



Craven u3a NEWSLETTER

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Dates for your diary:

*10 December – Carol Service at
Christ Church, 2pm*

*13 December & 10 January –
Monthly meetings at Champions, 10
for 10.30*

*21 March 2026 – 1980s Disco,
Skipton Community Sports Hub*

Podcasts arrive at Craven u3a - Rabbit, Rabbit !

Whatever happened to Chas and Dave? That record was released in 1980, and may have been the inspiration for the formation of the first British u3a in 1982! Because a lot of our members like to rabbit.



Our u3a is now being infiltrated by the podcast generation so maybe we need to think about catering for new types of rabbiting. If you can't beat 'em join 'em.

WhatsApp Doc?

I have done trial runs on producing a podcast for Culture Vultures; Wendy Brown and Jacqui (loves rabbiting!) Eames made a very nice podcast on a visit to Ilkley Literature Festival.

Here is the link if you would like to have a listen:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2P2CEjNPPLWFL5vIhTUh51?si=ksbsGcWYSD2nAPsEnVoceA>

This rabbiting is too good to hide and it occurred to me that these podcasts might have a wider appeal so I have set up a "WhatsApp Channel": "Craven u3a News". WhatsApp channels are not chat groups. They are one way - only administrators can send out messages (so hopefully no intrusions) but anyone can join. So this channel could be used for u3a announcements as well as podcasts.



I have added Jacqui and Wendy's podcast to the channel, and also a lovely video from Charles Green showing how brilliant his drumming circle is (very envious) – sorry, nice drumming but no rabbiting.

You can follow the u3a channel by clicking on this link:

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Vb6zPHeK0IBITFa0IV3I>

or by scanning this QR code with your phone camera:

When you do this you will get an automatic alert when a new item is added. It's very easy. Much easier than email and lots more secure.

I have just added a **Christmas message** to the members from our Chair Mick Richings in conversation with Helena Tudhope. It will also be on the WhatsApp u3a news channel by the time this is published.



I have one or two more podcasts in the pipeline but would like to add more. I have sorted the technology, so I can do the recording and editing, and loading onto Spotify. All you have to do is rabbit.

I am sure there are lots of you out there who like rabbiting. Please come and join in. If you are interested in doing a podcast which might be of interest to the u3a please feel free to contact me so we can make arrangements. You don't need to worry about the process. I look after all the techy bits. Please contact me if you would like to have a go: doug.hirst@btinternet.com

I have just tried the QR code link and it is easy. Please listen to the very informative Christmas message about what's happening with our u3a – Ed.

Allotment Group

As we approach the end of our growing season I can look back with a more positive view than at the same time last year. This year's weather gods have been much kinder to us and I can happily say that overall we have had an excellent harvest.

Two new crops were tried this year, butternut squash and sweet potatoes. The butternut squash was very successful and we have some very large squashes waiting to be eaten. The sweet potato was less productive and will not be grown again next year. One of our apple trees was laden with fruit. The other is recovering from its much needed pruning that it had last year, and hopefully it will be back in production next season. Leeks, parsnips, and turnips are still in the ground and they will be harvested over the winter months.

We have gained a new member this year, Nikki, and her knowledge on growing tomatoes will be a great asset to the group. Sadly, two members have left us they will be missed. Roland has taken the lead in managing plot 93 and has been very busy licking it into shape.



Nikki with a giant turnip!

The group continues to meet up over the winter months, weather permitting, and we always seem to find some work to do on one or other of the plots. We met up a couple of weeks ago to plan our seed order for next year and Sally has started growing the sweet peas to plant out in the spring, so the allotment year never ends. If anyone thinks that they might like to join the group, just get in touch and/or come down on a Sunday morning to see what we do.

Helena Tudhope

Lively mind? Healthy body?

‘Craven u3a believes that there is no age limit to learning and creative activity and that keeping a lively mind and healthy body is essential to mental and physical wellbeing’.

However, for some of us that is becoming more of a challenge as we begin to experience health issues which can, in some cases, prevent us from participating as fully as we would like in the u3a programme.

As a committee, we have discussed how best to support members who have accessibility needs and, in November, adopted the **Craven u3a Accessibility Policy** and agreed to appoint an **Accessibility Officer**.

