**SHEPWAY AND DISTRICT**

shepway.u3asite.uk

Registered Charity No. 1149472

# Newsletter December 2026


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## COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for the next coffee mornings are

**Friday 27th November** – ***Stade Court Hotel***, Hythe, 10.30am

**Wednesday 16th December** – ***Voco (Clifton) Hotel***, Folkestone 10.30am

*It would be very helpful if those attending can bring the correct money for their coffee i.e. £3.00 at the Clifton, £2.50 at the Ship Hotel and the Stade Court Hotel. This will ensure that there will be no problem with providing change.*

You will be able to register for groups, book for events, and discuss anything with the committee. If you have friends interested in joining, please bring them along. New members are always welcome.

## MEMBERS' MEETING

**Wednesday 9 December, *Annual Christmas Party,*** Burton Hall, Albert Lane, Hythe 2.00 pm.

A delightful opportunity to celebrate Christmas with seasonal refreshments and musical entertainment from the Ukulele and the Singing for Life Groups.

£2.00. **This event is now fully booked.**

## COMING EVENTS

**Friday 11th December. *Festive Lunch.*** *Now open to non members who are your partners or friends.* (See page 3 for more details)

# NOTES FROM THE CHAIR




We have heard a lot about Resilience recently, so I thought I would start these notes by providing a couple of links, firstly to the Government's advice on preparing for emergencies, and secondly to a new scheme to provide (financial) support where needed.

The UK government's Be Ready Campaign advises households to prepare enough essential supplies to manage on their own for at least 3 days (72 hours) during an emergency like severe weather, power cuts, or cyberattacks. To see the be Ready Checklist click on https://beready.campaign.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/252/2026/10/Be-Ready-Checklist_English.pdf.

It's a simple, but sensible idea, especially with winter coming on.

Also, I have recently been made aware of something designed to provide help in the short term to those who are struggling with money or dealing with a sudden change in their life. Called The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), it's a new scheme funded by the UK government, and operated in our area by Folkestone and Hythe District Council. Here is the link to find out more: https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/cost-of-living-support/crisis-and-resilience-fund
It may just help somebody, or someone you know, who finds themselves in hard times.



So, Christmas is coming, and in U3A we are marking this in two particular events. The first is at our members meeting in the Burton Hall with our Christmas party on Wednesday 9 December. The afternoon will be taken by our ukulele players and singers. (**This is now fully booked** as the hall capacity is limited.) The second, is our Christmas lunch at the voco Clifton Hotel on Friday 11 December. £29 for two courses and £33 for three. **You must book for this. The closing date is 27 November.** For more details on both see this newsletter or the website.

This past year the U3A could have become homeless when we had to leave the Tin Tabernacle. And Christmas is a time when we often think of the plight of the homeless – I suppose because no room could be found for Jesus to be born in the inn. It probably wasn't a stable, as we understand one, but certainly a place where animals were kept. Warm, hopefully, but pretty rough and ready.

Homelessness, and rough sleeping are terrible things. One of my favourite charities is Centrepoint, which exists to help young people get off the streets. If you can, do be generous to charities like this over the next few weeks. We could make a real difference to someone.

It simply remains for me, a little early perhaps, to wish you a Merry Christmas

Steve

## COMING EVENTS

**Festive Lunch**

Our **Friday 11 December,** Christmas lunch at Voco the Clifton Hotel Folkestone. 1.00 pm for 1.30.

The meal is ***now open to non members who are your partners or friends.***

Cost £29 for two courses, £33 for three. Booking required by **27 November**, please.

Please book choosing your guests menu choices using the menu selection form, from the Festive Lunch link on the events pages Festive Lunch, with your name as payee. You will then receive an acknowledgment email with payment details.

I will book another Curry Night in the New Year but will increase the price to include Poppadoms to make things simpler.

Jacqueline Mack



We had a large audience to listen to Martin Latham's interesting talk on "Kent's Strangest Tales". Fortunately, nobody in U3A was featured!

## U3a Diaries 2027

You may have seen in your recent U3a Matters mag the advert for diaries for 2027.

