



May - June 2025

CRAVEN U3A NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

[Summer Programme update](#)

[Japan in a nutshell](#)

[AGM report](#)

[Rewilding at Broughton](#)

[The Victorians – review](#)

[Odds and Ends](#)

[Gardening Group](#)

Dates for your Diary:

5 June – Quiz & supper at Skipton Sports Hub 6.30 for 7pm

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

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

24 & 25 July – Summer Programme at Ermysted's Grammar School

Craven u3a 40th Anniversary Celebrations - Save the dates!

To celebrate the fact that the Craven u3a is 40 years young this year, we are organising a number of events. Do save the dates, and get in touch if you would like to help with an event – more hands make light work!
bussecretary@craven.org.uk

Friday, 8 August: Treasure Trail around Skipton from 2.30 pm, finishing at Skipton Community Sports Club where there will be an optional barbecue and bar. Younger family members are most welcome to come along.

Tuesday, 11 November: 1985 film show and refreshments at the Skipton Community Sports Hub.

Saturday, 21 March 2026: 1980s Disco at the Skipton Community Sports Hub. Dig out the '80s gear and boogie on down (or whatever we used to say) to the hits of the '80s.

Craven u3a committee

Summer Programme 2025

24 and 25 July

There has been a very pleasing response to the Summer Programme, with 149 members enrolled so far. There is a link on the u3a website where you can access details and the application form.

Most sessions have spaces available but please note that the following sessions are **already full**:

YY Amanda Sitto

XX Amanda Sitto

AA Judith Barras

AG Fran Valiant

BB Nigel Holden

CC Kenneth Jackson

The following sessions are nearly at capacity and **have only a few spaces left**:

BA David Hawkins

BD Wendy Brown

CD Bernard Peel

DC Adrian Hepton

DE Linda Hoole

When applying, please provide a second and third choice to avoid disappointment.

We look forward to seeing you in July!

Linda Hoole

Janet Catling reviews Nigel Holden's course Japan: A History in Five Talks

What do you think of when the subject of Japan is raised? Cherry blossom, Mount Fuji, geishas and the stylised tea ceremony, polite manners, samurai warriors, the Second War, atomic bombs, bullet trains, cars, Sony Walkmans? What a challenge to cover the story of this country in five talks!



This course is a tour de force describing Japan's development chronologically with its emphasis on Japan's 'clash and fusion' with the Western world over the last 600 years. The talks included striking images of Japan through the ages and beautifully delivered readings by Judith Barras and Ann Horner. To understand the history, it is essential to hear all the talks.

We began with the mythical foundation of Japan, then learnt about the profound influence of Chinese culture, whilst we were in the Dark Ages. Europeans, including Jesuits, first came to Japan in the sixteenth century. One of them famously said the Japanese 'are the best people so far discovered'. In the seventeenth century Japan's rulers saw Christianity as a threat, expelled priests and sealed off their country from all contact with the outside world.

In the mid-19th century America and the leading European powers forced Japan to open up. Determining to make itself a strong country by fusing Japanese traditions with Western know-how, especially industrial and military prowess, Japan was swept along in a frenzy of Westernisation, Britain with its empire and 'wondrous industrial civilisation' was the model to emulate. Japanese nationalists dreamed of becoming the overlord of Asia. Meanwhile, its entrepreneurs began laying the foundations of its future as an industrial super-power. For example, the trail-blazing Matsushita Electrical

Company was founded in 1918. Today it is the world-spanning Panasonic corporation.

In the mid-20th century Japan's boundless imperial ambitions brought utter catastrophe. Post 1945, images of atrocities – and atomic bombs – dominated the impression of Japan in the world. Defeat was followed by the American occupation. The 1964 Olympic Games marked Japan's rehabilitation among the nations, and before long Japanese motorbikes, cars and cameras flooded the world's markets.



Konosuke Matsushita:
visionary industrialist known
as Japan's God of
Management

In 1988 Emperor Hirohito died. His 64 year reign had seen Japan's fortunes plummet to their lowest and soar to the very highest. Then in 1991 there was an economic crash. Japan has never fully recovered. The new century brought disasters, natural and man-made, which caused great soul-searching about the very nature of its society. Foreign visitors, travelling up and down Japan in the ultra-efficient bullet train, will be completely unaware of this. And who, incidentally, would have thought that the bullet train was first conceived in 1939 by Japan's military to support its planned take-over of Asia?



Nigel will be presenting this series of talks again in the autumn – a treat to look forward to.

Janet Catlin

Craven u3a 2025 AGM – Report

Firstly, many thanks to all those members who attended the meeting and to those who gave their apologies.

The headline news from the official business included a report from the Treasurer that, due to increased membership the accounts have recovered sufficiently, the committee has agreed a reduction in membership fees of £5 to £20 for members, Group Leaders and Associate members to £15. There is still the additional charge of £3.80 to receive 5 issues of Third Age Matters magazine. Venue charges will remain as they are, with some minor changes, and will be reviewed in December.

