

**\* Monthly Meeting – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October\***

Please join us at our next members' meeting.  
It will start at **2pm** on **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October** at **SHEPPEY HALL, QUEENBOROUGH**

**Murders in Kent**

**Keith Whitnell**

Our speaker this month, Keith Whitnell, is a retired Kent police officer. The subject, Murders in Kent, promises to be a fascinating talk that will include the background to some high-profile murders which made national newspaper headlines. One may well be the 1996 Chillenden murders. The convicted killer, Michael Stone, continues to protest his innocence and the case is about to be reviewed.

Keith, who holds a BA (Hons) in medieval and modern history, served for 34 years with the Kent force, retiring as a detective constable. Was Keith ever involved in the hunt for any of the killers he will be telling us all about? No doubt we shall be finding out on Thursday.

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

**\*Save the date for next month: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November\***

**Linda Murphy – Acting Can be Murder**

**COMING UP...**

<b>David’s Slice of Life</b>	Page 2	“Whatever happened to Penny for the Guy?”, asks David
<b>Their Finest Hour Project</b>	Page 3	Help the nationwide project being led by Oxford University to collate memories of a wartime generation before they are lost to posterity. Let us know about your family WW2 tales and memorabilia.
<b>National u3a</b>	Page 4	There are lots of opportunities to join other u3a members around the UK and to take part a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free included in your membership!
<b>Keep Smiling</b>	Page 5	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?

**MONTHLY MEETING DATES 2023/24**

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2pm until 4pm, (except December). Refreshments are included.

23<sup>rd</sup> November

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

**INTEREST GROUPS**

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)

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

## David's Slice of Life

Whatever happened to Penny for the Guy?

I doubt that these days youngsters could be bothered to make a guy, even if they knew it was supposed to be an effigy of Guy Fawkes to place on top of their back garden bonfire, always assuming they had one.

I'd love to conduct a straw poll with a bunch of 10-year-olds and ask them who Guy Fawkes was and what he was famous (or infamous) for. I think I can guess the accuracy of the responses.

Anyway, that time of the year is approaching fast. Bonfire Night, Fireworks Night, Guy Fawkes' Night – call it whatever you like but it's just around the corner.



When I was a youngster, 65 years ago, organised firework displays did not exist. If you were lucky enough to have a garden, a small bonfire would be built at the bottom and a box of fireworks, still comparatively cheap then, would be unveiled by dad in almost theatrical fashion just before he lit the bonfire. Studying the contents of the box was all part of the fun, as was scrounging bits of wood for the bonfire and some of dad's old clothes and a load of old newspapers and straw to make the guy.

Thirty years on from my childhood, organised displays were still relatively rare as our children were growing up. That same sense of excitement was still there as they went through the identical ritual of examining the box of fireworks. As the bonfire began to burn, I would attempt to explain which firework I was lighting and what it was about to do – or not do in some cases!

There were just as many pets - especially dogs - around then, but far fewer fireworks, far less irresponsible behaviour and few, if any, complaints about distressed animals.

What a difference three decades have made.

Today, fireworks have become big business. There are pop-up shops and roadside stalls exclusively devoted to selling fireworks for weeks before November 5th. It's no surprise, then, that the number of complaints about the distress caused to pets by fireworks being let off in back gardens and elsewhere has increased massively.

I know that most pet owners hate fireworks, which is one compelling argument against "private" fireworks displays in urban areas. But there is a counter argument, in that responsibly-organised one-off back garden displays held on November 5th are not really the problem. The problem is that with the increased availability of fireworks over much longer periods than was previously the case there has been a huge increase in irresponsible and anti-social behaviour involving them.

Some idiots now let off fireworks any time, on any night, between October and New Year's Eve to celebrate virtually anything you care to name without a thought as to how their neighbours or their pets might be affected. It is this large-scale, regularly repeated selfish behaviour which irritates people and stresses out their pets.

I never have liked being railroaded into "organised" events, especially firework displays. Carefully managed, a back garden display on November 5th or as close as possible, causes but minor noise and inconvenience compared to the almost nightly fireworks bangs and crashes which afflict most communities these days.

