



February 2024

CRAVEN U3A NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your Diary:

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

14 March – Drop in at Café Capo 2pm – see this page

20 March – u3a Orchestra, Skipton Baptist Church 2.30 pm

13 April - Coffee morning with speaker at Champions, 10 for 10 for 10.30 am

Call-out to would-be Group Leaders

Share your Ideas

What does being a Group Leader entail? Could you see yourself as someone who might just set up a new group or take over an existing one? With approaching 1000 members in Craven u3a there must be some people out there!

If so, there is a drop-in session for you at Café Capo, Swadford Street, Skipton at 2.00pm on Thursday 14 March. Bring along your ideas, queries and questions. Anne MacDonald and Nigel Holden, both members of the Craven u3a Committee and long-standing Group Leaders, will be on hand to have a chat over a cuppa.

If you can make it, please email Anne at anne.f.macdonald or Nigel at [nigelholden789@gmail](mailto:nigelholden789@gmail.com) ... or just turn up!



Save the Dates

The popular two-day **Craven u3a Summer Programme** returns this year on Thursday 25 and Friday 26 July, at Ermysted's Grammar School, Skipton. Sessions typically run from 10.00 to 12.30, and 13.30 to 16.00, with a half hour break in the middle. Some sessions may be shorter.

Work is beginning on securing presenters and facilitators to provide a varied and rich programme of talks and activities. If you are interested in providing a presentation or workshop, or know of anyone else who might be, please do get in touch with me (lindahoole@yahoo.co.uk) by February 28. We plan to decide and publish the programme in April.

Linda Hoole

Quilting Group Open Morning

Are you free on Wednesday 20th March? You are invited to an Open Morning from 10:30 to 11:30 at Christ Church Hall, Skipton. An opportunity to share our pleasure in creativity and admire a variety of textile projects created by our talented members. Join us for tea, coffee and biscuits!

(Please use the door on Keighley Road, nearest to the solicitors which provides direct access to the hall. There is NO step free access.)



Calling all e-bikers!

It took several years before I finally admitted that cycling in the rolling Hampshire countryside had not prepared me for the experience of puffing and pushing my way along the lanes in the rather more daunting Dales. Increasing problems with osteoarthritis means that the only way up (for me) is on an e-bike. It's always more fun to cycle in a group and so, with more adventures in mind, I would like to form a u3a cycling group for those of us with an e-bike (or any bike), starting up after Easter. The idea would be to meet on an ad-hoc basis, or perhaps more regularly for those with more time. The distances are negotiable. I have a car which can transport 4 bikes inside which gives more options for routes. Do contact me (lindahoole@yahoo.co.uk) if you are interested in joining this group. *Linda Hoole*

In Search of Lady Anne

In an obscure location somewhere on Embsay moor is an ancient but distinctive rock carving still discernible as the face of a young female.

After having moved to Skipton in 2017 we heard of the existence of this carving together with the rumour that it depicted the face of Lady Anne Clifford. Lady Anne was born in Skipton castle in 1590, the only child and sole heiress of George Clifford, the 3rd Earl of Cumberland. Apart from being, in her own right, the 14th Baroness de Clifford, she also inherited the titles of Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery. After further inheriting her father's estates in Westmorland she became an extremely wealthy landowner. She died in 1676 aged 86.

So, during 2017, we set out in search of the mysterious carving - with nothing much to go on other than "a rock somewhere on Embsay Crag". After three separate visits and an exploration over about a square kilometre we eventually located the large gritstone boulder housing the carving. As we had heard, the face looks down over a broad expanse of the territory previously owned by Lady Anne.



We initially assumed that the carving - being quite distinctive - would be familiar to our many friends in the Craven u3a Walking Group. However, it seemed that this was not the case. So, we decided to launch 2024 with an organised walk to explore Embsay Moor and share the knowledge of Lady Anne.

Hence, on 4 January an eager group of 19 came together in central Skipton for a 10 mile hike. Last minute changes to the planned route (which had included the crossing of the now torrential Waterfall Gill Beck) were agreed and the group departed: approaching Embsay Moor via

Haw Park Woods and Boncroft and then following a circuit covering Stone Ridge Plain, Brown Bank and Crookrise Crag before descending to Embsay Reservoir and thence back to Skipton.