The meeting approved a minor change to Clause 16 of the Constitution to read: *If insufficient nominations are received to fill the vacancies for Officers and/or Committee members, a majority decision can be taken by The Committee to ask the retiring officer(s)/member(s) to remain in post until the next AGM.* The revised version is available to view/download on the website and has been forwarded to the Third Age Trust.

Your 2025/26 Committee is:

- Mick Richings: Chair
- Anne MacDonald: Vice Chair and Groups Coordinator
- Linda Hoole: Secretary and Summer Programme organiser
- Lesley Perkins: Treasurer
- Sandra Firm: Venues Secretary
- Members: Adrienne Gilchrist, Sheila Thompson. Here we are:

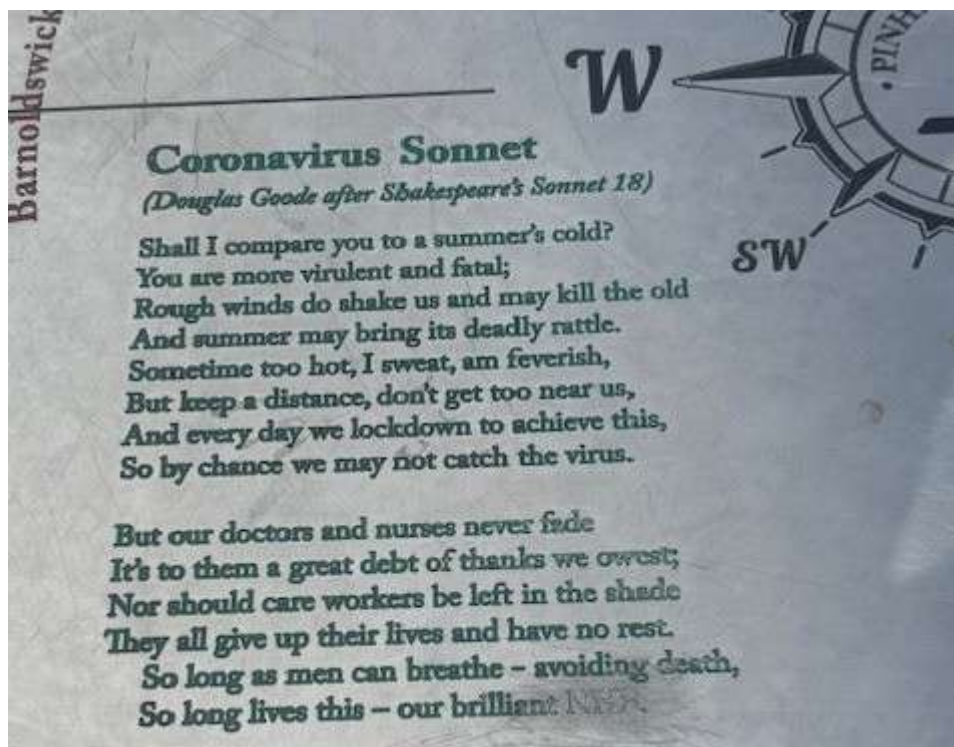


Following the official business a presentation was given on the 40th Anniversary Events by Linda Hoole and the 2025/26 Programme by Anne MacDonald. The programme is presently being reviewed, and it's planned to be published in June. Linda Hoole gave an update on the Summer Programme, with a plea for volunteers to assist with providing refreshments.

Finally, a thanks to Committee members Doug Hirst and Jacqui Eames, who stood down at this AGM, for all their support, much appreciated.

The draft minutes from the meeting will be published very soon and posted on the website.

Mick Richings



An arm-chair trip to the toposcope and sonnet at Pin Haw Beacon, - donated by veteran Craven u3a member Douglas Goode during Covid



Broughton Estate Visit

On Wednesday 14 May twenty members of Craven U3A took part in a Nature Recovery Tour on the Broughton Estate to learn about the rewilding project which commenced there six years ago, and in celebration of Craven u3a's 40th anniversary. The stated mission of the rewilding project is "To protect and enhance the diversity of wildlife and natural habitats and to reconnect visitors with the natural environment." Much of the funding is from the White Rose Forest programme affiliated to a government scheme, the Nature Climate Fund.

While the venue for the start of the tour was a little tricky to find and the weather a little chillier than some of us had anticipated the experience was 100% fascinating. This was due in no small part to the knowledge, enthusiasm and ability to impart information in an easy manner of our guide, Rivers, an ecologist working with the project.



The area involved includes meadow pastures, ancient and newly planted woodlands, heather moorland and freshwater habitats all of which were included in the tour. Rivers explained the different ecological value of native species of trees such as oak and non native species such as sycamore and why after even 500 years the latter will never be regarded as native. He also informed us that rewilding involves planting slow growing species in the centre of circles of fast growing ones which will form protection. 300,000 trees are being planted in the designated areas. In the ancient woodlands

some trees are being left even after being felled by storms as they provide habitats for a wide range of creatures. An old ash tree which unfortunately has Ash Dieback disease is being kept alive a while longer by its root system obtaining nutrients from a neighbouring ash which has recovered from the disease.

