



November 2023

CRAVEN U3A NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your Diary:

11 November – Coffee morning with speaker at Champions, 10 for 10.30 am

29 November – Craven College Christmas meal, 6 for 6.30 pm (see page 2)

9 December – Coffee morning with speaker at Champions, 10 for 10.30 am

13 December- u3a Carol Service at Christ Church, Skipton – 2pm

Impressive end of year line-up for monthly coffee mornings

In just a few days time, on Saturday 11 November, **Zoe Metcalfe**, the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, will be our monthly speaker. One of her key responsibilities is to appoint the chief constable, hold them to account, and secure efficient and effective police in their area – no mean task!



This is your opportunity to ask questions of the Commissioner. We have been asked to submit our questions beforehand so if you have something that you would like the Commissioner to address please submit your question to u3a chair Mick Richings at chair@cravenu3a.org.uk.

Then, in December, it will be time to have a good laugh, when **Bunty Leder** returns by popular request, this time to regale us with stories of her time as an airline stewardESS (*am I still allowed to say that?? Ed.*)

These speakers follow an interesting talk in October given by Eric Jackson about highwaymen, notably Dick Turpin, a murderer, robber and absolute scoundrel who plied his trade between London and York. Any romantic notions about these chaps, as sometimes portrayed on paper and screen, were roundly dismissed.

Craven College Meal

After a hiatus of four years this event returns, albeit at the new venue of Craven College Campus, Gargrave Road, and in the evening instead of lunchtime.



We have booked the restaurant on Wednesday 29 November at 6 for 6.30 pm. The booking allows for the maximum of 40 and a minimum of 30. The event is open to members and partners. If we are oversubscribed we will arrange an additional meal. It will be the Christmas menu costing £25 / person; as yet the exact menu has not been released.

In the first instance please complete the link below, or email Mick Richings on chair@cravenu3a.orguk

<https://airtable.com/appP26jYNdtTfCzXx/shrnD8YE4Tc3IVJyc>



U3a Carol Service

Everyone is welcome at Craven u3a's 25th Carol Service on Wednesday 13 December at Christ Church Skipton at 2pm. The service will include music performed by the Recorder Group and on the Church organ. After the service, refreshments will be available at the rear of the church; any offers of mince pies will be gratefully received. There will be a retiring collection, to be split between the Church and the Sue Ryder charity. The event is being organised on our behalf by Albert Bonham and Kenneth Jackson. Massive thanks to both.

Tribute to Peter Chiles 1933-2023

Peter Chiles, who died on 27th August 2023 aged 90, was the leader of Craven U3A walking group from 1997 to 2006, and it was he who created the Walking Group as we know it today. He took over from Stan Hall when walks were Thursday only and no walk was more than 9 miles. He created a group which had full day walks every Tuesday and Thursday, and produced the first walking group programme in the format still used today.

He extended the group to include long distance walks as well as monthly walks in the Lake District. With the help of Tom Morgan, he developed a programme to complete all the Wainwright summits over a period of 5 years, completing the last few summits in 2005, only a month or so after Tom's death.

Peter and his wife Pat



Peter instigated and organised walking group holidays to Wales, Scotland, and various parts of England. He also ran the group completely on his own, organising and chairing the meetings, putting the programme together, and before universal email, printing 150 copies and distributing them personally on all the long, medium and short walks. He thought it was the role of the leader of the group to go on all the walks, which he did along with his wife Pat.

In 2005 he decided to step down and I was the only one willing to take over which I did for 18 months, although Peter continued to organise the walking holidays. I subsequently persuaded the group that the role was too much for one person. I stood down in late 2006 and was replaced by the first committee of Mike Clarke as Chairman, Frank Goad as Programme Secretary, and Nick Jarvis as Treasurer.

David Turner

Music for Fun

The Music for Fun group goes from strength to strength. We have 15 new members but are still not full. A lovely bunch of friendly people who sing for mental and physical well-being, and for the pure joy of singing and socialising in a group.

We are accompanied by some excellent electric guitarists and flute, ukulele and acoustic guitars.

We sing songs of all types and from many eras, including folk, classic pop, American song book, jazz and blues.

Words and chords are projected onto a screen.

If you only sing in the shower we are for you.

Instrumentalists who don't sing are also welcome. So come and join us at Trinity Methodist Church,

Westmoreland street, Tuesdays from 10.30 -12.15, with a refreshment break.



Lesley Widdop

Twelve music groups from other u3as in the Yorkshire and Humber Region took part in the YAHR Music Fest held over the summer at York St John's University. These included performances by guitars, choirs, ukuleles, pianists and recorders, to name a few. Sheffield u3a has uploaded a video to Youtube:

<https://youtu.be/3z73vnniLfM>

Visit to Bradford Grand Mosque

u3a member Amanda Sitto has arranged a group visit with guided tour to the Mosque on Thursday 18 January 2024, from 10.30 am to 12.15pm. There will be an opportunity to ask questions after the tour and light refreshments will be provided (no charge). If you would like to come along please email Amanda at amanda_sitto@hotmail.com. Numbers are limited, so first come first served.

Nature Rambles

It's the 3rd of October, the forecast is for rain but a small group meet at Gawflatt Meadow, an ancient field in the care of Skipton Civic Society. Maurice White, our group leader, tells us confidently it will not rain – which proves to be almost true. This is one of our monthly Nature Rambles when there is much to see whatever the season. Few of us are experts and we each share our smatterings of knowledge.



