

*** Monthly Meeting – Thursday 28th March***

Please join us at our next **Member's Monthly** meeting.
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 28th March** at **SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

Eva Braun
Melanie Gibson-Barton

Last time, cuddly teddy bears. This time, Eva Braun, Adolf Hitler's mistress. It would be hard to find two topics which are, shall we say, so many light years apart.

Our speaker Melanie Gibson-Barton is making her second visit to the Isle of Sheppey u3a. You may recall that she gave us a highly entertaining and informative presentation two years ago on the history of teddy bears. Many of you brought along your own teddies.



This time her subject matter could not be more different. We shall be learning about the life and death of Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress and very briefly, his wife.

The couple committed suicide on 30th April 1945, less than 40 hours after they exchanged their marriage vows, as Soviet troops closed in on their Berlin bunker.

Eva Braun met Hitler in Munich in 1929 when she was a 17-year-old assistant and model for his personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann. She began seeing Hitler often about two years later and she became his constant companion, though their relationship was kept secret from the German public. Hitler believed that marriage would decrease his appeal.

You don't have to be a student of the Second World War to be fascinated by the story of the Nazi leader responsible for the death of millions and the teenage girl who eventually became his bride.

Save the date for next month: [FRIDAY 26th April](#)

The Wreck of the Richard Montgomery – Colin Harvey

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2024/25

Subscriptions for the year 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025 are now due and despite rising costs across the board, the committee have agreed to keep the subscription at £20 for the coming year. We will be collecting subscriptions at the meeting, you can pay with cash, cheque or by card.

You can also pay 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 payments more easily. Bank transfers are encouraged.

PAYMENT DETAILS

Cheques payable to: Isle of Sheppey u3a

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

Bank transfers are very convenient for our u3a so please consider paying by this way if you are happy to.

COMING UP...

Subscriptions now due	Page 1	We will be collecting subs at the meeting or you can pay by bank transfer at any time
David's Slice of Life	Page 2/3	This month, David explores the concept of customer service....
2024 AGM - May	Page 3	Notice of the upcoming AGM and urgent request for volunteers
Interest Groups & Activities	Page 4	See what our members have been up to lately and what's coming up. Register for any groups you are interested in joining
SE Region Summer School	Page 5	Information about the Summer School in September
National u3a	Page 5/6	There's a wide range of national online talks, workshops and courses available, included in your membership for FREE!
Keep Smiling	Page 7	A little humour.
Meeting Dates, Information & Contact details	Page 7	Let us know if you want to join our members only Facebook Group and/or u3a General WhatsApp Group?
REMINDER		Next month's meeting is on a Friday

David's Slice of Life

When someone tells you they are employed as a "Happiness Associate" you know things aren't going to end well.

It didn't, because the individual with the ludicrous job title failed to make me happy with her reply to my complaint.

I won't bore you with the details, but I was complaining to a company which had failed to provide the service I had paid for.

It got me thinking how any boss in their right mind could possibly think that a customer service employee who has to describe themselves as a "Happiness Associate" could ever be taken seriously.

This rather surreal email exchange I had with the young lady in customer service, who presumably would be sacked if she so much as frowned at any point during the day, got me thinking that so many shop and store staff now have silly job titles, though "Happiness Associate" is so far a clear winner.

Wandering around Kent's largest shopping centre a couple of weeks before last Christmas, I couldn't help noticing that a soon-to-arrive fashion store was advertising for "merchandising visuallers."

Apparently, no other employees were required in this shop. I thought: If everyone is busy visualising merchandise, who's going to take the customers' money?

Then it dawned on me. Stores don't employ shop assistants any more. They do, of course, but it's all part of the growing trend to give staff fancy names. The theory must be that in today's inclusive world it's demeaning to call a shop assistant a shop assistant!

Supermarkets and department stores are the worst offenders. There are no check-out staff at the tills, no shelf fillers, no customer service staff or any cleaners. Even the cheerful little chap who rounds up the trolleys in our local supermarket car park isn't a member of staff.

