

Angie Grain, Chair of Trustees

At the AGM in November, Angie Grain will be stepping down as Chair of Trustees of Ilkley and District u3a as her three-year tenure comes to an end. However, she will remain an enthusiastic supporter of the organisation which has been such an important part of her life for the past 12 years.

Angie joined our u3a when she retired after a busy working life in teaching, local government and as an administrator and manager at the University of Leeds, as well as raising her two children (she is now a grandmother twice over).



It was obvious that a quiet retirement was not for her so, when a friend recommended the u3a, she leapt at the chance. She was a trustee for six years then, after a break, she was asked to return as Chair.

“For retired people the u3a is the best thing since sliced bread,” she says. “We have more than 100 groups. Some members join several and others just one; we have such a wide range of activities there is something for everybody.”

Angie lives in Otley and is particularly pleased about raising awareness of the u3a beyond Ilkley itself to the discrete settlements of our ‘and District’ areas. Membership in her hometown has doubled in the last year and interest is growing in Addingham and other surrounding towns and villages.

But despite these advances – and the fact that Ilkley, with around 1,800 members, is the second largest group in Yorkshire (after Sheffield) – Angie sounds a cautious note.

“Currently, we are in a dangerous situation. Some people join and expect everything to be provided for them, but we are an educational co-operative and too few members are contributing to the running of our u3a. If we don’t receive more help from everyone, we are in danger of losing our excellent and dynamic u3a. We need a lot of people helping a bit, rather than a few members doing a lot.”

However, she pays fulsome tribute to those who have been willing to play their part. “I would like to say how much we appreciate all the help we get from Trustees, Group Leaders, Action Team members and others; these are members who are full of ideas, energy and enthusiasm. I must say a huge ‘Thank You’ to all of them – your help and support has been much appreciated; it has been an honour and a privilege to be the Chair of our u3a.”

Thank you, Angie!

We feel sure that most members of Ilkley & District u3a will have met Angie Grain, whose term of office as the Chair of the Trustees will end in November.

Angie assumed her role just as the rumblings of Covid began to hit the headlines and we all know the devastation this caused. It could not have been a more difficult situation for Angie to encounter but she faced the difficulties head on. With sound wisdom and a dogged determination, she ensured that our u3a was alive and kicking throughout the pandemic.

In fact, we not only survived but became even stronger than before.

Angie is a shining example of all that u3a stands for. She has worked tirelessly and enthusiastically to promote inclusivity and the love and value of lifelong learning.

We will elect and welcome our new Chair at the next AGM. We would ask you to lend every hand and support that you possibly can so that our u3a remains a strong and vibrant community.

These QR codes indicate that more information is available on our website. To reach the correct web page, view the QR code through the camera on your smart phone or tablet.



Christine Gibson u3a member and lace artist

Christine is an artist in lace, bringing an individual and very arresting aspect of creative abstract work to the ancient craft, developing her own personal style of Wild Lace.

Christine has brought a modern sensibility to the craft, using the aesthetics of the artist. She uses traditional craft skills, learnt many years ago, to revisit and reimagine the possibilities suggested by the medium, making works of art.

So how did she first acquire this love for lace? Christine describes her approach as a journey, not knowing where it would lead. She started dressmaking at school and went on to study Needlework and Textiles at Battersea College of Education where she developed a great interest in stitching with textured threads. Her first encounter with lace began after a distant relative died and bequeathed her lace making equipment to Christine.

At a lace class in Billericay, she was encouraged by lace artist Janet Evans to find a photograph and work it. Two abstract pieces resulted and the rest is history! Christine says, "I use photographs as patterns and colour in the shapes with threads, freely twisting and moving bobbins as needed until an abstract interpretation of the photo emerges. I am never fully sure what the finished piece will look like until it is completed, dealing with problems as they arise rather than by having a pre-set strategy."

Wider interest in lace was revived by the wedding dress of the now titled HRH the Princess of Wales, which featured metres of intricate, traditional and symbolic Carrickmacross lace. British lace making is widely acknowledged to be an important heritage skill, but she acknowledges that there's a struggle to keep lace making going; youngsters want to get things finished quickly and lace making can be time consuming.

Christine has exhibited with 98Lace a national group who work to bring contemporary work to the fore. To explore further, see their website at 98lace.org.uk.