As we walk around the perimeter of the field we explore the hedgerows, taking care not to walk on the central meadow to help preserve its richness and diversity. We see several wasps around the hawthorn berries but Maurice tells us we've most likely seen the last of the bees. A bright yellow fungus growing on a tree branch he informs us is Tremella - a jelly fungus.



The purple clover still has a few flowers but most summer flowering plants are now in their vegetative state. We see a sizeable clump of meadowsweet looking healthy but its scented summer flower heads are long gone.

Members also share their own discoveries on our dedicated WhatsApp group which produces a treasure trove of flowers, insects, spiders, caterpillars, butterflies and seasonal fungi in all shapes and colours – a small sample below.



Fungi: russula emetica, dusky puffball, brown mottlegill, fly agaric



Insects: silver-sided sector spider, hawthorn shield bug, cinnabar moth caterpillar, red admiral

There is a joy to autumn days and slow walking. John Clare, the Northamptonshire labourer/poet wrote about his preference for autumn after the busyness of summer:

... give me, Autumn...

For there is wildness that can never cloy -

The russet hue of fields left bare, and all

The tints of leaves and blossoms ere they fall.

In thy dull days of clouds a pleasure comes...

Also, the great 19th century naturalist and polymath, John Ruskin, encouraged “slow looking” – we do a lot of that on our Nature Rambles.

David Turner

Many thanks to Roger French who answered the call for fresh front page banner photos. This month’s picture shows the Aire Valley flood plain. Expect more of Roger’s shots in the coming months. Other banner photo contributions also most welcome.

Could you write a newsletter piece about a group you have joined this year? Ideal length is 300 words, with a photo. Send to elizam2207@gmail.com – Ed.

Chair's Report to Members

The Committee's key challenges are how to:

- satisfy the needs of all members all of the time
- counter negative reactions with actions
- increase membership, and understand (by survey) why people do not renew
- work with group leaders to keep the groups relevant
- maintain a good reputation in the community.

More and more, communications with members are moving on-line. Think of our Newsletter, Group Leaders' communications with groups and, of course, the Open Event. However, we've got to keep our members with us.

This year's Open Event, held at Skipton Town Hall on 8 August, has brought us plaudits, but also criticism from members. We have analysed all the feedback and must conclude that, despite our best intentions, joining groups was the elephant in the room. The Committee has taken that on board and has produced an action plan for the next Open Day and related activities for 2024. I want share this with you now.

Actions for 2024

1. All payment methods to be accepted: cheque, cash, credit cards. A triage desk to be set up to direct members to different desks according to the payment method.
2. More help will be available to support those with IT needs. We shall be inviting members with IT skills help on the help desks.
3. Queues should be kept out of the hall, with the Hub used for registration and group enrolment.
4. Once members have completed their registrations, they should be discouraged from congregating, to avoid access problems.
5. Clearer signage to be provided.
6. We will schedule a membership registration event on the morning of the Open Event (rather than on the day before).

7. More registration sessions will be held during the summer, including at the Summer Programme and monthly meetings.
8. Members will be informed that they can renew their membership as from 1 July.
9. If the finances permit the plan is to reduce the membership fee for 2024/25.

I hope everyone will agree we are listening and trying.

Kind regards,

Mick Richings, Chair



Articles made by last summer's woodturning class: Jan's penguin, David's egg cup, Katherine's egg cup, Helena's scoop. Linda's door wedge, Chris's trees and Barry's whistle

Why not try one of the National u3a's online talks available via the [National u3a website](#). For example:

The Curious History of Labyrinths and Mazes – 10 Nov.

Mathematical Games: Winning Strategies – 14 Nov.

Family History: When the transcript is not enough – 15 Nov.

Glen Coe Trip – Walking Group

Twelve intrepid members of the Walking Group braved the Scottish midges on a 4 night break based in Glen Coe. We had beautiful weather throughout our stay, excellent accommodation and more food than we could, or should, eat (though we managed!).

We didn't have a pre-planned programme but members who know the area well proposed a variety of routes. On Day 1 two set off via Mam na Gualainn to join an old military road now part of the West Highland Way, while Ben Nevis was the destination for the majority. Two parties set off up the peak, one aiming to get to the top and the other to take a gentler approach and head for the half way tarn. Everyone met their goals and enjoyed a great day out. Day 2's offering appealed to all so we set out along Lairig Eilde and Lairig Gartain on a two valleys walk which was a delightful if very warm

outing in the glorious sunshine.



Walkers tend to be independent spirits so our final day was spent in small sub-groups following individual choices, from challenging routes up Buachaille Etive Mor and Beag, a walk-in from Kinlochleven to Loch Eilde

Mor with a cooling swim in the lake, a sketching expedition to capture local landscape and wildlife, and a mellow meander from Fort William to Banavie



and beyond along the Caledonian Canal. Sightings of eagles and deer were highlights, and on our final evening a piper escorted us in to dinner to set the seal on our Scottish sojourn. Thanks to Graham and Anne Reay who led the principal walks and to Philip Sugden for organising the accommodation.

Fran and Mike Valiant

The 2024 u3a Festival

is taking place 18-20 July 2024 at the University of York, based around the Exhibition Centre and Sports Centre. Accommodation will be available in Student Halls.

Full information is available on the [u3a website](#)

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>

which will be updated as time goes by. Craven u3a group leaders may want to start thinking now about possible participation, and members to think about attendance.



Volunteer stewards and meeters/greeters are also needed.

For more information, and to offer skills and support, contact festival@u3a.org.uk