



CRAVEN u3a NEWSLETTER

Saturday Night Fever afflicts Craven Boomers



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Dates for your diary:

9 May & 13 June - Monthly meetings
at Champions, 10 for 10.30

13 May - AGM, 2.30 pm at Skipton
Community Sports Hub - please try
to attend

23 & 24 July - Summer Programme
at Ermysted's.

The final 40th Anniversary event was a 1980s dance night at the Skipton Community Hub on 21 March. Very well attended and most of the evening the dance floor was absolutely packed! Great music provided by the Retro Echo band, fronted by our very own Jacqui Eames. This was a first for Craven u3a but a definite hit, so another disco event is being planned for September.

Craven u3a Summer Programme

23 and 24 July 2026

The Summer Programme is now available to view, and the application process is open!

For those new to the u3a, this event takes place every year at the end of July over 2 days at Ermysted's Grammar School, Skipton, when members have the opportunity to attend up to 4 talks or workshops during the Programme. The cost for attendance, for however many sessions, is only £12 total. In addition, a separate Away Day programme has been organised which is offering 6 very different trips.

- The Ermysted's programme can be accessed by clicking [here](#) and the application form by clicking [here](#). Some speakers are very popular and are usually over-subscribed; places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served basis'. It is a good idea to include second choices on your application form.
- The Away Day programme and application form can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

For those who cannot print the form, it can be obtained from Craven Stationery, Coach Street, Skipton for a small charge.

Refreshments are provided for a small donation during the breaks, thanks to a wonderful group of volunteer bakers who provide a delicious choice of cakes and brownies. We hope they will answer the call again!

Finally, there will be an opportunity to renew your u3a membership for 2025-26 while you are there.

I very much look forward to seeing you at Ermysted's in July.

Linda Hoole

New Summer Group - Walking Cricket

Walking Cricket is a great way to meet friends and enjoy a new sport. We will be playing outside on the cricket pitch, next door to Sandylands.

Teams of eight, plastic bats and a softer ball are used. Running is totally forbidden!

Most of our group are total beginners to the game, so anyone who fancies giving it a try are more than welcome

We are having a pre- game coffee and chat on 29 April at 10.30 am in the Skipton Sports Community Hub, to discuss the rules and play and get to know each other. If you are interested in finding out more about the group, please feel free to join us then, or just contact me.

Walking Cricket starts on Tuesday 12 May, and will continue weekly, from 10am – 12 noon at Skipton Community Sports Hub, Skipton Cricket Ground, Carleton New Rd, BD23 2AZ.

Anne Macdonald

anne.f.macdonald@btinternet.com



The u3a orchestra entertained us at Embsay Village Hall on 25 March

You Live and Learn

What is this thing, I hear you say?
This thing they call the u3a.
Is it a place to sit and wait
Until you've reached the Pearly
Gate?
Or is it somewhere you can go
To have a snooze and take it slow?

Or, would you rather take a hike
Or learn some French or ride a
bike?
Or maybe painting's up your street
Or the archaeology of Crete.
Do you like books or films or plays
Or stories from the olden days?

Astronomy can blow your mind
With new horizons there to find.
Is science what you like to do?
There's other folks who like it too.
Or Roman empires - east and west
(And finding out which one was
best).

Good with hands? Try throwing
pots.
Or turning wood - you'll like it lots!
Quilting, sewing, keeping fit,
There's hardly any end to it.
If songs and music are your thing
Find folks out there who like to
sing.

Racketball and Pickleball...
(I don't know what these are at
all!)
They're on the list of things to do
With birdwatching and theatre too.
Art and fitness, bridge and trips,
Photography and politics.

Here's a very clever poetic
tribute to the u3a from
Craven's very own Geoff
Wilkinson. 🙌🙌🙌

D'you like geology or not?
(What is a drumlin?... I've forgot).
There's lots of history to share
(But don't ask me... I wasn't
there).
What happened in Byzantium?
I've no idea - let's ask someone.

