



December 2024

# CRAVEN U3A NEWSLETTER

## Celebrating creativity at Floral Art

Here's what some members of Jesca de Rijk's group have to say about their fortnightly sessions:

"Our little group is lovely and supportive - almost like therapy when we talk about our arrangements and where everything comes from - both flowers and other pieces. Also it's nice to see how everyone progresses."



"Our flower group is so much more than the art of floral design. As much as we learn new skills from Jesca and each other, it's also the most supportive space. It's so uplifting to talk about our designs and the ideas for our pieces. I joined the group halfway through the year, and everyone made me feel so welcome and put me at ease

straight away. It's one of the highlights of my week to look forward to."

What better recommendations could there be? New members are always welcome. Upcoming classes include a dried arrangement on 9 Jan and ikebana (Japanese) on 23 Jan in the New Year.

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### *Dates for your Diary:*

11 December- u3a Carol Service at Christ Church, Skipton

14 December - Coffee morning with speaker at Champions, 10 for 10.30 am

12 January - Coffee morning with speaker at Champions, 10 for 10.30 am

## More Local creativity at Craven Arts House

**The Winter Exhibition by Craven Arts members is open to the public until 21 December, Wednesdays to Saturdays 11 – 4pm.**

**The Christmas Makers Market and Open Studios – Sunday 8 December 10 – 4pm.**

Craven Arts House in Otley Street, Skipton, opened its doors in January 2023 after a heritage refurbishment contract. The Arts Centre provides affordable studios, afternoon and evening courses, galleries, a music recording suite and a large hall for community use.



The vision grew out of a partnership between Craven District Council and Craven Arts – a ten-year-old network of local artists. Grants were acquired to re-purpose the decaying Victorian building which once housed Skipton’s primary school. With escalating build costs during the pandemic, the funds stretched to only a third of the building – the remainder being smartened up by volunteers, pending the raising of further capital grants. Since the local government reorganisation, Craven Arts House is now answerable to North Yorkshire Council as one of its regional arts centres, with the twin aims of providing courses for the community and training and mentoring for young creatives.

Courses, exhibitions, lectures and events are publicised on our website [www.cravenarts.co.uk](http://www.cravenarts.co.uk) and social media platforms. Membership is open to Artists and Friends (who wish to support the arts in the region) via a simple application process.

We’re pleased that Skipton Civic Society has relocated recently to Craven Arts House, and other partners include Skipton Town Hall, Craven College Performing Arts Department, Incredible Edibles and The Craven District Sanctuary.

David Hawkins  
*Craven Arts Chair of Trustees*

## Rambling via WhatsApp

I'm sure that the summer of 2024 will go down in history as the one we didn't have. The weather was awful, generally: wet and colder than normal, and only warm and bright occasionally, and rarely hot. For that reason the Nature Rambles group didn't get out very much. However, we have another string to our bow, as they say. Most members of the group are linked up via WhatsApp.

About 37 members, at the last look, are connected in this way, and we use it to continue the sort of discussion we would have in the field. It's often identification of things seen on walks, occasionally far away on holidays in the sun, and usually plants and insects. Recently, because of the season, it's been fungi. Members send their pictures in and the rest of the group can comment.



Photograph by Lynda Newhouse of a female Ruddy Darter dragonfly, *Sympetrum sanguineum*.

I have never made myself out to be any sort of expert in any area, and I know that many other members of the group have much greater knowledge than I, but in the interests of the u3a aim of learning from each other, I let it be known that I have several books to assist identification of the sort of creatures I'm interested in. So, a picture comes in and I have a rummage through the big book to see what I can find out. It's a great exercise,

because I learn a lot through the process and can feedback with information about habitat and behaviour that I hope is useful. I do enjoy a Latin name!

This sounds like it's quite an erudite group, bothered about the details of the things we see as we go about the world, but really it's not. No-one knows everything, and most of us only have pockets of knowledge – for example, I'm always grateful to those who know more about birds and spiders. But this gives the group a dynamic that I think is in the correct spirit of U3A activity. Many members of the group don't make any comment or send in pictures, but I know, because they tell me, that they enjoy the photos sent by others and the information that results from it.

I think WhatsApp offers a connection to those who can't get to the rambles and it's a good way to share our enjoyment of the natural world even if we haven't been able to get out as much as we might have liked.

