



August 2025

CRAVEN U3A NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

[Syd Matthews](#)

[New Members welcome](#)

[Summer Programme Review -1](#)

[Decarbonising your home](#)

[Visit to Sikh Gurdwara](#)

[Summer Programme Review – 2](#)

[Trip to Heysham 2](#)

[Glaciation and Geology walks](#)

Dates for your diary:

*13 September – Coffee morning
with speaker at Champions- 10 for
10.30*

*11 October - Coffee morning with
speaker at Champions- 10 for 10.30*

Speaker details to follow

Syd Matthews

I would like to thank everyone for their support and sympathy in the recent period up to Syd's passing.

Syd had a very active life and had interests in many areas. He was very active in Craven u3a and a great supporter of the ideals of the organisation.

So it was very reassuring to know that Syd had so many friends and that he was so well thought of during a difficult period.



Syd was always light-hearted and did not want any fuss or mourning, or a formal funeral occasion, but instead there will be a happy celebration of his life on what would have been his birthday at Skipton Rugby Club on 27 September from 7:30 pm. All who knew him are welcome to come and join us for pleasant recollections of his friendship.

Gail Matthews

A welcome to all new members from the Chair

Firstly, thank you for joining our u3a; you're very welcome. We (the committee) hope you'll enjoy the group(s) you have joined.

The next activity is our monthly meeting 10am – 12pm, Saturday 13 September, at Champions Church, Skipton. The event comprises a speaker, and the opportunity to meet other members and enjoy refreshments. These meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month.

Information about all our activities and much more is available on the website: cravenu3a.org . If you have any suggestions for improvement or queries of any kind, please contact any member of the committee. Our promise is that we'll respond within 24 hours.

Your committee:

- ☐ Chair – Mick Richings
- ☐ Vice Chair – Anne MacDonald
- ☐ Treasurer – Lesley Perkins
- ☐ Secretary – Linda Hoole
- ☐ Groups Coordinator - Anne MacDonald
- ☐ Venues – Sandra Firm
- ☐ Others - Adrienne Gilchrist and Sheila Thompson

Other team members:

- ☐ Doug Hirst – Beacon Administrator
- ☐ Andrew Todd – Beacon Support
- ☐ George Mackley – Website Coordinator
- ☐ Liz Morrison - Newsletter Editor

If you have an idea, a flash of inspiration, a eureka moment, or anything we could do better, please don't hesitate to contact me at chair@cravenu3a.org.uk

Kind regards, *Mick Richings*

Summer Programme 2025

It has been a real pleasure to lead the team in organising the Summer Programme this year, and, as always, we are so grateful to all those presenters, facilitators and walk leaders who have given up their time to prepare and run sessions, not to mention the many helping hands who served teas and coffees, loaded the dishwasher and looked after us all at break times. I don't think it's an exaggeration to compare the generous donations of home-baked cakes, scones and brownies to the miracle of feeding the five thousand! Thank you to all those who brought in so many treats.

The team at Ermysted's was very supportive, and helped ensure everything went as smoothly as possible, particularly regarding IT. We have a good relationship with the school and hope to use the premises again next year.

170 members registered for the programme which, this year, provided 30 different activities and talks. Compared with last year's registrations of 205, this was considerably lower, by 17%. It would be sad if the numbers were to drop even lower as this would make the Summer Programme less viable to run. Given the early publicity and applications, it is not surprising and understandable that some members, who had booked, could not attend the programme because of hospital appointments and family commitments. Thank you for letting us know. However, in some cases, some presenters were disappointed by the number of 'no shows' who had not given apologies.

We received some great verbal feedback, but please do get in touch with the committee if you have any suggestions about how we could improve this event or if you would like to help in any way next year.

We hope to see you at the Summer Programme in 2026!

Linda Hoole

This year the Summer Programme included a number of novel trips to interesting places. In this newsletter I have included a report on the visits to a Gurdwara in Bradford and to Heysham 2 Power Station. If you went on any of the others, please do write and let us know all about it. – Ed.

The climate crisis and domestic heat pumps, solar panels and electric cars, and how they can help to “decarbonise” our energy consumption – Part 1

This article is based on the u3a monthly meeting talk I gave on the 14 June this year. I’m the current group leader for the Science and Technology Discussion Group, and member of the steering group for Climate Action Skipton (CASK). But most importantly, we have adopted these technologies at home and so I can speak firsthand about our experiences.