The key points of the policy are to ensure:

- We are as inclusive and accessible as possible.
- We take steps to review accessibility needs for individual members and make reasonable adjustments, where possible, to accommodate the needs of members with disabilities and/or health related needs.
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The Accessibility Officer will be recruited from the membership, ideally someone who has direct or indirect experience of disability issues, from personal experience or who has perhaps worked in the health care sector. This is a new role and is subject to review and adjustment.

Key points about the Accessibility Officer (AO) role:

- The AO doesn't have to be a trustee but is expected to report to the committee
- The AO will liaise with the Group Leaders, Groups Coordinator and the Venues Secretary where there are accessibility issues or an additional risk assessment is required
- The AO will arrange for training re accessibility issues to be delivered to the committee and to Group Leaders (for example, dementia awareness)
- Actively research and promote potential new groups which are accessible
- Lead the Accessibility Group, for members with accessibility issues, arranging a minimum of 3 meetings a year, reporting back comments and suggestions to the committee.

Finally...

If you are interested in this role or have any thoughts about what we can do to ensure that **all** members have the best possible experience of our u3a, please contact Linda Hoole (lindahoole@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone 07773 407628.

Kind regards, *Mick Richings*, Chair Craven u3a

Travellers Tales – Walking Group

Around 40 members of the Walking Group gathered at the Gamekeeper's Inn at Long Ashes for a night of food and Travellers Tales on 19 November.



Enroute to the South Patagonian icefield

Firstly, Geoff Wilkinson enthralled us with reminiscences of a Christmas visit to Patagonia, with videos of daring wire river crossings, canoe journeys and pictures of stunning scenery from the National Parks. We learnt that Patagonia means "Land of the Giants" as the indigenous Tehuelche people were significantly taller than the average European seafarer at that time.

Next, Mark Woronowski treated us to a session on Easter Island, or Rapa Nui as the indigenous Polynesians call it. This was a fascinating talk which brought home how far away from any other landmass Rapa Nui is, and the Polynesians arrived by canoe! The talk also busted the many myths around the famous Rapa Nui Heads, although the reality of how they were made and transported was just as fascinating. Spoiler alert, they were not just heads and think about moving wardrobes!

A picture showing moai (statues) on an ahu (funerary platform). The moai represented important members of the clan and were intended to protect the people. The ones that we see today are only partial restorations.



All of this was rounded off by an excellent meal. Good company, good food and much learning. Exactly what u3a is all about.

Lynne Orton

Some readers were interested to know how much it had cost Ian Blomfield to decarbonise his home and energy use. Here's the answer!

The climate crisis and domestic heat pumps, solar panels and electric cars and how they can help to “decarbonise” our energy consumption – Part 3

The table below gives details of the items that we installed, along with the costs and the installers that we used.

Item	Cost	Installer
10 x 425-Watt Evolution titan panels, 6-kWh battery and Solax twin-tracker inverter.	£15,578, including scaffolding costs. Expect to recoup the cost in around 14 years, depending on the price of electricity.	National company. Project Solar.
8-kW Ecodan Mitsubishi heat pump, large double radiator, pumps and thermostats	Balance of £10,674 after a £7,500 BUS grant. Costs about 2/3 of the price of a gas boiler to run.	Sheffield-based. Matrix energy solutions.
Zappi charger and internet extension	£2,549. Expect to balance cost in around 4 years.	National company. Myenergi – The Zappi charger manufacturer. In addition, we employed Bay networks to install a WiFi cable.

We were very satisfied with the companies who carried out or retrofit work. Installing all of our equipment was challenging as we live in a converted mill building which is both grade II listed and situated in a conservation area. Not only did we need planning permission and listed buildings consent, but the layout of our property made the work challenging. The regulations in force at the time meant that the heat pump had to be positioned at least 1.5 meters from our neighbours. This required extensive external piping. To add to this, we needed to replace all four of our thermostats along with the pumps for our heating system. The average cost of installing a heat pump in the UK is £5,295 with a BUS grant. To comply with planning regulations, we had to install our car charger on the front of our garage, which is a very long way from our house. This made finding an installer difficult and the cost considerably more than is typical at between £800 and £1,200.

Ian Blomfield

Thank you !

A ` huge ` thank you is due to Joan and John Hughes, who have organised the refreshments and help set up the hall for every monthly meeting over the last few years.

