

**\* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July\***

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

**History of Aviation & Eastchurch Museum**

**Peter West**



Peter West is the manager of the Eastchurch Aviation Museum. It was almost by chance that the museum, a treasure house of exhibits which celebrates Eastchurch's role as the cradle of aviation, came into existence. Looking for something to do in retirement, Peter popped into the Bluetown Heritage Centre to offer his services as a volunteer. Peter says that, while there, he was "transfixed" by the story of Sheppey's pioneering aviation heritage and thus the seeds were sown for the creation of the Eastchurch Aviation Museum. Peter will be telling us more - a lot more!

**Non-members are welcome £3 – Come and see how we “learn, laugh and live”**

**\*Save the date for next month: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August\***

**Picnic in the Park – Queenborough Park**

**COMING UP**

<b>David's Slice of Life</b>	Page 2	See what David has to say about life this month!
<b>Interest Groups</b>	Page 3	Find out the news about our current and new groups. Interest groups can only run when we have willing volunteers to organise them, our committee is ready to help get new groups set up so let us know if you have an idea for a new group.
<b>National Project</b>	Page 4	<b>THEIR FINEST HOUR</b> – Get involved in this national project to help preserve local and family memories of WW2
<b>National u3a Activities</b>	Page 5	Also find out more about what is available nationally Read about the recent visit by our u3a members to Cobham Hall and the Wine Appreciations Group's quiz win!!
<b>Local Services</b>	Page 6&7	Read about the new and existing services provided by local charity Age UK Sheppey – NB: There's more than you might expect!
<b>Keep Smiling</b>	Page 7	A little light relief.
<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?

**Bring Your Reusable Cup**

Refreshments are provided free at our meetings so please bring your own cup/mug if you can. Not only is it more environmentally friendly to reduce our use of single use cups, but reusable cups are also nicer to drink out of, we can also 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.



**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.

24<sup>th</sup> August – **Picnic in the Park**  
28<sup>th</sup> September

26<sup>th</sup> October  
23<sup>rd</sup> November

**14<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Meeting

## David's Slice of Life

I can still remember my first encounter with the National Health Service. It came via a disgusting pink concoction called M&B, which seemed to be prescribed for virtually everything when I was growing up post- Second World War.

I was in bed suffering from a high temperature and my mother poured a dose of the evil, sweet-smelling mixture from a glass medicine bottle into a tablespoon. I can recall gritting my teeth and trying hard not to vomit as I forced two or three spoonfuls of it down my throat. But M&B did the trick and after a day or two I started feeling much better.



The very first bottle of M&B, now in the Science Museum

For more than 70 years, I hadn't a clue why it was called M&B, but I have finally discovered the answer and you'll have to read to the end of this article to find out why.

Little did I realise at the age of five or six that, at the time, M&B had been hailed for years as a miracle drug and the first chemical pneumonia, long before the vast array of anti-biotics available today, and it saved many lives, including, notably, that of Sir Winston Churchill, who was suffering from a severe bout of pneumonia. My dose of M&B got less publicity than Sir Winston's. In fact, none at all.

So why am I taking a trip down the NHS memory lane? It was reading a newspaper story last week about yet another controversy involving the NHS, which prompted me to turn the clock back.

Remember the term "family doctor?" Sounds a trifle quaint these days, something from another era, but in my childhood days and even as my children were growing up 35 years ago, your family doctor would make house calls if anyone was ill, especially children. He would make two or three more visits if necessary. He would know the names of everyone in your family.



I remember visits from Doctors Wylie, De Lacey and others when I was growing up and, much more recently, house calls by Drs Youdale or Murthy when our children were young.

One day, when my sister was about five, she somehow contrived to get a pea stuck up her nose. Don't ask me how! My father tried in vain to get it out but it wasn't long before our family doctor turned up and skilfully removed it using a pair of tweezers. Today, it would be a four- hour wait in A&E, a 20-mile drive and all the associated trauma.