Greenhouse gases continue to rise far above preindustrial levels causing the Earth’s climate to warm. To mitigate this, we must decrease their emission *and* remove them from the atmosphere (“carbon capture”). The rate of change is exceeding even our most pessimistic predictions. The pace is accelerating, sea levels are rising faster than ever, and the Earth is absorbing more heat with devastating consequences - from hotter oceans to intensified weather extremes. The advice from analysts is clear - the longer we delay taking more decisive action to reduce our carbon emissions, the more costly and disruptive this will become for all of us. We must also find ways to adapt to climate change (including our infrastructure, agriculture, health care and disaster preparedness). While governments and industry must take the lead on tackling climate change, there are many things that only we as individuals can do to make a difference.

Installation of solar panels on our roof



Household boilers, cookers and cars are significant sources of our greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO₂. Household natural gas consumption accounts for more than 60% of the UK’s gas use. The carbon intensity of electricity in the UK was 124 gCO₂/kWh last year, while that of natural gas used for home heating and cooking was 230 gCO₂/kWh. With our increasing concern about climate change, my wife and I decided to try to decrease our own home’s carbon emissions. We think that this is a good news story, and it is something I am happy to give help and advice about.

Starting in November 2022, we replaced our gas combi boiler with an 8 kW Mitsubishi air source heat pump – just before temperatures plummeted to well below freezing for almost two weeks! We were impressed, and more than a bit relieved, by just how effective our new heating system was. In fact, for each kWh of electricity that a heat pump consumes it provides at least 2.5kWh of heat energy. In contrast, with an efficiency of around 0.9, even the best new gas boilers require more energy to run than they produce. The following February, we installed 10 solar panels on our South-facing roof (Fig. 2) and a 6-kWh battery in our loft. This has allowed us to generate over half of our electricity. Equally importantly, our battery not only stores excess solar power, but we can also charge it up cheaply from the grid when there is insufficient sun. This means that we can always be “off grid” during periods of peak electricity demand. As well as saving us money, this helps to decrease the use of gas to generate electricity when the demand for it is most likely to exceed the supply of low carbon and renewable energy. This is important because generating electricity from gas is expensive and because it has a much higher carbon footprint than wind, solar or nuclear power. Finally, in November, we installed a 7 kW Zappi charger for our electric MGEV5 which we bought in October.

Ian Blomfield devilsbit18@gmail.com or 07831 243 719

Don't miss Part 2 of this article in the next issue to find out the difference that these changes have made to Ian's carbon footprint and electricity bill

Disco Dancing 1960s-80s at Ilkley u3a

There was a strong response to the item in the last newsletter regarding the search for a new DJ for our group. We have now filled that position from within our Ilkley membership but so many people expressed interest in disco dancing that we're extending an invitation to anyone in Craven u3a who would like to come and give it a try. Our first meeting of the Autumn Term is 2.00-3.30 Wednesday September 17 and we then meet fortnightly till December 10 so please come along to any **one** of our forthcoming sessions for a **FREE taster** (or perhaps your taster session might inspire you to start a disco group here in Craven!)

Full details on the website: ilkleydistrictu3a.wildapricot.org or email Fran on franvaliant@hotmail.co.uk.

Visit to Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara Bradford

On 17 July I had the pleasure of the company of 15 eager members of Craven u3a in Bradford for a guided visit at the Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara, a Sikh temple.



Our host and guide, Harcharan Singh, greeted us. Many male Sikhs are named Singh, which means "lion" and represents their identity and faith. The female equivalent is 'Kaur', meaning 'princess'. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru introduced these titles to encourage equality among Sikhs and to lessen the caste distinctions linked to Hinduism.

Harcharan told us that the Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara was the first Sikh temple in Bradford. It was officially inaugurated in 1970 and opened for services in 1972. The building features Mughal and Islamic architectural elements, such as domes, minarets, and ornate arches.

We were taken round the prayer rooms, or 'diwans', where the holy scriptures are kept. Everyone is welcome and allowed to enter and pray at any time.

This gurdwara is named after Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), the tenth and final human Sikh Guru. The crucial point about Sikhism is that it accepts people from all castes and adheres to the principle of equality of all people. Many lower-caste Hindus in India converted to Sikhism seeking better treatment.

Harcharan also referenced the five 'Ks' that baptised Sikhs are expected to observe. The Kesh or uncut hair and body hair and the wearing of a turban denoting acceptance of God's will; the Khanga or small comb to groom the hair; the Khara or steel bracelet worn on the right hand; the Kirpan or small sword a symbol of courage, strength and kindness, and the Kaccha or shorts, a symbol of modesty and morality.

After a lively Q&A session, Harcharan invited us to the langar hall for a free vegetarian meal, which is served to everyone attending the gurdwara.

