



CRAVEN U3A NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your Diary:

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

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

13 January – Coffee morning with speaker at Champions, 10 for 10.30 am

Your u3a needs YOU!

Fancy an interesting challenge? The Craven u3a Committee is in the process of forward planning for the next u3a programme in 2024/25.

Our Constitution states that a committee member may only hold the same role for three years (with the exception of the Treasurer). I will have been Venue Secretary for three years at the end of the 2023/24 u3a programme. As a result, there will be a vacancy on the Committee for a member to take over my role.

The Venue Secretary role involves working with the Programme Secretary and Group Leaders to identify suitable, cost effective venues, which have the facilities needed for the individual Group's activities. In addition, the Venue Secretary provides a financial forecast of the venue costs to the Treasurer, so the Committee can budget for the u3a year.

Anyone who is prepared to take on this role will have plenty of support. A comprehensive list of venues with contact details, costs and facilities will be provided. If you might be interested, please do not hesitate to ask me any questions.

Anne MacDonald

Indoor Games Group

The Group will be starting the second session at The Three Links Club, Skipton on Monday 8 January from 2 – 4pm.

The Group has gone from strength to strength this year, with many more lady members and a much wider range of games to choose from, including canasta (and other card games), scrabble, rummikub, darts, dominos, pool, draughts & chess. Members are also encouraged to bring in their own games to try out.



There will be around 10 places available in the group for new members from January. Further information from Alan Newall Group Leader:
newallaandj@gmail.com

What a nice way to spend a cold winter's afternoon

First Thursday Group

The First Thursday Group is up and running! As its name suggest, we meet on the first Thursday of every month. So far this year, we have explored Salts Mill and Cliffe Castle Museum in Keighley and in December we will be lunching at the Railway Inn in Skipton. Proposals for future outings include:

- Skipton Castle
- Leeds Art Gallery and an exploration of buildings of architectural interest
- The Bronte Parsonage Museum in Haworth
- The Creamery and Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes
- Day out in Morecambe

Where possible, we share lifts or use public transport. Getting to know each other over a cup of coffee or lunch is also an important aspect of our activities. We are not a huge group and members can opt in or out of trips as they wish. New members are always welcome, as are suggestions for outings.

*Linda Hoole
Group Leader*

Relaxed painting with the Watercolour Group

The Watercolour Group meets weekly during term-time at St Andrew's Church Hall, Newmarket Street, at 2pm on Tuesdays. Since our communication member is no longer with the group, we've been a little remiss this session in getting information both about prospective members, and the group and how it works, circulated. Our joint apologies to everyone for this, but the group has been rather in the dark itself!

We are very much a self-help group, which means there is no formal tuition as such; we all do our own thing, using our own paints, brushes and other materials, and if we have a problem, we are free to ask others in the group if, out of their combined experience, they are able to help. Nine times out of ten, help is forthcoming! Also, we always feel free to walk around and look at other members' work, and the methods they use. That way, we pick up a lot of hints and tips about particular techniques.

We vary in the types of pictures we paint; landscape, flower depictions, seascapes, animals, all sorts of subjects have made appearances, and if we seem a bit quiet and not very forthcoming, it's only because we are concentrating hard! Don't be put off by this, it simply means we are working away quietly, and to be honest could probably do with an interesting (or even an apparently stupid) question so we can have a break!

Below are some examples of the work the group does, so please, if you are interested, do come along and join us.

David Henderson (cravencast47@gmailcom)



Group News - from Keith Berrington

Geology Walks

Haw Crag is just one of the places visited recently by the Geology group. Just a short walk from Gargrave, it

boasts a stunning 360-degree view.

And there is a topsy-turvy limestone



quarry to investigate for fossils, as you can see from the photo. Other recent Geology walks have been to Malham, Burnsall and Yarnbury. These short friendly walks are fortnightly on Monday mornings, and normally finish before lunchtime. Future walks are around Linton, Threshfield quarry, Greenhow mines, Trollers Gill, and other intriguing places.

Wharfedale Walking

Leaping salmon was the highlight of a recent Wharfedale walk. At least four were spotted as we watched. This was a special out-of-area walk for us, starting from Stainforth, walking to Feizor and back via the Hoffman Kiln. The possibility of seeing the salmon leap was an opportunity not to be missed after the recent heavy rain. Normally our Saturday walks are in the Upper Wharfedale area, and we have recently had some lovely autumnal walks around Conistone, Grassington, Burnsall and Bolton Abbey, as well as Gargrave and on Barden Moor. Although the group is the fourth largest in Craven u3a, a typical number on a walk is in the mid-teens, making the walks pleasantly-paced and companionable.

Opera DVDs

Craven u3a had a taste of real culture last month: two operas presented specially for us in Skipton. Each performance started with coffee and an introduction by a member. We then settled down in comfortable armchairs to watch opera on DVD. The highlight of the month was Puccini's La Rondine, a sumptuous story of star-crossed lovers. Earlier in the month we saw Wagner's mythical Das Rheingold. However, all good things come to an end. The group is rather small, and as we all have other commitments, we are pausing the group till next year. Many thanks to Con & Geoff for hosting such a wonderful experience in their house.



Stretching Yoga

It's sometimes hard to motivate yourself on a Monday morning when the weather outside is frightful, but it doesn't stop an intrepid group of women from turning up week after week throughout the winter to stretch their bodies with Sandra Dixon. This is a good fun class where we warm up, then stretch and try to keep our bodies supple and youthful. Are we successful? Well, you'll have to judge from the photograph.



It's also a lovely social occasion, because, like so many classes, we have time before for a quick catch up and later the café at St Andrews provides us with tea and coffee which we drink while the second class is arriving. News is shared and aches and pains discussed.