Like everyone else, he's a "colleague."

The use of this word fascinates me. It implies that everyone who works in a supermarket or department store is best mates with everyone else around them, all “colleagues” together in one big happy family. In the real workplace world, not the fantasy, human resources version, it’s not like that at all. It certainly wasn’t like that some of the offices I worked !

It’s all got so daft now that “colleague” has morphed into a job title, as in “Please speak to a colleague if you have a problem with one of your purchases.”

If you’re really lucky, in one department store chain you might be elevated to the dizzy heights of being a “partner,” considerably more grand than being a “colleague” and certainly a cut above being just a mere member of staff. I’ve even heard shop assistants described as “retail associates,” which sounds so pumped-up you might be forgiven for thinking they are just a few notches below managing director !

Of course, fancy job titles are not the sole preserve of shop staff. Most of us have been around long enough to remember when dustmen were upgraded to binmen and now, to give them the official title, “refuse collection operatives.” And it surely can’t be long before a waiter becomes a “culinary choice adviser.”



Someone, somewhere, in a human resources department is bound to come up with the idea sooner or later.

Which reminds me, didn’t human resources used to be called the personnel department, until some politically correct individual decided that “personnel” was far too disparaging a word to be applied to people?

But that’s another story ...

AGM - May 2024

The committee wish to give advanced notice that the 2024 AGM will be held on Thursday 23rd May at Sheppey Hall at 2pm. This will be followed by the usual member’s monthly meeting.

With our AGM coming up in May, we are in urgent need of new committee members. 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. Our current committee members have been in post for several years so we need volunteers to join the committee enabling us to have a smooth planned handover as existing committee members stand down. Without more volunteers our u3a is in danger of stalling

U3a are run entirely by volunteers and all members are invited and encouraged to get involved in supporting their local u3a where they can. Our Isle of Sheppey u3a can only continue with the support of the members. Expressions of interest from members who feel that they could contribute to the running of our u3a either by joining the committee or more informally are now required and will be gratefully received.

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

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

SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH at the MASONIC

Twenty-five members gathered at the Masonic Club in Sheerness for a lovely Sunday Lunch and social get together on 3rd March. The carvery meal was followed by dessert, cheese and biscuits, tea/coffee and mints. At a cost of £20 per person everyone enjoyed the meal and thought it was excellent value for money. The consensus was that members wanted it to be a regular feature, so Sally has agreed to organise another lunch. We have created a Sunday Lunch group so those registered will receive information of the next lunch dates. If you would like to be added to the communications list just let us know.

CEMENT FIELDS & ART PROJECT

INTERTIDAL ALLOTMENT - On Monday 11th March a group of u3a members had a very enjoyable and informative, albeit cold, morning with Cement Fields, a visual art organisation working on an environmental project along the coastline of Sheerness and Minster called "Intertidal Allotment".

This project reimagines an allotment for the beach where both wildlife and humans can forage for edible treats. About 10 of us braved the weather where nature experts helped us to identify cormorants, turnstones and a variety of other birds that frequent our shores.

There are some further public events in the coming months on the themes of intertidal allotments:

Seaweeds and their Secrets - Saturday 20 April, 15:30-17:30

Join a walk and talk with Ian Tittley to learn about seaweeds, including how they can be used, harvested and eaten. (Meet at The Ship on Shore, Sheerness)

Reserve tickets with Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/seaweeds-and-their-secrets-tickets-811501401537> - FREE

Coastal Foraging with Lucia Stuart from The Wild Kitchen - Saturday 4 May, 14:00-17:00

Join renowned forager and wild food chef, Lucia Stuart, to discover the edible treats hiding in plain sight on Sheppey's coastline. (Exact location TBC, near Sheerness)

Reserve tickets with Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coastal-foraging-with-lucia-stuart-from-the-wild-kitchen-tickets-815438497497> - FREE

TRIP TO CHARTWELL

A group of members visited Chartwell – the home of Winston Churchill, on Monday 18th March. Everyone had a couple of hours to wander in the gardens and visit Winston Churchill's studio where many of his paintings



are displayed. The group then had a self-guided tour around the house and museum and listened to several of the National Trust volunteers give information about the house, contents and the history.



