

*** Monthly Meeting – Thursday 22nd June**

Please join us at our next members’ meeting.
It will take place at **2pm** on **Thursday 22nd June** at **Minster Club**

Huguenots in Kent

Dinah Winch

Dr Dinah Winch, who was previously the Director of the Huguenot Museum in Rochester, will talk about the historical background to the arrival of the French Protestants to Kent in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Huguenots suffered severe persecution at the hands of the catholic majority and many thousands emigrated from France. La Providence in Rochester, also known as The French Hospital, is an alms house and continues to provide accommodation, primarily for the descendants of the Huguenots.

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

Save the date for next month: Thursday 27th July

History of Aviation and the Eastchurch Museum – Peter West

COMING UP

David’s Slice of Life	Page 2	See what David has to say about life this month!
Interest Groups	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.
Recent Workshops	Page 4	Read about our recent workshops
Activities	Page 5	There are lots of opportunities to get involved in a wide variety of subjects with the u3a – Read here about our members who attended the annual Science Seminar hosted by Sevenoaks u3a
Local Events/Keep Smiling/National u3a	Page 6	Have you signed up for the monthly newsletter from National Office?
Information & Contact details	Page 7	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.

27 th July	28 th September	23 rd November
24 th August – Picnic in the Park	26 th October	14 th December – Christmas Meeting

David's Slice of Life

We had friends visiting from the North of England last month and they were astounded when, on two consecutive days, mail dropped through our letterbox around 6pm.

Why does your post arrive so late? they asked me.

Was it just a Sheppey thing? That's a question I couldn't answer. But it did get me wondering. Why does my post arrive some days at, say, 8.30am, and on other days 6pm or even later for no obvious reason?

Where have the letters been all day when they're not delivered until early evening? Did they get stuck somewhere between a central sorting office off the Island and the local delivery office in Sheerness? Or were most of the posties off sick, on a day off or on holiday? And if it's not due to a staff shortage, what do the posties do all day while they're waiting to deliver mail at 6pm?

It's a mystery which continues to baffle me. I could say answers on a postcard, please, but they may not arrive!

Consider this: In Victorian times, especially in London, there were up to 12 mail deliveries day between 7.30 am and 7.30pm.

Imagine that happening now... anywhere in the UK. I do love "progress," don't you?

*** On the day I finished writing this last sentence, we had two mail deliveries in one day to our home in Minster Road – one at 7.45am and the other at 6pm. I was flabbergasted, to say the least. This was a first in all the years we have lived here. Perhaps things are looking up. Time will tell!

Recently on the Facebook Sheppey History Page, someone posted a photograph of Warner's Holiday Camp, taken around 1961.

Nothing especially remarkable about that, but what struck me was that looking east from the Warner's site - still a chalet park, of course, but now tucked behind the Abbey Hotel – a swathe of open countryside could be seen stretching as far as the eye could see. Minster Abbey could be seen quite clearly in the distance. Few of the dozens of roads and thousands of houses which now fill that gap existed. And, remember, this was only 1961, not 1861.

The view would probably have looked much the same in 1861 as it did a century later. I find it concerning that so much development has taken place in that area, and elsewhere on Sheppey, at the expense of green space, in such a comparatively short time.

I was born on Sheppey and one of my favourite walks as a youngster in the Fifties was along Scocles Road, which was so rustic it could have come straight from a Constable painting. What a difference now. Concrete everywhere.

I realise that Sheppey, along with most other places, can't be preserved in aspic like some museum exhibit and new houses have to be built. But there is a great deal of merit to the argument that the Island has had more than its fair share of housing developments.

INTEREST GROUPS UPDATE

If you are interested in joining any interest groups, please sign up at one of our meetings or email us at: isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

SINGING FOR FUN INTEREST GROUP

Sadly, our facilitator, Pam has had to stand down from this group. We are hoping to be able to continue the wonderful momentum that she has started. The group are very keen to continue and will hold a discussion meeting to see if a way forward can be organised.

SOCIAL HISTORY INTEREST GROUP

This group has recently started and is facilitated by Celia. The group meets on the third Friday afternoon each month from 2pm- 4pm at The Abbey Motel (now the Abbey Hotel) Minster. There is a small charge for the venue and includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

SEWING – TIPS & TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Stella has restarted this group and it meets at her home in Eastchurch. Stella is an experienced seamstress and the group get together to discuss their sewing projects and share tips and tricks of the trade.

NEW INTEREST GROUPS**MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SMART PHONE – Friday 14th July at 10am**

This new group will be facilitated by Sally, our Membership Secretary. This group will be 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 run on Friday mornings on the second and fourth Fridays each month at the Rushenden Wellbeing Hub.

CARD MAKING/SCRAPBOOK CRAFT – Friday 7th July at 10am

This new group will be facilitated by Sally. If you want to try out making your own bespoke cards using die cutting techniques, stamping and embellishments, why not come along and see what you can create! You won't need any equipment; we have plenty of resources. Will take place at the Rushenden Wellbeing Hub on the first Friday morning of each month.

COFFEE STOP - Friday 21st July at 10am

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 perhaps a simple sociable chat. Will take place at the Rushenden Wellbeing Hub on the third Friday morning each month.