And on our descent via Saddle Holes and Crag Nook there she was, waiting patiently for us as she has been for uncounted decades, or centuries perhaps. Who knows?

In order to protect her integrity that's the only hint I'm prepared to give in this article as to her location. However, if you are really keen to make her acquaintance and your intentions are honourable, please feel free to contact me and I'll share the "What Three Words" location with you.

By the way, my search of the internet has returned no further information about this carving. If you know anything about its provenance I'd be delighted to hear from you.



Geoff Wilkinson geoffwilko@gmail.com

Supervised Bridge



This group, led by Douglas Goode, has enabled me to take bridge up again after a 45 years gap. It is certainly a challenge, but very stimulating. Topics such as Benji Acol, 'weak twos', defence and leads and 'big hands' have been covered. We play hands and afterwards discuss them to find out how else they might have been played. It is all very interesting and useful.

Thank you u3a and in particular thank you Douglas.

Kathy Amey

Politics Group – Life in a WW2 Japanese Internment Camp

Few of our lives will have been quite so directly touched and impacted by global events as that of Craven u3a member **Frank Waller**. The Politics Group was treated to a fascinating account by Frank about his life as a boy growing up in the International Settlement in Shanghai, and the consequences of the second Sino-Japanese war which became part of the Second World War. The International Settlement was a unique political entity that emerged after Britain's victory at the end of the First Opium War in 1842 and was largely governed by British interests, Shanghai being a huge centre for foreign trade and investment.

In 1937 Japan invaded China and by November effectively controlled the areas that surrounded the International Settlement. When WW2 began in 1939 British and American troops were pulled out, leaving it unprotected, and the day after Pearl Harbour in December 1941 the Japanese marched into the Settlement with little or no resistance. Initially daily life continued much as usual, but gradually pressures and restrictions became ever more intrusive, until finally in March 1943 all foreigners were forcibly removed to internment camps. Frank, aged 16, along with his mother and younger brother, endured a very difficult journey by barge up the Yangtse River to the Grand Canal and on to Yangchow Camp "C", where they remained until liberation in September 1945. Frank lived in a room of about 25x30 feet occupied by 18 people of all ages and both sexes, with minimal privacy. Summers were extremely hot and humid and winters, without any heating, were harsh and intensely cold. Early morning roll calls in the weather conditions were stressful and interns had to learn their numbers in Japanese.

This brief summary prepared from Frank's notes does rough justice to his talk, which also explained the history of Shanghai. You can find out much more at April's monthly meeting, when Frank will be the guest speaker.

Group Leaders' Meeting

Many of us u3a members just sign up, turn up, and enjoy our groups, giving little thought to all the behind-the-scenes planning that takes place.

Attending the Craven u3a Group Leaders meeting at the Skipton Little Theatre (a new u3a venue) on 23 January was an eye opener for me.

Issues that the Group Leaders, and then the full u3a Committee, will be considering shortly include:

- How the size of a group can affect the group dynamic
- Who should have the final say on group size
- Whether the number of people allowed to join a group should be allowed to exceed the maximum, on the basis that 100% attendance is rare
- How to ensure places in popular groups are allocated fairly. Should there be a percentage of places reserved for new people?
- Whether people who sign up for a group but then fail to attend without good excuse should be removed so that someone else can have their place?
- The timetable for assembling next year's programme, which has to get underway this early in the year.

Mention was made of the situation in Liverpool, where there is just one u3a for the whole city, and the number of groups is, according to the website, less than half of the number offered by Craven u3a. Furthermore, it is really difficult to get into a group – a 'dead man's shoes' scenario. It made me realise just how lucky we are.

Other practical problems being worked on at the moment include how to deal with the closure of Barclays in Skipton, where we have our account and where all those £5 venue fees have hitherto been paid in by the groups. Fortunately there are work-arounds.

The task of finding affordable and suitable venues is also vital, and Anne MacDonald has to retire from the post in May. Anyone taking this on would be making an invaluable contribution. Anne is super-organised and would



help the new person settle in. She says that the venue personnel are friendly and helpful, and she has enjoyed the role. A new Membership Secretary is also needed to take over from Nick Jarvis. Under our Constitution these posts can only be held by the same person for 3 years. Please think about it!