I have been lucky enough to have been part of this class from the beginning and it has developed to suit participants at all levels, hence the new class. The U3A is so good at meeting need in Skipton and Craven and responding to user feedback. The wealth of classes also means that whichever class you try you are likely to bump into people you know from the area - sometimes through the U3A and sometimes just from seeing them around the town.

At Stretching Yoga we develop core strength, improve balance and stretch out the aches and pains because we want to have an active older age. Sometimes we even look good while we are doing it. But whatever the initial motivation, we always come away with improved wellbeing, even if it's just from the gossip and the light-hearted banter. The classes are a joy and we all thank Sandra Dixon very much for running them.

Jay Cundell Walker

Popular Music 1920-1970

This session has seen a new high in our membership, with 45 signed on. For a few years now, we have topped the 25 mark, so it is quite an achievement. Admittedly, we have only been topping the 30 mark so far, but that is due to a mixture of holidays and hospitals! Soon, we'll touch the 40 mark!

We began in October with an afternoon of 25 records spanning the years 1920-70, literally a song for every two years. If you're still curious about the content, our 20's selection included Al Jolson and Bing Crosby in the 20's and concluded in the 60's with "Hey Jude" by you know who. After such a wide selection, our second week was a "Sixties Sandwich", with all 25 tracks taking us back to the 1960's, stretching from "Apache" with the Shadows to "Those were the days" from Mary Hopkins. The filling in the sandwich was a dozen tracks from the flower power era, including the Mamas and Papas and Mama Cass. In the words of Mary Hopkins "Those were the days".

Since then, our last five weeks have been spent listening to "An Alphabet of Musicals". Altogether 125 songs from stage and film musicals, in alphabetical order beginning with "An American in Paris", "Annie" and "Annie Get Your Gun!" As I write, we've just reached "K" with songs from "The King and I", "Kismet" and "Kiss Me Kate".

And after our musical alphabet, we have a week of French songs (Charles Trenet, Yves Montand, and of course, Edith Piaf), a Day with Disney, and of course our usual Christmas invitation to our members to entertain us all with their own personal choice. By which time, we should have beaten our class record for the number of chocolate biscuits consumed and cups of coffee drunk!

David Wiseman



Another beautiful photo from
Roger French – Farnhill Pinnacle

Bradford Revisited – Walking Group

Satanic mills, not rolling hills, in this 6-mile walk from Saltaire station to the centre of Bradford on 10 October. However, it was no easy stroll because, in keeping with normal practice, there were steep ascents and some mud.

Our initial route took us past Salts Mill, across the busy A650, and into more uncharted areas. I grew up in Bradford, and expected to see little that was unknown, but we were soon into unfamiliar woods and out of my comfort zone. A steep and slippery woodland path eventually levelled-off and then ran alongside the 150 allotments of the Northcliffe area in a peacefully rural setting.

Having achieved a significant elevation, there was a pause for “coffee”, before sacrificing all that effort in a descent towards the cobbled back streets of Frizinghall. Once there, a party of middle-aged ramblers with rucksacks and walking poles were an unusual sight for the local residents, some of whom looked on in amazement as we passed by.

Re-crossing the A650 into Heaton, we now found ourselves amidst imposing mansions, a reminder of Bradford’s Victorian heyday. This was an up-market area in every sense – another challenging ascent for those of us unable to talk whilst walking uphill.

The Victorian splendour continued as we entered Lister Park and made our way to Cartwright Hall at its centre. It was here that we stopped for lunch, sitting in glorious sunshine - the entire walk would be completed in tee shirts!



Our route was now into the city centre, taking in the architecturally significant Alhambra theatre, almost-refurbished Odeon cinema, Millennium Square, and the City Hall whose clock tower is based on the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.



Little Germany mural commemorating founding of the Independent Labour Party

We made our way through “Little Germany” to Bradford Cathedral, where I was able to revisit the Pre-Raphaelite stained glass windows of its 1860 restoration.

Our final stop was for tea & cake in the Venetian gothic revival splendour of the Wool Exchange, before boarding a train back to Skipton.

Roger French

Coffee mornings

In November Zoe Metcalfe, the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, talked to us about her role, its challenges, and its future. Full of facts and figures about policing, it was reassuring to be told that North Yorkshire is the safest place in England and Wales in which to live.

This Saturday, **9 December**, **Bunty Leder** will be keeping us amused with tales of life above the clouds as an air stewardess, and on **January 13** we will be hearing all about the **Air Ambulance service**.



Seasons Greetings from u3a Chair Mick Richings

It must be the festive season, the BBC has started playing Christmas music, the lights in towns and villages have been switched on, and there is a rush on buying Christmas trees!

I hope you've found all the groups you are attending enjoyable. If you have any suggestions for new groups, please contact Jacqui Eames or myself. The groups started this year are doing well, which is very encouraging.

We've continued to organise events, eg Summer Programme, Craven College meal, Carol service, and a music event.

What is very pleasing is the membership continues to creep up to pre-covid numbers, but we still have a way to go.

I would like to express my thanks to the Committee for all their hard work. I know from comments that it's really appreciated by the membership. Thanks.

May I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Cheers

Mick



And just in case you have withdrawal symptoms over the Christmas break here are some ideas for online u3a participation:

The [National u3a Poetry Competition](#) has been launched with the theme of 'What If'. Your poem should be a maximum of 16 lines and the deadline for submission is 26 January 2024.

Climate change and the Oceans – 15 Dec at 10 am
Monthly Laughter Yoga – 19 Dec at 3.30 pm
How to better insulate your home – 4 Jan at 2 pm
Access these events [here](#)