These diaries give a week a page on the left, and a note page on the right – very useful for making a note of items related to events you may have logged such as pre-pay or order etc.

I will definitely be getting a diary, and it crossed my mind that I could order one for you, if you are interested. Ordering in bulk does reduce the diary price.

Payment (made at time of order) would be £7.25 if you can pick yours up at a Coffee Morning or other meeting, and £10.25 if you would like it mailed to an address of your choice.

**Methods to order/pay**

***To Order*** email or post to me with the number of diaries required, and your preference to have it mailed to you (incl postal detail) or collect in person – see below.

Or you can place your order in person at a Coffee Morning/Meeting

***Payment*** by BACS, Cheque, card or cash. Card or cash at a Coffee morning/meeting only.

**Diaries will only be ordered from TAT (and posted where requested) if paid for in advance.**

**DEADLINE** for your order to be received by me **MIDNIGHT WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER**.

membershipsecretary@gmail.com

Membership Secretary Juniper House 24 Petrel Way Hawkinge CT18 7GZ

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|---|---|
| **BACS details** | CAF Bank |
| Account | Shepway & District U3A |
| Sort Code | 40-52-40 |
| Account Number | 00031591 |
| Payment Ref | Diary27x (number of order)/your initials/Membership number |
| | **For example Diary27x1/sd/1748** |

Sue Dickie (Membership Secretary)

## LOCAL QUIZ

1. Which local settlement in Saxon times was known as Tettinghelde, and in the 15th century Etynghyld?

2. In the 19th and early 20th century, what nickname was given to the village of Cheriton?

3. What is not as natural as you may think about the Zig Zag path?

4. Margaret Damer-Dawson is buried in Lympne Church. What was she famous for?

5. Which local village hosts the Boxing Day fun run?

6. Which monarch is believed to be the first owner of the Westenhanger estates?

7. In which year was the first Away Day train trip from London to Bologne-sur-Mer?

8a. An A.A. box was sited at Newingreen for many years. What was unique about this box?

8b. Patrolmen saluted any passing car with an AA badge. What did it mean if he failed to salute?

*Thanks to Mary of the Local History 4 Group*

*Answers on page 9.*

# GROUP NEWS

## CALENDAR OF GROUP ACTIVITIES

Download the December calendar here: December Calendar

## Group Information

A reminder that for insurance and administration purposes members of each Group need to be registered as such on our Beacon system.

If, as a member of our u3a, you are interested in a particular Group, you can, with the Group Leader's permission, attend a meeting as a guest. Make the arrangements through the *membership secretary* on https://shepway.u3asite.uk/contact/. If you wish to continue you must register your interest by contacting the Groups Registrar through the contact page on the website: https://shepway.u3asite.uk/contact/ or register at a coffee morning.

The Group Leader will be informed and add you to the list or put you on the waiting list if the Group is already over-subscribed. Either way they will let you know.

Non-u3a members may attend a single group session with the leader's permission but must do so by contacting the membership secretary on https://shepway.u3asite.uk/contact/. Should they wish to continue they must join our u3a.

If you are unable to attend a meeting, please always let the group leader know in advance as it helps them with arrangements

If you belong to a Group which you are no longer able to attend please inform the Group Leader so that your place can be given to someone else.

When you apply to join a group make it clear which group you wish to attend by giving the exact name and the timing.

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**Book Circle 3 - Romney Marsh**

This group meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month to discuss our current reading. Members take it in turns to suggest a topic, or author for us to read. These can cover a wide range of subjects and the meetings are always interesting.

Bryony

**Romney Marsh Pub Visits**

This group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at a nominated Pub in the Romney Marsh area in order to have a social get-together in a convivial setting somewhere other than your usual "local". We meet at 6.00pm and spend an hour or more socialising. Those who wish to may decide to stay on for an evening meal which many pubs serve until up to 9 o'clock.

An invitation is sent out to all members about a week in advance giving the pub location. Over the winter months, the locations will be in either New Romney or Dymchurch rather than out on the Marsh.