Joan and John are retiring from the role this December. We now need a new volunteer or two! It is not difficult as there is a team of helpers, but is a really valuable contribution to the u3a. Please apply to anne.f.macdonald@btinternet.com

Walk to Lunch venues

Over the years the Walk to Lunch Group has eaten in many of the pubs in the local area and further afield - with variable results! One I'd especially like to put a 'positive shout out' for is The Old Swan in Gargrave. 29 of us had lunch there in November; excellent food and superb hospitality. Several of us are planning a return. Another very popular and always excellent venue for us is The Knights Table at Stainforth, who coped very cheerfully with several last minute cancellations in October. Both are well worth your support !

*Jenny Robinson
Co-Group Leader*

Padel at Skipton Tennis Club (STC)

A dozen u3a members expressed an interest in playing Padel at the Open Day on 12 August and by lunchtime the following day 40+ had enrolled to try out this rapidly growing sport.

Two taster sessions were offered by STC coaches and following induction two groups were created, each one playing on alternate Wednesdays.

Padel is proving to be popular with members. Most have adapted to the game quickly and have mastered the basics. There have been some competitive games and rallies despite some of the rules being difficult to interpret.

Court bookings resume in the Spring on 15 April. Contact me if you are interested.

Roland Styles rolandstyles@btinternet.com

40 word poem

Here's the first of the poems sent in response to the challenge to pen a poem of just 40 words, celebrating the 40th anniversary of Craven u3a. Thank you Geoff! Keep the poems coming; all will be published.

40? Really? That's a lot.
In AD1985, if you were over 55
U3a would come alive:
Learn some French
Arrange some flowers
Argue politics with Syd
Its quest a chance for the Mid
Lifers to find a magnificent truth.
Done? No just begun.

Geoff Pipkin

National u3a Interest Groups Online

If you are stuck at home, or just prefer to stay inside, here's an opportunity to learn something new alongside u3a members who share your interests, from the comfort of your home, with *Interest Groups Online (IGO)*. There is something for everyone. There is a huge variety of groups on offer, all run by enthusiastic IGO members.

As part of the u3a movement, members generously volunteer their time and share their knowledge, skills and experience with the members in their groups. Some groups are more interactive than others, with an expectation that all members take it in turns to present their knowledge. If in doubt, give it a go. The more groups you try, the more likely you'll find the one you love.

To join a group, you must first be a paid member of Interest Groups Online. Annual membership is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. If you join after 1st October, the fee is reduced to £6.

[Join interest groups online](#)

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

Eco Quiz - True or false?

- a. Domestic gas consumption only accounts for about 25 % of the UK's use (F, it's >60%)
- b. The price of electricity in the UK is dependent upon the price of gas (T, electricity prices are set every ½ hour, at a rate of the most expensive unit consumed in that period. Gas is the most expensive source of energy used)
- c. At greater than 90% a new gas boiler is much more energy efficient than a heat pump (F, heat pumps have an efficiency in excess of 250% and often much more)
- d. The number of households installing a heat pump each month has not changed much over the last five years (F, the number of heat pumps installed per month has been rising sharply over this period)
- e. Heat pumps blow out cold air (T, this is because they extract heat from the air)
- f. Solar panels are much less efficient than plants at using the sun's energy (F, solar panels are around 3 times more efficient than plants at capturing solar energy)
- g. If you have multiple solar panels, they may all work less efficiently if one panel is shaded (T, but there are measures that you can take to avoid this)
- h. The electric motors used to power electric vehicles (EVs) are many times more efficient than the internal combustion engines used in conventional vehicles (T, >90% and improving. In comparison, the best IC vehicles achieve only 25-30%)
- i. An EV's motor works most efficiently when driving at speeds of between 45-50 mph (F, this is true of IC vehicles, but not EVs. The faster you go in an EV the less efficiently they run)
- j. An EV can travel fewer miles before it needs recharging when it's cold (T, current lithium-ion batteries work less efficiently at lower temperatures. However, batteries are improving rapidly and is likely to include low-temperature performance soon)
- k. EVs are more likely to catch fire than a conventional vehicle (F, EV's are around 10 times *less likely* to catch fire)
- l. Norway has the highest per capita EV ownership of any country (T)

Ian Blomfield