The process of actually getting to see a doctor can, these days be a stressful experience. It's a race against time at 8am sharp to secure an on-the-day appointment by continually re-dialling your surgery. By the time you eventually get through, there aren't any appointments left. Those who are not quick-on-the-dial stand no chance.

You may know the name of the GP who sees you or, more likely, you won't if he is a locum. You may also never see the same doctor again because he has moved on.

To be fair, things seem to have improved on the Island recently but friends in Sittingbourne say it's virtually impossible to get an appointment anything less than a week or two ahead, unless you can demonstrate that the Grim Reaper is knocking at your door.

If this month's Slice of Life sounds like a total rubbishing of today's NHS, it's not meant to be. The doctors and nurses are as dedicated as ever; the chances of surviving a serious illness, a stroke, a heart attack or a life-threatening road crash injury are greater than they have ever been because of the technological advances in medicine and surgery techniques. All this despite unprecedented pressure on hospitals, especially A&E, GPs and nurses.

It goes without saying that we can't preserve the NHS of the Fifties and Sixties, even the Seventies, like an institution frozen in time, much as some would like to. It has had to move on from those days when we regarded it as a localised version of the much-loved TV series Dr Finlay's Casebook and, inevitably, has become a much more impersonal organisation.

From the day it was founded, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1948, the NHS has always been a political hot potato and is even more so today. But, hopefully, we can all agree it is still the world's greatest healthcare institution, despite its shortcomings.

Taking my trip down memory lane, I look back with great affection for the way things used to be: mum or dad having a chat with the doctor while the kettle was boiling for a cup of tea and the appointment for the next visit sorted out directly with him.

It all sounds rather cosy now and I know that nothing stays the same for ever. The NHS I have been reminiscing about was of its time. That said, it's impossible not to cherish fond memories of almost everything about the NHS in its early days... except, of course, M&B.



A cosy scene from Dr Finlay's Casebook

**Footnote:** *The pink medicine I hated so much was one of the first generation of what are called sulphonamide antibiotics. It was discovered by Lionel Whitby at the British firm May and Baker and logged in the company's test book on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1937, under the Code No. M&B 693. From then on, it became known to generations of youngsters- and adults – as simply M&B, without most of us ever knowing why. Or ever liking it !*

## INTEREST GROUPS UPDATE

Each interest group has its own communications list so, if you are interested in joining any interest groups, please sign up at one of our meetings or email us at: [isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

### SINGING FOR FUN INTEREST GROUP

Wendy had agreed to facilitate this group and following from recent discussions the group will recommence in the early Autumn.

### CARD MAKING/SCRAPBOOK CRAFT

This new group facilitated by Sally held the first meeting recently introducing this craft. If you would like to try out making your own bespoke cards using die cutting techniques, stamping and embellishments, along with great company, why not come along and see what you can create! You won't need any equipment; we have plenty of resources. Meetings take place at the Rushenden Wellbeing Hub on the first Friday morning of each month.

### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SMART PHONE

This new group, facilitated by Sally, our Membership Secretary also held its first meeting recently. This group is for anyone who wants to learn more about using their Smart Phones (and tablets) from the basics through to more complex uses of our mobile computers in our pockets. We may not know the answer, but we can find out together! The group will be run on a collaborative basis with helping each other to become more confident in using those features each member would find useful. The group will run on Friday mornings on the second and fourth Fridays each month at the Rushenden Wellbeing Hub.

### COFFEE STOP – Next meeting 15<sup>th</sup> September

Come and mingle with your fellow members. This group will be an informal monthly coffee morning drop in. We will have board games to try out or perhaps jigsaw puzzles to complete collectively or maybe a simple sociable chat. Will take place at the Rushenden Wellbeing Hub on the third Friday morning each month.

