



the EYE



Marking two decades of shared learning with U3A

Celebrating 20 special years

The main hall at the Clarke Foley Centre was decked with bunting and balloons when Ilkley & District U3A celebrated our 20th birthday in style with tea parties enjoyed by members and VIP guests alike.

Our thanks to Booths which supplied cakes for the party and to all our willing helpers on the day.

Earlier, in her annual report at the AGM, our chair Sue Butler praised all those members who make our U3A function smoothly.

“We are so fortunate that our members continue to contribute great enthusiasm and a wonderfully diverse range of skills and talents that make these activities a success,” she said.

“Thank you all, with a special thank you to group leaders, our website team, our communications group, our Saturday morning coffee team . . . the list of those who give extra time and thought to ensure we can learn and have fun together goes on and on.”

Sue acknowledged the tremendous contribution of the five trustees who retired at the AGM this year – Angie Grain, Gunilla Vriesendorp, Patricia Baker, Pam Lamming and David Higgins.

She went on to welcome our new



Trustee Mary Podesta helps to serve 20th anniversary tea party guests

trustees – Anne Eady, who takes over from Gunilla as membership secretary, Mary Podesta, who takes over from Angie as groups co-ordinator, Stuart Campbell and Anthea Obank.

“We wish them well in their new roles,” she said.

As another year ends, membership continues to rise to more than 1,500 and there is a growing number of activity groups.

We want to spread the word about the U3A. To this end we have increased the number of drop-ins to two a month and run some in Otley to attract new members from a wider area.

Next year we hope to maintain this momentum and welcome your ideas for new groups, study days and social events. Contact info@ilkleyu3a with your suggestions.

* Photos by Julia Kay and Mary Podesta

‘Members continue to contribute great enthusiasm’



Left: Chair Sue Butler addresses members at the AGM
Centre: long-time member Richard Lorimer blows out the candles on the birthday cake
Far right: Special guest John Grogan MP was full of praise for U3A

The day the air turned blue



In response to our appeal for reports from members, David Whiteley sent in this. We hope it makes you smile!

"I am involved with an amateur dramatic society unrelated to the U3A. My role is backstage, especially doing the sound and lights.

For a recent production I needed the sound effect of a number of female jail inmates shouting at one of the characters. Their language had to be profane to say the least.

One of the Ilkley U3A groups was of great assistance. In view of the language used, it is probably not appropriate to identify which group this was, or indeed which members participated.

The on-stage character had just been caught with illicit drugs and was accusing the prison officer of stealing her cigarettes. She was screaming and shouting about it. The offstage women's voices were telling her, in no uncertain terms, to "shut up", only in somewhat more forceful language.

Each of the group members involved was taken to a side room, where the situation was explained, and they were then encouraged to shout their improvised response.

My task was then to combine the various voices into one recording, and to play it over the theatre speakers at the appropriate time.

If you are reading this, and you were one of the participants, then thank you, and shame upon you for knowing language like that!"



Fell walkers find the middle ground

Where is the centre of Great Britain? Ordnance Survey, using the "gravitational" method, calculate it is at grid reference SD64188.3 56541.43, a remote spot of deep heather, next to a bog on the fells of the Bowland Forest, above Dunsop Bridge in Lancashire.

Members of the Fell Walking Group, whose aim is to "reach those parts that others don't", located this exact spot during their outing in September, and the photograph shows four members standing there.

They are from left, Mike Pilling, Gill Fox, Paul Bunting and Stan Robinson. (Photograph by Alan Kay)

Working in partnership is on the right track

The Railway Group joined forces with Ilkley Literature Festival on October 3 to host an afternoon with Andrew Martin, award-winning author and railway expert.

This was the group's first meeting of the new term and was attended by 115 people, of which about half were festival guests and the balance U3A Railway Group members.

Andrew talked about the romance of railways, drawing on references as diverse as Dickens, Sherlock Holmes and Brief Encounter. His anecdotes arising from his own upbringing as a child of a railway manager in York, whose family were allowed their own first-class pass to anywhere in the UK, were particularly enlightening and amusing.

After tea, Andrew discussed the creation of his Jim Stringer character and the research he undertakes to get historical facts as accurate as possible.