Art Appreciation Group

Autumn 2020: I was new to u3a – and to Ilkley too – but keen to sample what was on offer.

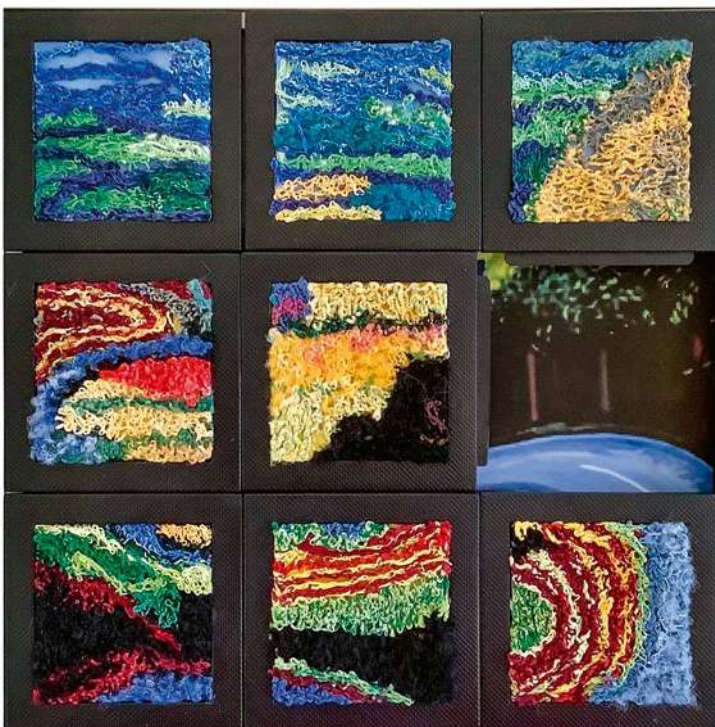
The Art Appreciation group caught my eye straightaway. Here was an opportunity to look at the work of an artist, or a group of artists, or even a single piece of art, and to consider their merits or otherwise with like-minded individuals. I was also taken with the group's wide definition of art to include areas such as sculpture, wood carving and lace making in addition to painting.

I was assured that the group was friendly and so it turned out despite my first term taking place on Zoom because of the pandemic. In fact, the presentations worked very well over the internet, although making your own cup of tea is never quite as nice as when someone else makes it for you!

In autumn 2021 face-to-face meetings resumed and we have had presentations on a wide variety of subjects. True to the principles of the u3a, the group works on the basis of people volunteering to research and give a presentation on some area of art that they have a personal interest in. However, volunteering to do a presentation is not obligatory and some members help the group in other ways such as organising the all-important tea breaks (!) and arranging visits between meetings to local exhibitions and galleries.

There is no shortage of candidates for the best Ilkley u3a group but the Art Appreciation group is well up there and, in my experience, well worth taking a closer look at.

Lesley Mercer



My u3a

All of you had your own reasons for joining our u3a branch and your own experiences of how this has then panned out afterwards. It might be instructive and interesting to share my experiences to help you and our u3a.

When I took early retirement in 2016, I came across the u3a in Ilkley. They seemed to be an active lot with many different and interesting groups, so I joined. However, I soon found out that all three news groups and the Science & Technology group were full and unlikely to have a place for me anytime soon.

When I grumbled to a u3a representative he said, "Why not form your own group?" This looked a bit daunting, but I gave it some thought and decided it would enable me to organise and structure 'my' group in the way I wanted. For me, my interests focused mostly on ships and Europe as I had worked as a naval architect based in the Netherlands. I did not expect there would be much interest in boats in land locked Ilkley! However, as we had just had the Brexit referendum, I chose to start a group to look at the implications of this significant outcome.

I contacted the new groups coordinator, who was Angie Grain (our outgoing Chair) at the time. Over a coffee she put to rest my concerns and explained there were guidance documents in place. As I was planning a discussion group, she suggested we could meet in a pub!

The interest in this group grew quickly and I soon had a waiting list. I started a second group, one ran in the morning and one in the afternoon, so it would take only one day every fortnight for me to lead two groups. Now that Brexit has been 'done' we are back to one group looking at and discussing wider political developments in Europe.

My interest and knowledge of ships meant I could share this with others in presentations at, for example, the Summer Programme. Few people will be completely at ease standing in front of an audience giving a presentation, but it is easier if you are doing this in front of forgiving fellow u3a members.