VISIT TO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT – Monday 24th June

The visit to the Houses of Parliament is currently full. Ken has arranged two minibuses for the visit and all those on the list should have received an email confirming the cost of the transport. You can pay this by cash at the meeting or by cheque or bank transfer. We have a waiting list so if you are on the confirmed list and subsequently cannot attend, please let us know to avoid wasting any places.

SUMMER SCHOOL 2024 – UNIVERSITY of CHICHESTER

The South East Region is again hosting a Summer school at the University of Chichester – Monday 2nd to Thursday 5th September 2024. Please click here for more information [Summer School 2024 - University of Chichester](#)

The Summer school gives members access to a range of groups where they can meet with u3a members from across the South East region or perhaps even further afield. The leaflet gives more information on what will be available and the cost of accommodation and the contact details for booking. Please note booking is not available yet but will go live on Thursday 11th April and places are limited

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.

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.

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

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

- Secrets of the Human Brain: Brain & Behaviour
- Secrets of the Human Brain: The Blood/Brain Barrier
- Suffering and Hope in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina
- Aviation Network Meeting: Milestones in Aviation
- From Pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks
- Electing the President in 2024 – An update
- Artificial Intelligence News: April
- An introduction to AI Chatbots
- The Climate Crisis and some solutions
- The Road to Clean Water: Beginnings of a Sewage system in Victorian London
- A Remarkable Woman: The Arts and Crafts Designs of May Morris
- From Despair to Delight: The Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins
- Live Cookery Demonstration – Vegetarian Spring Recipes
- Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords
- Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance
- Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie
- Laughter Yoga with Judith
- Mindfulness and Meditation

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

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](#)

NATIONAL U3A NEWS

BOOM Radio

Have you heard of Boom radio? This is a digital radio station built by baby boomers for baby boomers. Boom is not part of any large media empire - just a group of old friends with a dream, broadcasting from their own homes.

Boom radio plays songs that we grew up with, newer ones we've acquired a taste for – plus a few our parents enjoyed, 60s classics and 70s memories and hidden gems. You will recognise many of the presenters, David Hamilton, Graham Dene, Roger Day, Judi Spears, Nicky Horne, Diana Luke, Rob Jones, Les Ross, Jenny Hanley, Simon Bates, Bill Bingham, Les Ross and many more. They've been around for years, just like us!

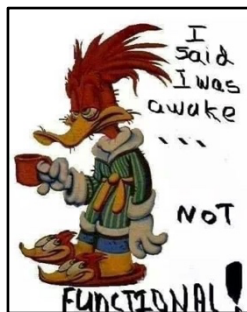
They've now got three stations. Alongside Boom Radio with '60s classics and '70s memories, you can enjoy Boom Light with beautiful easy listening and all your '50s favourites and Boom Rock with a world of rock music.

National Office have recently made this announcement, you may have already seen this if you are signed up to the National u3a Friends newsletter:

Advertising campaign with Boom Radio

We are thrilled to announce that we will be running an advertising campaign with Boom Radio, which has over half a million listeners over the age of 55. The three-month campaign will start in April, alongside a u3a social media campaign, and will feature three u3a members sharing their stories about what u3a means to them. [Listen to Boom Radio](#) and let us know what you think by emailing communications@u3a.org.uk.

KEEP SMILING



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 are held at the Sheppey Hall in Queenborough except in August. Doors open 1.40pm

23rd May
27th June
25th July

22nd August – Picnic in the Park
26th September
24th October

28th November
12th December - Christmas meeting

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.