Finally, it was reassuring to hear that, compared with two years ago, finances are in much better shape. The hybrid model of a slightly increased membership fee combined with the termly venue fee has worked well. Membership numbers are approaching the pre-pandemic level once again.

Liz Morrison

New sports groups?

There have been suggestions about forming a Pickleball group and/or a Badminton group, using the facilities at Sandylands. Please contact Nigel Holden at [nigelholden789@gmail](mailto:nigelholden789@gmail.com) if you are interested.



Monthly Meetings

February's monthly meeting was our best attended meeting with over 60 members coming along to hear Jon Tomlinson talk about our NHS in England, the topic evidently being of great interest to many u3a members. Jon gave us an illuminating history of the NHS from its first proposal at the beginning of the last century, through inception after the Second World War right up until the present day, peppered with illuminating and at times amusing stories. The audience was encouraged to contribute knowledge, answering his many questions about our local NHS. In the spirit of the u3a we learnt a lot of very interesting facts from an entertaining speaker.

Helena Tudhope

On 9 March Robin Taylor will be talking about working as a shoe designer, and on 14 April Frank Waller will speak about his internment in a WW2 Japanese camp – see [page 5 above](#).

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang to Coriolanus

Yes, this was all in an afternoon's work for the Craven u3a orchestra on a recent Wednesday in Embsay. First we had a visit from a little group of very small people from the next door playgroup, all looking rather worried. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang provided a cheery start to our short concert but proved too much for one small boy who put a finger in each ear! Some members of the orchestra



demonstrated their instruments, ranging from the lowest notes of the bassoon to the highest notes of the flute. We finished with a rousing performance of Sousa's famous Liberty Bell march. The adults accompanying the children certainly enjoyed it.

Refreshed by our tea break, we turned our attention to Beethoven's overture to Coriolanus, a work more suited to a large symphony orchestra than to our small group of players. To everyone's surprise we got about three quarters of the way through it before it all fell apart! But we regrouped and got triumphantly to the end.

This is just an example of the range of music that the orchestra attempts. We were pleased to welcome our new conductor, Peter Young, in September. We have enjoyed working with him and have gained several new members. There is always room for more, particularly string and brass players.

To showcase the music we enjoy playing we will be giving a concert in [Skipton Baptist Church on Wednesday 20 March at 2.30pm](#). Admission is free, with refreshments available afterwards. We can't promise you Beethoven, but we hope there will be something to suit all tastes and will perhaps encourage you to join us.

Sue Stidworthy

Fascinating Bradford Mosque visit - 18 January 2024

Nine intrepid u3a members set off from Skipton railway station to Bradford Forster Square (after a near non-starter, following icy cold weather resulting in frozen points on the railway). It was a beautiful, crisp, sunny day and thirty minutes out of Bradford station, we arrived at the Grand Mosque to be welcomed by Bilali, our guide for the morning.



Bilali told us the original mosque was founded in 1983 on the site of a former textile mill and funded by the Pakistani Muslim community of Bradford. The newer site today, opposite Horton Park, was begun in 2002 and opened in 2014. It is the largest mosque in Bradford and can house 8000 people. It is built from pink, red sandstone sourced from Agra in India and is an eclectic mix of styles ranging from North African, Middle Eastern and Mughal architecture, and is considered one of the most visually dramatic mosques in the UK. (Source: Historic England). The mosque is used as a place of prayer and worship, community centre, and madrasah, and hosts conferences and workshops in Islamic studies.



The foyer is incredibly light and airy with geometric patterns on the tiled floor symbolising infinity and has one of the most beautiful cut glass chandeliers with inscriptions in Arabic for the word Allah cut into each pane. There is an ablution area for worshippers to prepare themselves for their meeting with Allah, and a main hall for prayer with its 'nihrab' or niche facing the direction of prayer towards Mecca. We asked lots of questions and after the tour Bilali entertained us in the dining area with tea, samosas and cake. A thoroughly enjoyable and interesting morning, and as one of our attendees James said: *'A fascinating visit. I have been to many mosques, but this was different. More personal and an insight into the feelings of a*

devoted Muslim determined to reach out to non-Muslims . A pleasant trip and time for us all to chat'.

Amanda Sitto