His first novel in the series of nine is set in 1903 and based on The Necropolis



Author Andrew Martin signs copies of his book

Railway that took coffins from Waterloo to the Brookwood Cemetery near Farnham in Surrey, 20 miles or so from London. Yes such an enterprise did exist!

In answer to questions, Andrew confessed there were parts of himself in Jim Stringer and that his plot lines were often changed because he was surprised at how his various characters responded to events as the narrative unfolded.

It was an unusual co-operation between U3A and the Literature Festival that worked exceedingly well for the mutual benefit of both.



Project success

University of Leeds student Jake Mason gave a presentation to U3A members in March about his MSc project, designed to understand household energy usage.

He subsequently designed and circulated a questionnaire that was completed by more than 200 people.

After analysing the data he drafted conclusions and his final report earned a mark of distinction, helping him gain that grade for his overall classification.

A summary of the project, which was led for the U3A by Prof Mike Pilling, can be found on the Environment Forum Group

pages, in the members only section of our website, under the heading "Household Energy Behaviour in Ilkley."

Jake said he had found the project challenging, interesting and rewarding and thanked U3A members for their support.



Go to the top of the table

Members of the Thursday Table Tennis Group found an ingenious way to solve a problem!

The group plays at the Winter Gardens but it is possible to store only two tables there.

Member Barbara Falloon said that as the group was getting more popular, it was felt they needed another table. So they came up with a clever and inexpensive solution.

"We got four trestle tables, drew a chalk line and as we had an old net (not quite wide enough) we tried it out," she said. "As you can see we've now progressed to an expanding net. Now 12 can play at a time, so there is less sitting out!"

Raising dementia awareness

We are living longer but as we get older the risk of getting dementia increases – one in 14 of us will have dementia over the age of 65 while a staggering one in six over the age of 80 will suffer from this debilitating condition. Even if we are not personally affected, the likelihood is that we know someone who is.

Ilkley & District U3A is now a Dementia Friendly organisation. To this aim we have been running a series of dementia awareness workshops to help members reach an understanding of what living with dementia may be like for sufferers.

We also want those who have dementia to feel comfortable enough to continue

attending U3A groups for as long as possible. The campaign will continue next year when one of the first Saturday morning talks will be on dementia.

Already other U3As in WestNet and the Yorkshire and Humberside region have heard about the campaign and there is interest in following suit. Ilkley & District U3A now has its own dementia awareness champion, Jean Smith.

If you would like to know more about dementia awareness contact Jean at jeanmsmith50@hotmail.com You will also be able to find out more at the Saturday morning talk on February 17 at the Clarke Foley Centre.

Dishes to inspire and impress

Two cookery events held as part of this year's summer school had members licking their lips with delight.

At one session organised by Caroline Moseley, participants enjoyed sampling each other's favourite starter recipes.

These comprised Caroline's chilled pea and roast almond soup, Hilary's peppered mackerel, spinach and spring onion tartlets, Margery's Provençale peppers with cheese bread, Pauline's chicken liver pate with crusty poppy seed bread and Barbara and Paul's French onion tart and courgette, pea, tomato, feta cheese and chilli salad.

Cooking to Inspire Group leader Hilary Barrett organised the other session, entitled "Dishes from around the world."

She started in France with garlic quiche, travelled to Spain for fragrant arroz con

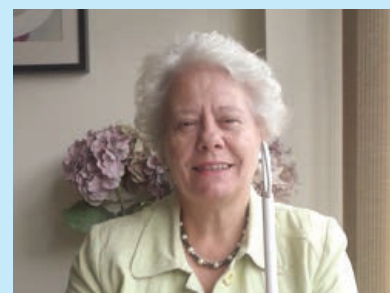


Hilary Barrett prepares her dishes

pollo (chicken with saffron rice) and then to Bangladesh for spicy balti cod and red lentils.

While that cooked, Hilary prepared delicate spaghetti salmon primavera from Italy and Thai spinach soup – healthy, colourful and packed with flavour. The journey ended in Morocco where sliced oranges with dates, cinnamon and mint left the palate refreshed.

Caroline said: "These dishes I will cook because they are rare and special but without undue fuss or expense – inspirational."



Sue takes the reins

Ilkley & District U3A has supplied the regional trustee for the last six years – three years with David Morton and the last three years with Neil Stevens.