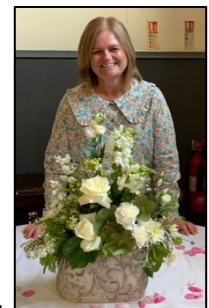
RECENT WORKSHOPS**WILDLIFE GARDENING WORKSHOP**

Thanks go to Helen who organised this free workshop for members. Helen along with other volunteers from the Kent Wildlife Trust, provided practical advice to attendees to help develop their own gardens to become more attractive to wildlife. Helen has also provided us with a whole series of articles which can be found on our website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/isle-of-sheppey/page/121766>

More information about the Kent Wildlife Trust can be found here: <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/habitats>

**FLOWER ARRANGING DEMONSTRATION**

This very successful workshop was well received by members. Phillipa, a local well-known florist demonstrated three different arrangements. The first being a hand tied bouquet, the next was an arrangement in a dish using chicken wire to hold the flowers in place and the third was an arrangement in a large container using traditional oasis. All attendees were entered into a draw for the opportunity to receive these finished arrangements. Phillipa, who is also the president of the local Minster Inner Wheel Club, agreed to do the demonstration at no charge but asked that we make a donation to their chosen charity, Wisdom Hospice. The attendees raised a great total of £200. Thanks go to Sharon, our flower arranging group facilitator, who organised this demonstration, available to all members for free due to the grants we have been able to secure.

***FREE WORKSHOPS***

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. Our workshops are open to all members subject to space.

If you have any ideas for future workshops and would be prepared to get involved to help organise these, please let us know. Email us on isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE SEMINAR - “Future Energy – Alternatives to Fossil Fuels”

Some of our members attended the recent seminar hosted by Sevenoaks u3a at East Malling. One of our members, John, has kindly written a summary.

This half day seminar was held at the East Malling Research Centre on the 7th June.

There were four fantastic lectures from top people in their field; Imperial College, Shell, UKAEA (UK Atomic Energy Authority) and Rolls Royce.

Imperial College talked about the future of solar panels. There was lots of information, but a highlight was their new research where they were producing thin flexible solar panels by 3D printing the photovoltaic material onto a polythene sheet. This material could be laid on the roof of all buildings and would impose no significant structural load.

Shell talked about the use of hydrogen as a propulsion fuel on all their maritime tanker fleet. He also covered with the first presenter the possibility of fitting VAST areas of the Sahara Desert with solar panels. Being too far to have feed cables to Europe with line losses, they would use the electrical solar power to dissociate water. The hydrogen produced is liquified and shipped to Europe to use as a fuel. I did not realise how hydrogen could work as a domestic fuel in a house boiler. Replacing 25% of Natural gas is ok but above that hydrogen being so light would leak out of pipe joints. If you released hydrogen in a room, it would pass straight through brick walls!

Both men thought hydrogen to power cars and trucks had a future.

One paper on very small nuclear power plants that would fit onto a 20 hectares site. Using nuclear submarine technology. They are close to starting to build one. They would be built modularly in a factory to reduce cost and lead times.

One paper on nuclear fusion where they are trying to recreate the temperatures of the centre of the sun in a vessel. The fusion process is held within a vast magnetic field. This is fascinating, 1.5 million degrees centigrade and millions of bar pressure. The test runs, at present, last 5 seconds and use 4% of ALL the electricity generated in the UK for that period. This apparently is not possible as above 2%, the UK energy grid would collapse. So, the extra 2% is generated by using two horizontal flywheels that generate the 2% of the energy requirement when they slow down over 5 seconds. They are 4000 tonnes each and the peripheral speed is 250 mph! before switching in the electrical generators. Their aim, with nuclear fusion, is to produce vast quantities of energy without the use of any radioactive material. There are robotic arms that reached inside the fusion chamber. The operator put his hands/arms in “gloves” and could feel the tips of the robotic fingers. Apparently, he could detect a very thin sheet of plastic in the robots’ “fingers”. The robot arms were bigger than human arms and undertook intricate operations.

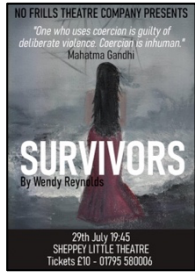
The fusion plant does use tritium which they are starting to produce themselves. The current commercial cost of tritium is \$30,000 a gram!!!!

I hopefully will attend more of this group’s seminars. A previous one covered the difficult subject of dementia and a future one will be on recycling plastic wastes.

The research centre was an excellent modern venue for the group of about 80 and a buffet lunch was included in the delegate cost.

John C Twiseldon

LOCAL EVENTS



SHEPPEY LITTLE THEATRE – Saturday 29th July

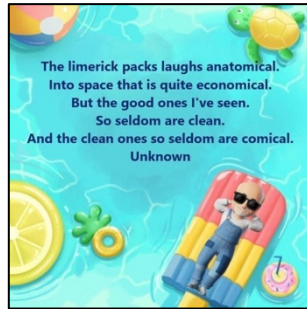
Wendy, our Drama Group/Playreading facilitator and committee member, has written and produced the play ‘Survivors’. This will be performed at the Sheppey Little Theatre, Meyrick Road on Saturday 29th July at 7.45pm. Tickets are £10 – Call 01795 580006 to book.

Upcoming Productions

More information on their website <https://www.sheppeylittletheatre.co.uk/>



KEEP SMILING



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/events/educational-events>

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