## NATIONAL PROJECTS

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

### THEIR FINEST HOUR - Keep your family WW2 tales alive

Highlighted recently in our Third Age Matters (TAM) magazine, this project has encouraged one of our members to get involved and would like to know of any other members in our u3a who might be interested in joining together to collect family and local stories and objects to help preserve these memories. Read the article from TAM here:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/i/isle-of-sheppey/docs/theirfinesthourproject.pdf>

**Their Finest Hour** is a nationwide project organised by Oxford University. It aims to record, for posterity, those memories handed down in families, of life during and after the events of 1939-1945. You don't need to have been there, but maybe your family talked about 'the war'. Maybe you have snapshots, or objects, that have significance in your family. Your family memories may be from military life or may be based in home life or in working life, but all are valued. <https://theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk/>



### U3A RESEARCH & SHARED LEARNING PROJECTS

This project is one of several u3a Research & Learning projects. These projects take many forms, some are devised on a national or regional basis, and others are devised and run by the members themselves. **Projects** cover anything that stimulates the interest of those taking part. Some may want to work with a university department, others might be counting species for a local wildlife initiative, but they are all valid and valued.

These projects are open to any member and you can sign up for information about related events and opportunities. You do not need to join via your own u3a, but you might get more out of a project if you have some local buddies.

## NATIONAL u3a

Click here to find out more about what there is on offer nationally <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> There are numerous leaning events and short courses (usually free online using zoom) from Mindfulness & Meditation, Laughter Yoga to History, Science, Maths and Arts.

### NATIONAL u3a NEWSLETTER

**Sign up to 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/events/educational-events>

### RADIO PODCASTS

Have you listened to the monthly **u3a Radio podcasts** on YouTube? They are currently on summer holidays until September, so now is a great time to catch up. Click here for the full list of radio podcasts since they started in September 2020:



[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsB2t41TNozHSJ4fvod\\_yjxrUJDzqbDD](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsB2t41TNozHSJ4fvod_yjxrUJDzqbDD)



## ACTIVITIES

## COBHAM HALL VISIT



Our thanks go to Lynda, our Speaker Secretary for arranging our visit to Cobham Hall facilitated by Christophe Bull, one of the Cobham Hall guides, and a former speaker at one of our monthly meetings. David posted a great review of the visit this on our member's only Facebook group. "Forty-one members of our U3A enjoyed a fascinating day out today at Cobham Hall, near Gravesend. This magnificent building is rich in history and dates back to the Elizabethan era. It was once home to the

Earls of Darnley but was sold to the government when the then owners ran out of money. The maintenance of the building swallows up cash at a frightening rate. In the early Sixties it had a new lease of life as a girls'



school and today accommodates some 200 pupils from around the world. If you would like any of your grandchildren to attend, you'd



better start saving now as the fees for boarders are £45,000 a year! At the end of the tour, we all enjoyed refreshments including tea and coffee and some delicious home-made scones, plus fresh cream and jam. A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon all round."

## WINE APPRECIATION GROUP WINE CRUISE

A big smile from Val, a member of our wine appreciation group, as she proudly displays the prize - two Saga key rings! - the group's quiz team won on their recent Moselle river cruise. The team came top in the on-board general knowledge quiz with a score of 35 out of 40. It was a fully-deserved victory, as the team narrowly missed winning the first two general knowledge quizzes. However, in the cruise's third and final quiz, their collective brain power was enough to see off the competition!



So, which five questions did the team get wrong?

1. Who was Prime Minister in 1975? Our team said Ted Heath.
2. How many sheets of paper in a ream? Our team said 240
3. What is a Kerry Blue? Our team said a breed of cat.
4. How many strings on a Spanish guitar? Our team said four.
5. Which member of Robin Hood's Merry Men was a travelling minstrel. Our team said Will Scarlet.

Do you know the answers? No checking with Mr Google !

We were quite pleased with ourselves getting a couple of especially tricky questions correct, including which bird has the Latin name troglodytes troglodytes (David's bird-watching finally paid off here) and which US state includes a Union Jack on its flag (Val and Brian knew the answer to this – they've been everywhere !)

Other tricky questions we answered correctly were: What is the official language of Liberia and how many times can the horse height measurement of a hand be divided into 12.

Do you know the answers to those two?