Yes, organised displays have bigger, noisier and more spectacular fireworks but there is a lot less fun watching an anonymous person let off an anonymous firework in an anonymous field or park.

Last year, sometime around November 5th, we had a visit from two of our grandchildren. I bought a box of low-noise fireworks from Aldi and let them off at the bottom of our garden. Hardly any noise and no bonfire. It was great fun. No complaints from anyone.

Sadly, I fear that the days of such responsibly-run family gatherings are numbered, firstly because the thoughtless minority have ruined it for those of us who do not like organised displays and secondly because the cost of even the smallest box of fireworks is now horrendous.

Over the course of three generations, we have descended from a situation in which fireworks were let off on only one day each year to the point where they are now let off on every other day in the last three months of the year.

Surely, the sense of fun and wonder vanishes when any special day is repeated so many times it is no longer special.

## INTEREST GROUP PROJECT

### THEIR FINEST HOUR

#### Keep your family WW2 tales alive

Isle of Sheppey u3a are asking our members to contribute their family WW2 tales for an on-line war archive as part of a Heritage funded Lottery funded project entitled **Their Finest Hour**. Many of our members will have either personal experience of life during wartime or have personal tales from their close relatives handed down and these are important to preserve for future generations.

**Why Now?** We act as custodians of our relative's remarkable legacy of those times. The tales and memorabilia symbolise the sacrifices the wartime generation made and it is vital that we preserve and value this heritage before it is lost to posterity.

We ask you to let us know if you or your family members have memories, personal objects, photos or experiences of life during WW2 so that we can all help to ensure that the memories of a wartime generation are not lost.

Our Social History Interest Group have taken on the task of collecting these stories and are aiming to submit them to the project early next year. If you would like to submit stories or photos or would like some help to do so, please let us know by email: [isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

**Their Finest Hour** On-line Archive will be published online and made freely available via [theirfinesthour.org](http://theirfinesthour.org) website. It is expected to be published on 6 June 2024.

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**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.

Read more about the project here: <https://oxford.omeka.net/s/theirfinesthour-archive/page/About>

## LOCAL EVENTS

## SHEPPEY MATTERS

Sheppey Matters are holding a FREE - BIG BASH event on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October. This is open to everyone (it's half term so if you have grandchildren why not take them along too).

Isle of Sheppey u3a will be there, we will have our display stand up, come along for a chat and if you have friends and relatives who would like to meet us and find out more about us, let them know. Find us in the Sports Hall, Sheerness Healthy Living Centre.



## 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 you'd like to take part in coming up in the next few weeks.

ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

There are numerous and wide-ranging learning events and short courses (usually free online using zoom) from Mindfulness & Meditation, Laughter Yoga, Yoga, Cookery, Family History to History, Science, Astronomy, Maths and Art, plus various other talks and events. [u3a online events](#)

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Enter your poetry and short stories in the competitions, submit your paintings/drawings and photographs to be featured in the online galleries. Share your stories on the **All Our Yesterdays** page or submit a **Letter to Your Younger Self**. Try out the Maths Challenge or Logic Puzzles. Take part or just browse other members' submissions. [u3a National Programmes](#)

NATIONAL u3a NEWSLETTER

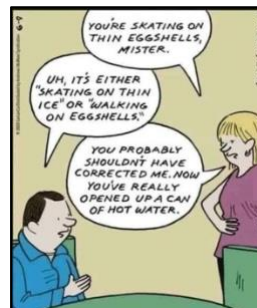
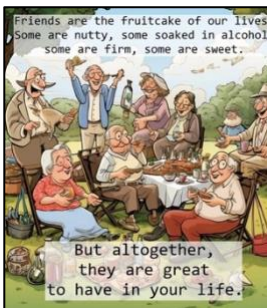
**Sign up to get the most up to date news from National Office and find out the latest news and learning events as they are added.**

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 in September 2020: [u3a Radio Podcast Playlist](#)



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.