*Maurice White*

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## **2-Hour Hikes**

Craven u3a's newest walking group, the 2-Hour Hikes group, meets on Tuesday mornings. Whether hiking around villages, over fields or moorland, up hill or down dale, the walks last just two hours. The number on each walk is normally in the teens, making for a very sociable group. Many of the walks start from places which have convenient buses connecting with Skipton, which helps the environment. Recent hikes have been around Grassington, Addingham, Gargrave & Skipton. The photograph shows us at Rylstone on a pleasant autumnal day.



*Keith and Wendy Berrington*



## Music for Fun

This group just gets better and better and more fun with a capital F. We are just "what it says on the tin"! A friendly mixed group who enjoy a big sing along to some really skilled musicians, including electric and acoustic guitarists, percussion, keyboard, mouth-organ, ukulele and a flautist. We sing Bobby Darin to Beatles, Bacharach to Beach Boys. Folk, American song book, classic pop, sea shanties, jazz and blues. We will try most types of songs from all eras. Requests and suggestions encouraged.

Words and chords are provided and projected on to the wall. No ability to read music is required.

Only enjoyment of music and singing are essential.

We have a couple of places left. So why not come along and "try before you buy!"

We meet Tuesday mornings 10.30 – 12.15 at Trinity Methodist.

All enquiries to  
[lellyelli1953@gmail.com](mailto:lellyelli1953@gmail.com)

Lesley Widdop (co-leader



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## Forthcoming Monthly Meetings

Next Saturday's (14 December) monthly meeting at Champions should get us all in a cheery mood, when **Bunty Leder** returns for the last of her trilogy of autobiographical talks, this one entitled 'Life Does Begin Again at 50!'

Kicking off the New Year, on 11 January **Liz Morrison** will be addressing the topical subject of Children and Smartphones. We may not have young children any more, but lots of us have grandchildren. Do we want phones glued to their hands, and if not, what can we do about it?

## HEARING LOSS – NOTES FOR GROUP LEADERS

*The notes for "Hearing Loss – Notes for Group Leaders" has been put together by a group led by Vera Brearey. There are nineteen in the group, and I would like to thank one and all for their input. The document will be uploaded to the website. Mick Richings, Chair Craven u3a*

**A third of the population aged 60 to 70 have hearing loss, as do three-quarters of the over 70s.**

### HELLO GROUP LEADERS

The new Hearing Loss Network has updated some guidance that was sent out to group leaders a couple of years ago. Is there anything you could do to make life easier for those of us with hearing problems? Here are some ideas...

### TALKS

Probably the most important thing to do is to **reserve seats at the front** for people with hearing loss and, of course, people with other disabilities who might need them. Some groups have got a brilliant version of this working. Seats in the front two or three rows are reserved for people with hearing loss or other disabilities by the placing of an A4 sheet of paper with an appropriate symbol on it on the relevant seats. Easy and effective!



Please **check that we can hear you**. It only takes a second. At the start of the meeting a quick "can everyone hear me? – give me a wave any time if you can't" makes it much easier for us to say something (or wave...) if we need to. And have you thought about using one of the **headset microphones/voice amplifiers** that the committee have bought? They might make all the difference.

Many of us start to rely on seeing someone's face (the lip shapes, the expressions) long before we identify as lip readers, so please **don't turn your back** whilst talking (easy to forget if you're describing something on the screen) and please check that your notes/the lectern/the music stand/the microphone **aren't covering your lips**. Please **don't turn the lights off** for a PowerPoint, or, if you really need to, leave a light on at the front of the room so your face is still lit. Equally, don't stand with your back

to a window – it will cast your face into shadow and make lip reading much harder.

Getting the right balance of words to images in a PowerPoint is tricky. Nobody wants to be reading the whole talk from the screen. But having **headings and some text can be helpful**, especially for unusual words. We're sitting there thinking "what?? missed that..." but then it says on the screen "Emperor Constantine, fourth century" and it all makes sense again.

It can be very helpful to **repeat any questions** before answering them. Successfully hearing the speaker at the front of the room can be a lot easier than figuring out what someone in the back row has just said. And please try **not to drop your voice** at the end of a sentence. Or when you get to the punchline. It's surprisingly common. When it's the punchline it can leave us hearing the build-up but then feeling totally left out when the rest of the room starts laughing uproariously and we haven't a clue why.

If there is a **loop system** know how to turn it on and know where the microphone is. Let hearing aid wearers know at the start of each session that the loop is on (so we don't waste time fiddling with our devices and wondering if it is or not). There are currently working loop systems at the Soroptimists, St Stephens Church Hall, Skipton Friends Meeting House and the Town Hall concert hall. They need to be switched on before you begin the talk. The Town Hall concert room system needs you to use a hand-held microphone or a lapel mike.