Bryony

**Short Walks West**

There will be no further Short Walks over the coming Winter months because of the unsuitability of the Romney Marsh terrain at this time of year. Walks will resume in March 2027.

Bryony

**Long Walks**

**FRIDAY 4th December** 10.00am

The next long walk is from Brookland. Meet ouside the church (TN29 9QR). There is plenty of parking around the area.

**Italian**

Franca is no longer hosting the Italian Group which has now closed.

**Cribbage**

Cribbage continues over the festive period, meeting on 15 December and 19 January.

Dave Denyer

**Local History 3**

A recent Local History 3 meeting covered a number of very different presentations.

The first was about the experiences of one of our members who swam the channel as a member of a relay team of six.

We were told about the early channel swimmers including captain Webb who was the first swimmer to achieve this in 1845 taking 21 hours 45 minutes since then to around 1950 there were only about six attempts.

But since then interest has grown and the average number of attempted channel swims now has grown to around 300 per year.

The speaker told us about what training they had to do before they were permitted to take part in this event and what regulations the Channel Swimming Association put on participants including any attempts between November and June are treated as void.

Over the years there have been 4,135 successful channel swims and 7 to 10 known deaths for comparison there have been 12,400 successful climbs of Mount Everest.

The second presentation was about a WW1 medal dug up by a family member in a Folkestone allotment it was awarded to Sergeant William Sharp who was Born in 1888 survived the First World War but died of Spanish Flu in 1919.

The next presentation was by a resident of the Kent village of Brook near Wye. We were told of the village's history from Roman times to the present day including the history of the church, moated manor house, oast house and the very large barn that is now an agricultural museum.

The final presentation was on the history of the English Channel from the time when the sea broke through the land bridge between the continent and Southern England around 10,000 to 6.000 years ago. And included the people who crossed it such as Caesar, St Augustine and William the Conqueror. The Spanish Armada and Drake were also mentioned.

Our November meeting was to be our last one of the year and we started by looking back at what we had achieved over the last 12 months which included lots of informative presentations and some successful visits to historic places of interest. Many thanks to those who have worked on presentations and contributed in making this a happy and successful group.

We then had two presentations the first presentation was on Kearsney Abbey just outside of Dover.

We were Informed of the sites history and its extensive gardens dating back to the time of the Norman conquest. We were then told about its history and its numerous owners through time and how they landscaped the 11,000 acres of gardens and diverted the river Dour in to various ponds and fishing lakes.

We were also informed of the site's role in the second word war after which Kearsney Abbey was purchased by Dover Borough Council for £10,000.

The Site has never been associated with any religious groups although some of the building stones may have been recycled from local demolished sites as part off Henry Vlll's dissolution of the monasteries.

The second presentation was completely different in that it was about the 1970's rock group "Supertramp" That was formed by a chance meeting of two founder members at the Botolph's bridge pub on Romney marsh.

We were then treated to a brief history of the group and its players and how it morphed into various phases of its life until it's final demise around 2002.

Some group members lived and practised in a rented cottage near the Botolph's bridge pub while attending gigs in Kent and greater London.

We then had our tea break with traditional mince pies.

This was followed by a 25 question quiz devised by one of our members, based on past presentations and local historic places.

John Anstiss Group Leader

**Earth Science**

December 21st is so near Christmas. As usual we shall have our Christmas party. Bring some party nibbles and if you come across any interesting science information we can discuss it.

Kay Sharpe

**Climate in Crisis**

Last month we viewed these talks from its source material, The National Emergency Briefing:

- Food Security: Professor Paul Behrens told us that, on current climate projections, the land area of the Earth which is suitable for food production will be reduced by a third by 2100. Three of the worst cereal harvests in the UK have happened in the last decade and the Mediterranean countries which supply a quarter of our food are already being seriously impacted by drought.

The keys to securing future food supplies are:

- Moving to predominantly plant-based diets
- Reducing food waste
- Improving production
- Increasing climate resilience

- Health: Professor Hugh Montgomery, an intensive care consultant in the NHS, told us that our health system is degrading because our economy and food supplies are breaking down. The Lancet Countdown had reported recently that 12 of the 20 indicators of known health hazards of climate change had broken records.