Amanda Sitto

A participant's view of the Summer Programme

As anyone who went to this year's Craven u3a summer programme will have noticed, it's not only people of school age who appreciate something to keep them interested while normal lessons are suspended. Support for the event was evidenced by a good turn-out and attendees really were spoilt for choice when it came to subject matter. The classes on offer ranged across a very broad area, including the arts, with sessions on painted works, literature and music (together with the opportunity to see a recent film), through history, prehistory and architecture, and extended all the way to engineering and medieval town planning. For those with an artistic or creative bent who possessed at least a modicum of ability (so not this u3a member!) there was the opportunity to take part in singing, dance or making folios or fabric cards. For those who didn't want to spend all their time sitting in a classroom there were walks (educational ones, of course!) and the opportunity to learn about other cultures through visits to Sikh and Muslim places of worship in Bradford.

All the sessions were led by members of u3a, a further demonstration of the broad base of knowledge and experience that our members possess.

Aside from the opportunity that the classes provided to learn and to create, the lunch breaks were a chance to catch up with u3a friends that we may have not seen for a while. So, once again, an excellent couple of days. This member is already looking forward to next year's event!

Mark Woronwoski

Bridge for Beginners

Places are still available on this new course which takes place at my home in Addingham on Wednesdays from 2-00 to 4-00pm. There are 10 sessions beginning on 1 October with the last session on 10 December.

This course is designed for people new to bridge. However, those who have played informally a few times without using a proper bidding system, will also find it beneficial. If you enjoy the challenge of trying to obtain a better result than other players with identical cards, why not give it a go? Once you have mastered the basics, there are plenty of bridge clubs locally where you can play regularly.

If you have any questions, please contact me: David Lowe - 07854 410892-
davide.lowe@hotmail.co.uk

A trip to Heysham2 nuclear power station



“Heysham...” - early 1950s obligatory visits to retired relatives; a grimy harbour; a strange ornate outdoor weigh-scale and holidaymakers paying to sit on it; a kiosk selling nettle beer; a churchyard holding ancient rock-cut graves (and later, my retired relatives). This is what came to mind when I saw Linda Hoole’s invitation to a Heysham trip.

But the trip to Heysham2 nuclear power station could not have been more different! At 8.00 on 22 July, 28 eager souls boarded our Bibby’s coach in Skipton. We arrived for the 10.00 tour which was to take about 2 hours. Safety and security were as stringent as you would expect at a nuclear facility, but our guides could not have been more helpful or patient (they are used to coping with school children).

The site is unique in having two operating nuclear power stations. Heysham1 and Heysham2 are advanced gas-cooled reactors, and became operational in 1983 and 1988 respectively. Since then, they have each produced 243TWh and 295TWh of electricity.

On entering the facility, we left all belongings (except tissues) in safe storage, before being issued with bright orange safety gear. Staff wore blue outfits, for



easy identification. We were split into three “manageable” parties before embarking on the comprehensive tour.

Heysham2 is a large building, but it was strange to see our lift indicator displaying floor numbers in the high 40s. The floor’s number is its height above ground-level in metres - an indication, for emergency crews, of the required fire-hose length.

We were shown all aspects of the operation: the very top of the reactor vessel, the eerily calm control centre, the cacophony of the immense turbine hall where twin of banks of high- and low-pressure steam turbines turn huge generators. The whole was reminiscent of a film set from James Bond, (thankfully not Homer Simpson).

An interesting and well-conducted tour. I do recommend that a facility which produces vast amounts of heat is probably best visited in colder weather... We came outside to find Jim, our driver, waiting to take us into Morecambe. He dropped us on the prom, near the iconic Midland Hotel, allowing ample time for a wander around, a bite of lunch and some sea air.

Many thanks to Linda. A grand day out, and back in Skipton for teatime!

Roger French



The Open Event took place at Skipton Town Hall on 12 August. A full report on this, and how things are looking on membership and group enrolment will appear in the next newsletter.

Summer School: Glaciation in the Yorkshire Dales by Bernard Peel

The classroom was jam-packed for Bernard's illustrated talk on Glaciation. He started by outlining Earth's glacial periods, and gave us a world view of glaciation. The last great ice age, the Devensian, covered much of the northern parts of Europe and America. So severe was this ice age, that most of Yorkshire was covered by an ice cap hundreds of metres deep only a mere 18,000 years ago. This is so recent that the result of glaciation is still fresh all around us.

Bernard then gave us an exhilarating tour of the main features obvious in the Yorkshire Dales: the U-shaped valleys, a fine example being the Wharfe valley downstream from Hubberholme; the drumlins of Skipton and a host of other features such as moraines and tarns. His talk was illustrated with many fine pictures of well-known landscapes. So much information, so little time to cover everything about our unique Dales landscape.

If you are interested in a gentle and informative walk into these features and other more ancient geology, why not join the **u3a Geology Walks** group, Mondays fortnightly, led by Diane Killock, Mark Wademan and Richard Collinson.

Keith Berrington.



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