It seems there's such an endless
flow
Of topics you could choose to
know.
And you won't need a PhD
Or Bachelor of Arts degree.
Retirement's not the end for you
It's just the start of something
new.

With all those 'ologies' out there
There's always someone who can
share
Their expertise and insights too
To make the learning fun to do.
The best thing is (I think you'll
find)
To turn up with a curious mind.

Geoff Wilkinson
January 2026

Your Poetry Group needs you!

The Poetry Group is looking for a new leader. Liz Morrison started the group last year and has done a brilliant job of running it but is now taking a break. Without a new leader, the group would sadly not continue next year.

It has been run fortnightly as a small group of 10 members in the group leader's home, focusing on reading, listening to and discussing a wide range of poems. However, a new leader would be free to alter the focus of the group, frequency of meetings, venue or group size.

If anyone is interested in running the group, or would like to discuss it, please contact me, Wendy Brown, at wendywoo.22@hotmail.co.uk.

Wharfedale Walkers – the Saturday walking group



On 14 February sixteen u3a Wharfedale Walkers had an outstanding 8.5 mile walk with enough snow and ice for quite an adventure, and the scarcely seen winter sun was out. We started out of Kettlewell up famously steep Park Rash on Cam Gill Road, rising over 230m in just 2.3 km up to the watershed with Coverdale, then through a twisting snowy path on Tor Dyke with fantastic white scenery, before descending to Starbotton, over the footbridge and back beside the river Wharfe to Kettlewell. A wonderful and pretty impressive day when you think 4 people were 80 years old and more!!

Richard Waller

Conversación en Español

We launched the Advanced Spanish Conversation group for the 2025-26 season. As the leader, I had no idea how many Spanish speakers there were in the Craven area. Several months later I still don't, but I am pleased to say we have found a few.

I called it an "advanced" group because it is not for beginners. I am in favour of beginners. I was one myself. But I am not a teacher and it is a conversation group, not a class. We have 12 members, with a variety of abilities, but everybody knows the rudiments and can converse to an extent. Some are fairly fluent speakers, including one valued member who has lived in South America but needs to brush up her Spanish.

We enjoy discussing Spanish and Latin American things, but we talk about anything and everything. The purpose is to use our knowledge of the Spanish language and improve it by using it.

We launched the group with a maximum of 12 members. We have achieved that. But with experience I think we could increase the maximum for the future. This season we held five sessions before Christmas and another 5 in the remainder of the season, a total of just 10 sessions. It began as an experiment, but I think it has succeeded. At least one of our members can speak more Spanish than she herself had realised, and for the more confident speakers it has provided an opportunity to converse.

What we are lacking is contact with locally-based native Spanish speakers. There must be some. It would be great to meet them, so if you know them please let me know.

Will we continue for 2026-27? If there is enough interest, probably.

Finally, I personally do not want to lead a beginner's group, but I would be delighted to share my experience with anybody who would like to do it.

Saludos cordiales

Phil Lawler – phillawler@btinternet.com

Geology Walks

On 16 February the Geology Walking group braved the cold winds on Ilkley Moor to investigate and find out more about the geology that sculpted the landscape which dates back around 326 - 315 million years ago when, would you believe, the climate was tropical and humid, although it did have high rates of rainfall – so no change there. We saw many geological features, including an imprint of a *Lepidodendron*, three types of valleys (glacial, river and dry), tidal laminates and a fine example of glacial striae (scratches in the rock caused by fragments of rock and debris lodged within a glacier which cut grooves into the rock) and heard how Ilkley Moor was on the shore of the sea-filled (Pennine) basin.



We visited two quarries, where the Addingham Edge Grit was quarried in the 1800s for the construction of many buildings in Ilkley. At the Cow and Calf Rocks, we heard a folk tale about Rombald the Giant, being chased by his angry wife. Although this isn't scientifically accurate it did give us a laugh as we looked at the glaciation evidence. We also found Cup and Ring structures carved into a rock - evidence of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age people living approximately 3,500 – 3,600 years ago. These petroglyphs are only a couple of the 400 such carvings on Rombalds Moor.