Policies on clean air, active travel, warm homes and plant-rich diets will cut emissions and disease together, making the NHS more sustainable. Tackling obesity alone could save the UK around £126 billion every year.

Roger Wood, Group Leader

**Classical Music**

The first recording played at our November meeting was of the slow movement that concludes Gustav Mahler's monumental *Third Symphony* composed 1895-6. As a contrast we followed it with a complete performance of Tchaikovsky's *Little Russian Symphony, No 2 in C minor* written 1872 rev 1879-80. The whole work is based on Ukrainian folk songs which the composer heard whilst staying with his sister living in the Ukraine (known by Russians as 'Little Russia'). The session ended with selected sections from another huge work the *Grande Messe des Morts* by French composer Hector Berlioz.

Michael (Group Leader)

**Ten Pin Bowling**

*Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to the members of the both the Friday and Tuesday Ten Pin Bowling groups for all their enormous support and to say **WELL DONE, EVERYONE** on the scores and strikes you've achieved*

The following dates are when the Ten Pin Bowling groups will be meeting until the end of January 2027:

**2026**

**Friday 11th December 11.00am**

**2027**

**Tuesday 26th January 11.00am**

*There will be **NO** meetings of the Ten Pin Bowling Group on Tuesday 22nd December 2026 or on Friday 8th January 2027*

The group members meet in the Hollywood Bowl, Station Road, Ashford and we play two games per session at a concessionary cost of £7.30 for the two games

*(Please note that the time to be at Hollywood Bowl is now 11.00am for both groups)*

Newcomers wishing to join one or both of the groups are very welcome.

Registration can be made at shepwaygroups@gmail.com

We look forward to welcoming new members to the group.

*Anyone wishing to play in both groups should be registered for both groups.*

*I very much appreciate the continued support received from all members of both groups.*

Doreen Bishop

**Photography Groups 1 & 2**

Photography groups 1 and 2 continue to have fun finding different subjects to photograph. Having just finished the challenge of photographing windows in all their forms we are now moving on to creating black and white photos of shapes and patterns. To this end we held a workshop on 18 November.

Both groups have a few places left for anyone interested in photography using any equipment. Group 1 meets on the first Tuesday whilst Group 2 meets on the first Friday. Both groups meet in the morning at The Shed.

Pete Savage and Peter Carroll

**Badminton**

We believe that we are a friendly group and every Thursday at 3.30pm approximately 8 of us meet at the Hawkinge Community Centre to play badminton for an hour. It's an excellent way to maintain mobility and improve motor skills. Ideally, it is suited to people who have played either badminton, tennis or squash in their earlier years.

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer coaching but would welcome any U3A member who would like to come along and try a free taster session.

Lyn Noyes

**Gardening 3**

**Glorious Autumn Colours!**

So often seen as the death of summer and precursor to dreary winter days! To embrace the changing of the seasons always brings excitement and relief. Change keeps us on our toes.

If we engage in walks, gardening, etc., and are immersed in our interests, new and old, we derive huge benefits for our emotional and physical health.

Have a wonderful autumn.!!



Picture taken of crab apple tree spotted in a Kent garden. Some spectacular vistas when **we get up and go.**

Maria Pearson

## Courses and Events being held by the Third Age Trust On Line

The Third Age Trust have arranged an ongoing series of online courses and single events which members of any U3A in the UK can join. To review the current schedule please go to the Third Age Trust website on u3a.org.uk/events where you can also book your place. The majority are provided free as part of your membership. They will also be reviewed at the coffee morning.

