



## CRAVEN u3a NEWSLETTER

### *In this issue:*

[Monthly meetings calendar](#)

[New groups starting now](#)

[Settle-Carlisle Railway talk](#)

[Walk to Lunch in Borrowdale](#)

[Situation Vacant!](#)

[Carol concert](#)

[Films and disco dancing](#)

[Floral art](#)

[Poetry and online talks](#)

### ***Dates for your diary:***

*10 January & 14 February– Monthly meetings at Champions, 10 for 10.30*

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

### **Celebrating the Winter Solstice**

It may not look like it, but this photo was taken at the very top of Elbolton, one of the odd, conical hills lying alongside the valley between Grassington and Skipton. Wharfedale Walkers were led up there on 21 December and celebrated with warm mulled wine, kindly provided by leaders Keith and Wendy Berrington.



## Now for 2026 – A Great Line-Up for the Monthly Meetings

How about this for a New Year's Resolution? Come to our lively, sociable and interesting monthly meetings (2nd Saturday of the month at Champions Church, 10 for 10.30).

**January 10: Bridget March from Craven Arts Hub. A brush with Asia; Vietnam's art from 1800 to 2025.** Bridget spent 12 years in Vietnam as an artist and gallery owner. She will lead us through the story of how Vietnamese art was influenced by the French colonization of Indochina, the introduction of Communism, the resulting 'American War', and the 50 year progress towards artistic freedom and a new age of internationally recognised Vietnamese artists.

**February 14: Child Gambler Wins Life Back: Paul Isherwood shares his inspirational story.** A 10 year old schoolboy lured by the magnetic pull of a 4 year gambling addiction had a light bulb moment, sought help, and 40 years on hasn't gambled since.

**March 14: Jenny Allison, MSc, Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioner & Coach. Beyond Limits Thriving with Pain:** Helping you move past pain, reclaim confidence, live boldly.

**April 11: Life and Times of Will Shakespeare** in his life and death month. Organised by **The Stripey Badger bookshop.**

**May 9: Stuart Atkins, Band leader and music expert :The Great American Songbook.** Talk with keyboard performance of famous songs by Cole Porter and others.

**June 13: Douglas Goode : His selection of The Seven Wonders of the Modern World.**

**July 10(tbc): Graham Mitchell from the Richard III Society.** Presentation with 50 slides on Richard: The Northern King

Happy New Year!

*Jacqui Eames*

## Welcome to our Craven u3a activities for 2026

There are some new interesting activities starting in January and in the spring.

It is worth checking Beacon as there are still spaces available for a large number of different groups.

### **New group activity sessions in January:**

*Stories of Scientists* - Mick Richings

(venue -Skipton Community Sports Hub Skipton Cricket ground)

*Illuminated Medieval Manuscripts* - Maureen Street

(venue - Craven College Community Hub, High St)

*Adventure into Classical Music* - Chris Skidmore

(Venue- St Andrews Primary Room)

### **New sessions in April:**

*History Extra-* Jane Houlton

(venue- Craven College Community Hub, High St)

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This is also the time of year when we start planning for our Craven u3a programme for 2026/2027

If anyone is interested in facilitating a new activity for the next programme, please contact myself or Wendy Brown.

Plenty of support is available for anyone interested in running a group.

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All the best for a happy and healthy New Year.

*Anne MacDonald*

## December Monthly Meeting – All Aboard!

The final monthly meeting of the year was a treat for those attending, with complimentary drinks and delicious cakes, and a really interesting talk about the Settle – Carlisle railway. U3a's own Jon Tomlinson is the Vice-Chair and Volunteers Director of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line (FoSCL), and he was ably assisted by the newly appointed Commercial Manager, Anna Jackson, in delivering an interactive presentation, with either side of the room competing for points answering tricky quiz questions.