Diane Killock

Inclusive Sports Activities

Craven u3a aims to be an inclusive organisation. To further this aim, we are considering arranging some 'sporty' activities for members with limited mobility, although any member is welcome to join in.

We would like to gauge interest in the following activities, to see if there is sufficient demand.

CURLING (without ice!)

You may have watched curling on the recent Winter Olympics and fancied trying it. The curling stones contain ball bearings which enable them to glide towards the house (i.e. target) on a smooth synthetic surface. Players can be seated or standing. No brooms needed!

BOCCIA

This is a paralympic sport but can be played socially by people of all abilities. It is a cross between bowls and petanque. Soft leather balls can be thrown, kicked or rolled from an assistive ramp. This can be done standing, sitting or in a wheelchair.

WELL BEING SESSIONS

These focus on balance and core strength. Participants must be able to walk around the gym on uneven surfaces and on the sprung floor area.

SEATED MUSICAL MOVEMENT

These sessions are suitable for the less mobile and for wheelchair users.

Carers too will be welcome to attend the activities. These will be held on a termly basis during the day at either the Sports Hub or at the Craven Gymnastics Club. These venues are both on the Sandylands Sports Complex and have parking and disabled access and changing rooms. The Brown Bag on-site café is also accessible so players can meet for welcome cuppa and chat after sessions.

Please email me if you are interested in pursuing one or more of these activities or if you would like some more information.

Maggie McLellan
Craven u3a Inclusion Officer

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The Geography Forum

We've just completed the u3a year for the Forum and I'm just getting a grip of the process of co-running the group, with help from three far more experienced members. It's a big group and I'm abysmally slow at picking up and remembering names...!

My ethos is that Geography is a broad topic, covering everything from travelogues via explorers and cultures to ecosystems, landscape history and more.

We've had a taste of landscape history via a discussion of historic gardens and have also focused on Scandinavia and Japan this year as Cultural Geography, as well as two "Lost" villages. Personal talks based in Europe, the Middle East and the USA were part of the diverse programme.

Presentations allow the group to live and travel vicariously through the words and images of our members.

I'm sending out links via e-mail and WhatsApp as follow-ups and as general interest to members as a bit of an innovation this year. Members can choose to open them if they wish. A sample from these: Christmas trees buried in sand dunes to protect them from erosion - psychogeography (how location makes us who we are) - finding historic maps on-line - big cities - fitting weather maps to the wet winter!

Give me half a minute and I'll fit it in under the title "Geography".

To help members who were unsure about compiling a presentation we ran a short session on how to put one together and some tips on presentation skills.

Jonathan Hauxwell



'Ecosystems'
from the
Floral Art
group



The National Emergency Briefing on climate change and biodiversity loss

In November 2025, the UK's leading experts on climate change, agriculture and national security delivered an official-style emergency briefing on the climate and nature crisis to MPs and national leaders in Westminster.

This has now been turned into a powerful public information film, designed to travel from Westminster to every constituency, so that MPs and communities can see the same evidence, together. By screening the film in communities up and down the UK, the aim is to raise awareness of the situation, cutting through misinformation to understand the threats – and equally importantly – the solutions.

Climate Action Skipton (CASk) will host the film on 6 May from 7:00-8:30pm in the church hall at St Stephen's in Skipton. The 45-minute film will be followed by 45 minutes of discussion. Refreshments will be available.

Ian Blomfield on behalf of Climate Action Skipton (CASk)

Podcasts on the website

The Craven u3a website now has links to the latest podcasts. On the website click on "Events" then select "Craven u3a podcasts and the spotify links". You will then see a page with links to the most recent podcasts. This page will be updated when new podcasts become available.

We need to make more podcasts and need members to volunteer. It's very easy – all you have to do is talk. If you think you might have something to say please feel free to contact me: doug.hirst@btinternet.com
Don't be frightened. We can always do a trial run and scrub it if you're not happy with it. Go on – give it a try. You have nothing to lose.

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