In terms of wildlife we heard a cuckoo calling, saw vole holes, mole "nursery" mounds, " and rabbitville" including their separate escape holes when away from home burrows. The area is now home to five owl species: little, short-eared, long-eared, barn and tawny. While some nesting boxes have been erected the owls seem very content to use the natural sites found in tree hollows.



A pair of breeding beavers have been introduced and, although it is too early to show them to visitors, Rivers assured us that they have been very busy and have already made positive changes to the area. We saw at first hand the difference made by the introduction of three female Iron Age pigs, which we were informed are genetically 60% wild boar and 40% domesticated pig. We were shown one of the pigs' nests where they keep warm at nighttime, the matriarch having the central warmest spot. With River's encouragement one of the pigs came very close to the group which was a definite highlight.

While most of the sheep farming area which originally dominated is now part of the rewilding project some sheep remain.

This outing was arranged by Wendy Berrington who had previous knowledge of the project and we were all grateful to her for this. In addition to this tour a self guided "Odyssey" walk is available by prior booking of a time slot. We were able to see several of the attractive stone way markers for this walk.

Annette Corley

Victorians

Wonderfully organised by Vera Brearey, the ten talks about Victorian times reminded us of the great burst of creative thinking and enterprise that lifted Britain, growing the country's infrastructure and industry whilst also causing social deprivation. However, it also brought those who sought to stir social conscience and improve the lot of ordinary people.

The reign of Victoria is associated with industrial might, and several talks provided fascinating insights into how inventions and developments affected both prosperity and quality of life. The spread of the railway network provided the means to transport both goods and people. Urban growth followed, as did urban squalor for many. Isambard Kingdom Brunel is probably the most famous Victorian engineer. His inventions and designs, railways, bridges, tunnels, and steamships continue to influence life today. The influence of Great Britain on other countries was brought to life in a talk, 'This Wondrous Industrial Society,' concerning the development of Japan from an isolated enclosed country to a modern industrialised power.

The creative aspects of these times included tales of Benjamin Stone, a photographer, traveller, and politician, as well as stories of gardens, the result of technological advances, colonial expansion, plant collection, and suburban growth. Many gardens with exotic plants were laid out during this era, which we can still enjoy today. The life and works of Anne Brontë provided insights into the position of women and their role in society. Victorian times are generally regarded as male-dominated, a concept swept aside by outstanding women who pioneered reforms in society, from penal systems to suffrage and equality. Today's headlines suggest reform is still needed. John Bright, a Quaker radical, cotton manufacturer, MP, spoke up for the disenfranchised working man. William Morris, poet, painter, publisher, politician, and pioneer, has had a long-lasting influence on the world of art and design through the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Arts and Crafts movement. The final talk, The Lives, Loves and Paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites, made the swinging sixties seem tame by comparison.

What a cornucopia – we are fortunate to have so many lecturers with such knowledge and enthusiasm they wish to share. Long may this continue.

Janet and Marcus Catling

**Monthly meetings/
Coffee mornings at
Champions Hall**

10am for 10.30am

June 14 - Ian
Blomfield on Principles
and Practicalities of
Low Carbon
Technologies

July 12 - A speaker
from the Stripey
Badger Bookshop in
Grassington

Here are just a few of the offerings from
the u3a national website in May and June
found [here](#):

29 May at 2pm – Life on a Smallholding.
Is it as idyllic as it sounds?

4 June at 10 am for 6 weeks –
Mindfulness and Meditation Series

4 June at 1pm – An Introduction to
Canva, a powerful online graphic design
programme (*Ed. – unfortunately I will
miss that one ☺*)

13 June at 2pm – The Glasgow Society of
Lady Artists

20 June at 9am - AI News

And some more designs from the Floral Art group's use of 'Unusual
Containers' ...



Gardening Group

The Gardening group visited three of our members' gardens earlier in May. Their spring gardens were very different: shady and woodland areas with a selection of different acers, and sunny spots, so there was a good variety of spring plants to see. Gail very kindly had been baking, so we all had coffee and delicious home-made cakes.

Later in May, a large group visited Parcevall Hall Gardens in Skyreholme, for a Gardener's guided tour of the estate. The hour and a half tour was very informative and interesting. We had a lovely afternoon with beautiful weather and finished the afternoon in the cafe with ice creams and cream teas!



There is lots more planned. Another open garden visit at the end of May to see a garden in Crosshills, a trip to Yorkgate Gardens, Adel, in June, and hopefully off to Burnby Hall Gardens, Pocklington, to see the Waterlily Festival in July/August.



It is a lovely way to spend a few hours with friends, enjoying chatting about plants and different garden styles. We have a Whatsapp group for plant advice and gardening tips. Anyone is welcome to join.

Anne MacDonald

Next newsletter will be in early July - submissions by end of June please

To unsubscribe from the newsletter please email the word "Unsubscribe" to unsubscribe@cravenu3a.org