You didn't have to be a railway enthusiast to get a lot out of this, and here are just a few of the interesting nuggets I picked up:



- Campaigns can work. By 1970 there were just two stations left open on the line, Appleby and Settle, but the 1984 Closure Notice was fought by the newly formed FoSCL and there were 26000 written objections lodged. Michael Portillo, then Railways Minister, gets a lot of the credit but in the end it was Willie Whitelaw who persuaded Margaret Thatcher to grant the reprieve.
- 2026 will be the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first passenger train on the line.
- A Trust raises money to help maintain the infrastructure (including £3m to repair Ribbleshead Viaduct) and has turned a number of station buildings into beautifully restored holiday cottages.
- 100,000 people visit the Yorkshire Three Peaks every year. We need many more of them to come by train, not car!
- Why complain about modest subsidies for the railways when they were built with private money and provide a greener form of transport, unlike roads (which are maintained through public money - road tax and fuel duty) and airports (which don't even have to pay any tax on fuel)?
- You can become a Friend, with various benefits, for just £20 a year.  
<https://membermojo.co.uk/foscl>

*Liz Morrison*

## A Borrowdale Ramble

Not to be outdone by the Walking Group, in December the Walk to Lunch Group also enjoyed a residential stay at the Glaramara Hotel in Borrowdale, Cumberland. Our fifth visit to this hotel. Nineteen of us enjoyed three more days of walking and fine dining.

A routine is now firmly established. We make our own way to Glaramara on the Sunday afternoon, journey time about 2 hours from Skipton, settle in and then assemble at 18:30 for a briefing by Stuart Robinson, our leader, on the plans for the next 3 days. Dinner is served at 19:30.

Walking usually begins on the Monday morning, but this year it was grey and raining so heavily that plans were abandoned and members made their own alternative arrangements. Some did walk, either locally near the hotel or along the Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Trail, a flat well-surfaced path along the line of a dis-used railway. But many, armed with their bus pass, caught the local bus either to Keswick or further afield to Ambleside or Cockermouth.



Tuesday was much better weather-wise so we decided to walk an old favourite, part of the Ullswater Way from Aira Force waterfall to Dockray. After all the recent rain, the falls were in full flow and raging, but care was needed on slippery paths. A picnic was had halfway round, red squirrels were spotted, and the 3½ mile walk was completed by 13:00. Time for a coffee in the excellent nearby National Trust Café.





Tuesday Dinner Menu – Served at 7pm	
Homemade Carrot & Coriander Soup with Herb Croutons	
Warm Bruschetta of Buffalo Mozzarella, Basil & Tomato with Tomato Jam	
Diced Melon with an Orange & Passion Fruit Syrup & Fruit Sorbet	
Atlantic Prawns, Baby Gem, Cherry Tomatoes, Cucumber, Marie Rose Sauce & Lemon	
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Slowly Cooked Minted Lamb Hind served with Braised Pearl Barley & Root Vegetables with a Red Wine & Rosemary Sauce	
Grilled Salmon Fillet served on a Crayfish, Spring Onion & Saffron Risotto finished with Fresh Parmesan	
Oven Roasted Pork Loin served with Sweet Red Cabbage, topped with a Cider & Apple Gravy	
Baked Aubergine filled with Provençal of Vegetables & Topped with Feta Cheese	
All served with A selection of potatoes And vegetables	
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Strawberry & Almond Frangipane Tart with Custard & Ice Cream	
Lemon & Raspberry Posset with a Homemade Shortbread Biscuit	
Death by Chocolate Ice-cream served with a White Chocolate Sauce	
Fresh Fruit Salad	
Cheese & Biscuits	
PTD	

On Wednesday most of us took up Stuart's challenge to do a 6-mile circular walk from Keswick up Latrigg, making use of part of the Cumbria Way. The rain stayed off, mostly, and we were rewarded with excellent views of the Derwent Valley and Bassenthwaite Lake. Some chose to walk around Grasmere instead.

Those who have stayed at the Glaramara Hotel will know that dinner in the evening is not for the faint hearted. At 19:30, it is later than most would like, and the three courses are on the large side. By the end of the week many were skipping the starter and sharing a pudding. But a full English is de-rigueur on the Thursday morning in preparation for the journey home and a week of scrambled eggs on toast.

*Mike Evans*

## Situation Vacant!

**'Wanted':** a sailor with RYA 'Coastal Skipper' or 'Yachtmaster' certificate willing to skipper a chartered yacht, with u3a members as crew, in the Eastern Mediterranean (Turkey, Greece, Croatia) in May 2026. As you may know Douglas Goode runs a 'Coastal Navigation' course every three years and some members are keen to sail. For 13 years (2000-2012) he skippered a chartered yacht in the Eastern Med till old age and Covid came along. Anyone willing to do this can contact Douglas (email: [cdgoode49@outlook.com](mailto:cdgoode49@outlook.com) mobile: 07398 117527) for more details.