Now Sue Stokes, of Barnsley U3A, is picking up the regional reins.

Sue was brought up in Barnsley but spent much of her career in education in the Midlands. After working as a headteacher and inspector she became involved with bringing education and industry closer together. For a period she was education officer for Severn Trent Water.

In Barnsley U3A she has been involved with a number of groups including Local History, Healthy Eating and Jewellery Making. She is a trained regional volunteer and recently has become vice-chair of the regional committee.

Besides representing Yorkshire and Humberside on the national executive committee she would like to see more cross-fertilisation of ideas and expertise within our region.

Ilkley U3A wishes Sue well in her new role and looks forward to a visit to us.

Useful contacts

Drop-in sessions are held at the Clarke Foley Centre in Ilkley from 10.30am to midday on the first and third Fridays of the month.

A committee member and group leader will be there to answer any queries you may have.

You can also email any of the following:

Chair, Sue Butler:
chairman@ilkleyu3a.org

Groups co-ordinator, Mary Podesta: groups@ilkleyu3a.org

Membership secretary, Anne Eady:
membership@ilkleyu3a.org

Information, Peter Mate:
info@ilkleyu3a.org

U3A regional news: yahru3a.co.uk
Registered charity no: 1070945



Ilkley U3A Railway Group using the system to hear about the history of York Station

Receiving you loud and clear

Have you ever been on a U3A trip and given up trying to listen to the guide because you are too far away to hear, or wanted to stop and look but are concerned you will miss something important?

These issues and more have been resolved by Ilkley & District U3A which has purchased an audio tour guide system. This gives information via a microphone attached to a radio transmitter and each member of the group listens to the guide through earphones attached to a portable receiver. The system is effective in noisy traffic or factory environments but is discreet enough to be used inside art galleries, museums, churches etc. A guide can be heard clearly over a distance of 100 yards or more.

The system consists of 50 receivers and two transmitters. Each receiver and transmitter is similar in size and weight to a mobile phone and is run on rechargeable batteries. The kit uses standard connections

so earphones provided for mobile phones and portable music players will all fit. Five of the receivers can be adapted to link with the T switch on hearing aids.

The system has made a huge difference to the enjoyment of members on various visits. Guides no longer have to wait for folk to "gather round" and can keep up a commentary while walking along. If a question is asked, everyone hears the answer, not just those who make the inquiry.

Individual members can stop to look at something of particular interest without feeling they must keep in touch with the guide. Where there is seating, members can rest without missing out on information. Those with impaired hearing are no longer at a disadvantage and many have expressed gratitude. The system has even been used to provide a running commentary on bus and train journeys.

Still motoring along

The Motorbike Group welcomed a motorcycle enthusiast with an amazing two-wheel history.

Walter Daynes, pictured with group leader Norman Jones and Mike Fourie the day before his 94th birthday, joined 14 group members for a coffee and chat in the café at Booths supermarket prior to their usual ride-out.

Walter, who started motorcycling as a dispatch rider and saw five years' service in the Royal Signals from 1942 in North Africa, Italy and Greece, regaled members with some of his tales riding bikes over difficult terrain without any of the navigational aids bikers now take for granted.



Sweet treats at Whitakers

The Science and Technology Group certainly had a sweet time when they visited Whitakers Chocolate factory at Skipton.

Members were guided around the facility in small groups, and it proved to be a fascinating experience. This is one of the few remaining family owned and managed chocolate companies in the UK, manufacturing in excess of 10 million chocolates every week.

Members saw everything from "own label" chocolates prepared for major supermarkets to small production lines for restaurants and family weddings. Next time you are served coffee with a mint chocolate in a restaurant, look at the label and it could well say "Whitakers".



To the visitors' surprise and delight, the last of the tours was presented with a supply of 1,000 chocolates personalised to Ilkley U3A.

"We thought about keeping them, but in the spirit of U3A, we wished to share our good fortune," said group member John Hancock. "And I'm pleased to say there were even some left for the 20th anniversary tea party in November!"

Share your stories

The Eye aims to spotlight the huge variety of activities available to members of Ilkley & District U3A so if your group has something to shout about do let us know.

We're also keen to get feedback about The Eye. What would you like to see in it?

Please email your comments to: info@ilkleyu3a.org