### January Newsletter

If you have any material about group activities or other pieces that may interest members, including poems, quizzes etc, please send them to Tony at shepwaynews@gmail.com by the **21st December.**

## Shepway and District U3a in collaboration with the British Red Cross

We have successfully run a few workshops in collaboration with the amazing training that the British Red Cross provide, and I was delighted to hear from one of our members who had attended the Basic First Aid for Adults Workshop; She found this had helped her and her husband to manage what could have been a health crisis for them.
This is her story:

> I came back from an early morning swim in the sea and took a cup of tea up to my husband who was still in bed. His speech sounded odd and I asked him what was the matter with his speech.He replied in a slurred voice "I don't know". He got out of bed and was moving around alright and although I said he might have had a stroke he replied that he would be ok and would take a shower.
> While he was showering I checked online, thinking it might be a mini-stroke (T.I.A?) as he had no other signs of a stroke, but a video said it was important to get treatment asap even if a mini-stroke. So I phoned 999 anyway.
> When paramedics arrived they did all the appropriate tests and although he could lift arms, legs etc. his speech was coming and going slurred and his blood pressure was very high.
> Cutting a long story short he was taken to Canterbury stroke unit overnight. It was more than a mini-stroke, a real stroke, and he has been told it could be up to a year to recover. It could have been a lot worse.
> He has some weakness on his right side and dexterity is affected, but can walk and talk ok until inevitable fatigue sets in. He is cooking our supper right now 😊

Visit the BRC website for information on their Basic First Aid downloadable app
redcrosseducation@redcross.org.uk
Further Workshops with the Red Cross will be arranged as we move into 2027. If you would like to be on the list to receive notification of prospective dates etc, please email me and state your preference as Hawkinge, or Hythe, or Either.
If you would be interested in attending a more in-depth First Aid Workshop - also from BRC, sessions are Four hours long and the cost, at the current time, is £15pp for the training plus costs to cover venue hire etc - circa £2-3pp. Send me an email if you would like to have further information in the coming year.

susandickie4@gmail.com




**Local history 4 quiz answers**

1. Etchinghill.
2. The wash tub of Folkestone
3. The rocks are Pulmanite, artificial stone
4 She was founder of the Women's Police Force.
5. Saltwood
6. King Canute.
7. 1843
8a It was the first AA box( No.1).
8b It meant that there was a police speed trap in the area.

# GROUPS

Afternoon Tea on the Marsh
Art - Mixed Media
Badminton
Bird Watching
Bolivia (Canasta alternative)
Book Circle - 1 - Hythe
Book Circle - 3 Romney Marsh
Book club
Books&Co
Bridge
Carpet Bowls
Chess
Climate in Crisis
Computer Users
Crafting Club
Cribbage
Critical Analysis of Poetry
Current Affairs - Folkestone
Current Affairs - Hythe
Current Affairs - New Romney
Cycling
Early Evening Drinks
Earth Science
Family History
First Friday Coffee
First Monday Breakfast Club
Fitness 1
Fitness 2
Flora, Fauna and Foraging
Flower Arranging
French - Beginners
French - Conversation
French - Intermediate
French - Online
Gardening 1
Gardening 2
Gardening 3
Geoffrey Chaucer: Life & Times
Golf
Greek & Roman Technology
Knit and Natter - Groups 1, 2 & 3
Kurling
Line Dancing
Local History 3
Local History 4
Mahjong
Meditation
Mid Week Supper Club
Military History
Music - Classical
Music and Drama
Novels 1
Patchwork & Sewing
Petanque - Elham
Petanque - Folkestone
Philosophy
Photography
Photography 2
Pickleball
Pilates (Friday)
Pilates (Wednesday)
Play Reading - Folkestone
Play Reading - Hythe
Poetry
Python Programming
Romney Marsh Pub Visits
Saturday Dining
Scone Rangers
Shakespeare
Singing for Life
Sunday Lunch Club
Swing Band
Table Tennis
Tai Chi - Class 1 - Form
Tai Chi - Class 2 - Qigong
Tai Chi - Class 3 - Qigong
Tai Chi - Class 4 - Sticks
Tai Chi - Class 5 - Form
Ten Pin Bowling (Friday Group)
Ten Pin Bowling (Tuesday Group)
Ukulele
Walks - Long
Walks - Short - West
Walks - Short -East/Central
Whist & Other Card Games
World at War – History 1930-1945
Writing Circle 1
Writing Circle 2
Your Favourite Poems