raffle prizes at our Christmas meeting in December. Congratulations to all our winners of the free Christmas raffle.

Special thanks go to all our committee members who donated the raffle prizes and provided the food for the afternoon Christmas tea.

CHRISTMAS RIDDLE

Well done to Sue, Sheila and Yvonne who emailed the correct answer to us.

The answer is Noddy Holder from Slade who sang Merry Christmas Everybody and was in the charts for Christmas 1973 – that’s 50 years ago! The song held off rival Christmas singles from both Wizzard and Elton John, selling a million singles over the festive period.



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 January/February: [u3a online events](#)

- Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk one
- Holocaust Memorial Day – The Story of Major Leonard Berney (1920- 2016)
- 'Flight Inspiration' Aviation Network Meeting: Apollo Mission 11 & 13
- David Hockney & the Theatre
- Science Network Event
- 'Safe bind, safe find' Locks & Keys
- Mosaic Art
- Introduction to the Air Fryer with Simple Recipes
- Cryptic Crosswords in Context
- More Number Fun with Dr Knott
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Monthly 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 our 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

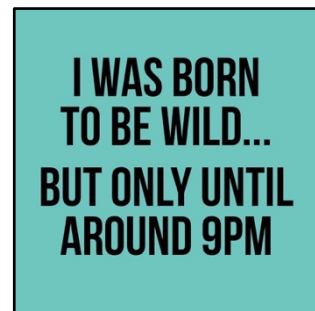
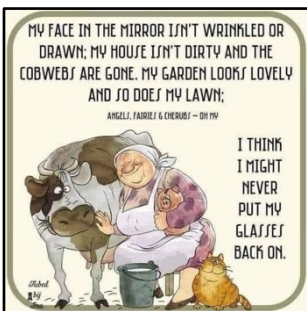
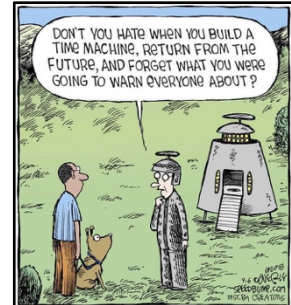
NATIONAL u3a NEWSLETTER

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 17th a new episode is uploaded. Click here for the full list of radio podcasts since they started: [u3a Radio Podcast Playlist](#)

KEEP SMILING



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.