## **GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

A nightmare for the deaf, because we need to see the person speaking. Can you **arrange the chairs in a circle**? Or in some other format where we can see the other participants? Could you think about the **size of the group** and the **suitability of the venue** when finalising numbers? Smaller groups work better for people with hearing problems.

And **we need people to speak one at a time** – which is probably a good idea anyway... Please keep reminding people if you need to.

## **WALKS AND OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

That "shy" person that doesn't say a lot may just not be able to hear all the banter. People with hearing loss often cope better one to one. Background noise can make a real difference – crunching along a footpath, walking past a noisy waterfall. Don't forget that lip readers can't lip read if they are having to watch their feet. And don't forget that you might need to get someone's attention first before saying something – she is not ignoring you, she didn't hear you.

## **OTHER ACTIVITY BASED GROUPS**

Again, the person who doesn't say much might just not be able to cope with all the chatter. If the activity involves concentrating on something with your eyes (calligraphy, knitting, quilting) lip readers can only "hear" when they take a break from that and look at you.

## **FILMS**

A huge thank you to our wonderful film groups for always showing films with the subtitles on. It's appreciated.

**AND THANK YOU EVERYONE**, for reading this.

*The Hearing Loss Network – November 2024 – Craven U3A*

contact us via [vera.brearey@btinternet.com](mailto:vera.brearey@btinternet.com)

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Members of the Walking Group at the beautiful Grade 2 listed Swanside Bridge, an old packhorse bridge which crosses Ings Beck near Chatburn



## Gardening Group

We had our autumn meeting to discuss our Gardening Year plans and share a few plants and seeds. Many thanks to everyone who brought a brilliant selection of plants to share. Janet brought an amazing selection of Aeoniums, much appreciated by everyone.

I have emailed out a list of local garden centres and nurseries for new members to our group.

A group of us went on a trip to RHS Harlow Carr garden in Harrogate. The weather was a bit blustery and wet but we still managed to enjoy the 'Autumn Event'. The colours were glorious, particularly the Acers, and we also enjoyed lunch in the newly converted Harrogate Arms cafe on the site.



In November we got together for coffee and cake in the newly opened Blooms Garden Centre, Craven Heifer, Grassington Rd.

In the New Year we will aim to visit the RHS gardens again, and hopefully Burnby Hall's Tulip festival in the spring, and the Waterlily festival at Pocklington near York in the summer.

New members are always welcome.

*Anne MacDonald*

### Could you be a member of the Third Age Trust Board or Council?

The u3a is moving to a new governance structure with a smaller Board, that will focus primarily on the governance of the Third Age Trust, and a new Council that will represent the voice of u3as. Nominations are open now for both Trustees of the Board and Council members. This is an exciting change that gives u3a members more of a voice than ever before. Details of each role and nomination forms can be found on [the election page of the u3a website](#). The deadline for nominations is **Thursday 19 December 2024**.

### Buy your u3a diary now

The 2024 u3a diary is available now. It has the format that has been so popular with u3a members in the past - with the days of the week printed on the left and space for notes on the right.

This is the first item on [our new u3a brand shop](#) - where you will be able to download publicity materials and purchase merchandise in the coming weeks.

Following almost straight on from the York Festival, it was a wonder that anyone had any energy left for the **YAGR Summer School**, but we needn't have worried as the sun shone throughout and the capacity number of participants all had a wonderful time.

As usual, the accommodation at the Hawkhills, near Easingwold was excellent, up to country house hotel standards with lovely gardens and woodland grounds and such good catering that folk were soon commenting about next week's diets.

There was a good range of subjects to study - from the Iron Age to Cosmology, from the Scottish Colourists to Greek Philosophy, from Beginners Spanish to Improvised Drama; with others to choose from the range of topics certainly provided something for everyone.

If you have never been to a Summer School - imagine a gathering of u3a folk from across the country (not all Yorkshire folk) where we study together, meet new people over mealtimes and have evening social events as well.

This year, as usual, the YAGR Summer School was booked up well before the closing date for bookings, so if you would like to give it a try in 2025, remember to get in early and make a booking so you are not disappointed. If interested, I am happy to answer any questions you may have before booking ([events@yahru3a.uk](mailto:events@yahru3a.uk))

*Angie Grain*

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