They say that fish is good for stimulating the little grey cells and, as it was a menu choice for most of us at least two or three times during the cruise, that must be surely be why we came out on top !

**LOCAL SERVICES**

**AGE UK SHEPPEY – <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/sheppey/>**

We had a visit at our last meeting from Diane Morley who is the Community Connector for Age UK Sheppey. Diane outlined a number of changes that Age UK Sheppey are making and is raising awareness of their new and existing services.



Age UK Sheppey is an independent local charity working throughout Sheppey to help support older people, their families and carers. Age UK would like as many members of the community as possible to be a part of a better more modern service that is all inclusive. Age UK Sheppey is no longer a service, just for the elderly and infirm, they are now providing services for people aged 50 and upwards.

**Services Offered**



**Gardening:** Just £12 per hour, this includes lawn mowing, weeding, planting up pots and other small jobs

**Mini maintenance:** Also £12 per hour this includes for example, installing door chains, key safes, shelf and flat pack assembly etc.



**Clubs/Cafes/Befriending** There are numerous dementia support clubs, cafes and befriending services throughout Sheerness, Queenborough and Leysdown.

They are also running also various exercise and craft sessions weekly in the activity centre. Details of these can be found on our socials, in the local libraries and GP surgeries or by contacting the centre directly.



**Drop-In Sessions:** Information and advice drop-in sessions are held on the first Monday of every month. These are for anyone who need help with benefits or completing benefit claim forms or any other financial advice.

**Home Support:** This service is provided by their team of employees who are fully DBS checked and insured. They can provide help with practical domestic tasks, such as shopping, cleaning, laundry, ironing, bed making etc. They can also provide light meal preparation, escorted appointments and companionship. They can help for a short period of time until people are back on their feet or provide a regular service.

**Meal Service:** Fresh meal delivery is available for £8 or frozen for £6 for 2 courses. You can even now pop into their centre for a bit of lunch for £8 or if you'd like to stay all day and join in with activities its £12.50. Menu choices change each week.

**Cost of Living Support:** Age UK Sheppey has received some funding from Minster Parish council and Swale Borough Council for support for those over 50 with some free shopping or a fresh hot meal delivered to your door. It is to help people who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. There are criteria for these services so give the office a call to see if you are eligible.



**Volunteers**

As a charity they are always looking for new volunteers to help in the activity centre, drive the minibuses or deliver meals to the elderly too. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jim on 01795 662562 or email [admin@ageuksheppey.co.uk](mailto:admin@ageuksheppey.co.uk)

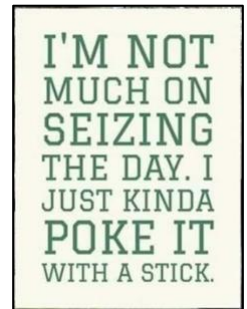
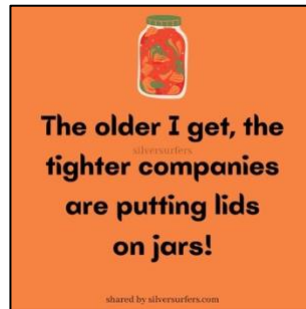
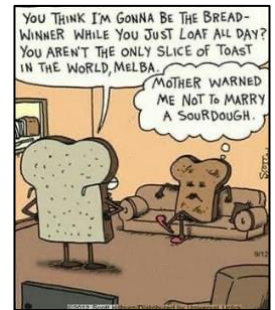


**LOCAL SERVICES**



MEN-TALK UK is a local service aimed at removing the stigma attached to men talking about their mental health and to encourage men to open-up about their mental health issues in a supportive group setting. Every week, MEN-TALK.UK hosts a series of open-door meetings for anyone who wants to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and discuss how their week has been, any troubles or frustrations that they feel they want to get off their chest. It is also an opportunity for everyone to listen to others, learn from their experiences and offer their own advice if they feel they want to. Find out more on their website: <https://men-talk.uk/>

**KEEP SMILING**



**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