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Could you make Douglas's dream of sailing the Med in his 96<sup>th</sup> year come true? Here's his poem about a previous trip, titled 'Sailing Fever':

Craven u3a's at sea again in the Northern Adriatic,  
We've got blue sky and a bright sun, we're old but not geriatric;  
And all we ask is a calm sea and a force four blowing  
And a great crew and a fine yacht, plus dinghy for rowing.

Craven u3a's at sea again with Douglas as the skipper,  
Maureen's the mate, isn't she great, and Dawn's the sail trimmer;  
And all we ask is a happy Bill and a very merry Molly,  
With some fine food and local wine to keep us all jolly.

Craven u3a's at sea again, for the call of sea and sun  
Is a wild call and a clear call: "Come and join the fun";  
And all we ask is a steady breeze with the tell-tails streaming,  
And a wide wash and a straight wake with the bubbles creaming.



## Carol Concert

The Craven u3a congregation was in full voice for the annual Carol Service at Skipton's Christ Church on 10th December. Around 130 members attended, raising £520 which was divided equally between the Church and Sue Ryder Manorlands Hospice.

"Audience participation" was, of course, at the heart of the service, but interspersed among the carols were readings which ranged from Isaiah to selected verses of a traditional Cornish carol.



These readings were delivered by Steve Coombes, Sandra Dixon, Carol Hawkins, Janet Hale, Andrew Todd, Christopher Pilling and Jacqui Eames. The congregation was also entertained by the u3a's recorder ensemble led by Susan Farmery.

Special thanks go to Kenneth Jackson, our wonderful organist, who at times found himself confronted by untimely noises from a badly behaved organ requiring repair. Kenneth valiantly saved the day.

The afternoon concluded with a convivial gathering accompanied by mince pies, hot drinks and mulled wine - organised by Anne MacDonald and her catering team.

*Mike Eaton*



### Thursday films at Champions, 1.30 pm

*'The Good Lie'*, 2014 on 15th Jan,

*'The Zone of Interest'*, 2023 on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan,

*'Awakenings'*, 1990 on 29<sup>th</sup> Jan,

*'Woman in Gold'*, 2015 on 5<sup>th</sup> Feb,

*'The Chorus'*, 2004 (NOT 'The Choral') on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb,

*'The White Crow'*, 2015 on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb,

*'Spring, summer, autumn, winter and spring'*, 2004 on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb,

*'Viceroy's House'*, 2017 on 5<sup>th</sup> Mar,

*'The Duke'*, 2020 on 12<sup>th</sup> Mar

*'Can you ever forgive me?'*, 2019 on 19<sup>th</sup> Mar

### Get out those dancing shoes!

Just because we might be of a certain age doesn't mean we can't have a boogie. Forget any inhibitions, and put the last of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in your diary. **A 1980s disco, on Saturday 28 March 2026** at the Skipton Community Sports Hub, Sandylands, 7.30 – 10pm, with live music and refreshments. No partner required! Further details in due course.

## Floral Art



Here are just a few of the beautiful seasonal arrangements produced by members of the Floral Art group



## Craven u3a's 40th anniversary, by Keith Berrington

*Craven we come  
craving to learn  
finding new friends  
friends of third age*

*arts and science  
in arctic venues  
warmed by culture  
coffee and tea*

*groups for walking  
wisdom sharing  
laughing at life  
living today  
carpe diem  
seize the day*

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This is the second of the poems sent in response to the challenge to pen a poem of just 40 words, celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Craven u3a.  
Thank you Keith!

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A few highlights from [National u3a](#) online:

12 Jan at 10 am – Exploring World Faiths

13 Jan at 2 pm – Understanding Online Content and Misinformation

15 Jan at 2pm – From Roman Britain to the Dark Ages

21 Jan at 10am – How do your medicines work? – Asthma

21 Jan at 3pm – A Voyage through the Scottish Hebrides

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