This increasing involvement in various u3a activities also led me to realise that for the u3a to be able to help to establish new groups and organise other events like the monthly Saturday Socials, Summer Programme, study days etc a lot of work needs to be done behind the scenes. It requires more than just paying our annual subscription and then expecting it all to be done for you.

So, when I was asked, I committed myself to be a Trustee for three years. I hesitated at first because I did not have any specific skills or previous experience as a Trustee, but I soon found out all that is needed are general organisational skills and a willingness to get things done.

Richard Lorimer RIP

Richard was born in Belfast to a farming family. It was during his formative years that he developed a love of music and sport. Sadly, his promising football career was curtailed when he contracted TB.



After the war he relocated to London where he was employed by the Civil Service. Initially he lived in a hostel run by Hyelm

(Housing for young people of limited means), a charity which he supported all his life as President and on the Board.

He quickly rose through the ranks of the Civil Service holding an esteemed position in the Department for Employment and later transferring to Whitehall supporting Ministers such as Michael Foot and Margaret Thatcher.

After his retirement he enjoyed cricket, golf and later croquet, setting up a Croquet Club as part of the local u3a in Broxbourne and later in Ilkley.

Richard was highly involved in the local community, becoming a local magistrate and director of the annual Broxbourne Music Festival and later Ilkley Concert Club.

My Trustee role will end in November and if all the 1,800+ of us in our local u3a could contribute, our u3a would have enough Trustees and other helpers for decades. That is not likely to happen but all of us cannot expect others to make your u3a activities possible and that all you have to do is pay your annual subscription. We all need to understand and accept, as I did, that the u3a is not a teaching institute but a member's co-operative where we all need to help each other. To paraphrase former US President J.F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your u3a can do for you – ask what you can do for your u3a."

Marten Koopmans

In 1992, in response to a chance suggestion by a local education officer, Richard and his wife Judy sent off for information about a new organisation for retired people... the u3a! As a result, the Lea Valley u3a was born, followed by Broxbourne and Cheshunt u3as.

Following their move to Ilkley in 2004, the Lorimers were attracted to the first meetings of its u3a. Over the years Richard has enjoyed the initiation of and participation in many groups, some of which, such as the Environment Forum and Art Appreciation he continued to be an active supporter of to his final days despite deteriorating health.

For some time, Richard was the national u3a advisor for sports and physical activities as well as being on the editorial board for the national magazine.

Richard loved all things u3a. He said,

"All members have a valuable contribution to make no matter what their background because we never stop learning and everyone has something valuable to say."

We shall miss this amazing and inspirational man with his vast knowledge, care for all those around him, staunch support for u3a, both local and national, but most of all for his kindness and friendship.

Obituary included at the request of the Chair of Trustees.

Where did the u3a come from?

We are one of over 1,000 u3a groups in the UK, but how did this successful organisation come into being?

The original idea was developed by Professor Pierre Vellas at the University of Toulouse in 1973. Working with a group of professors, students, and staff plus members from WHO, ILO and UNESCO, he proposed l'Université du Troisième Âge de Toulouse with the specific objective of investigating how the university could improve the quality of life of the elderly.

In 1981, the concept was brought to the UK and adopted a self-help model which

followed one basic principle: everyone teaches, and everyone learns. That is, 'third agers' learn from and teach 'third agers'. The assumption is that everyone has something to contribute, and everyone has something new to discover. This is a grassroots organisation where the decisions about programmes and topics are driven by the membership who operate as a self-financing, self-managing charity with links to the national coordinating body, the Third Age Trust.

Since those initial beginnings in France, the u3a has become an international phenomenon with groups in over 30 countries and on every continent. A global umbrella organisation, AIUTA (Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Âge), oversees the groups. But the u3a is not a homogeneous or standardised

organisation, as each country adapts and modifies the format to suit its own socio-cultural-political setting.

Despite these differences, all groups share the same values and purposes: learning just for the sake of learning with no exams or intention of receiving a qualification. In addition to

Autumn

Address you as a person, like a poet would?

That's fine, but don't expect much praise
Since all who laud you deep down loathe
The prospect of foreshortened days

The mists, first cousins to the later fogs,
The blinding low slung morning sun,
The leaves, at first all russet and all gold,
Which turn to mush when once the rain's begun

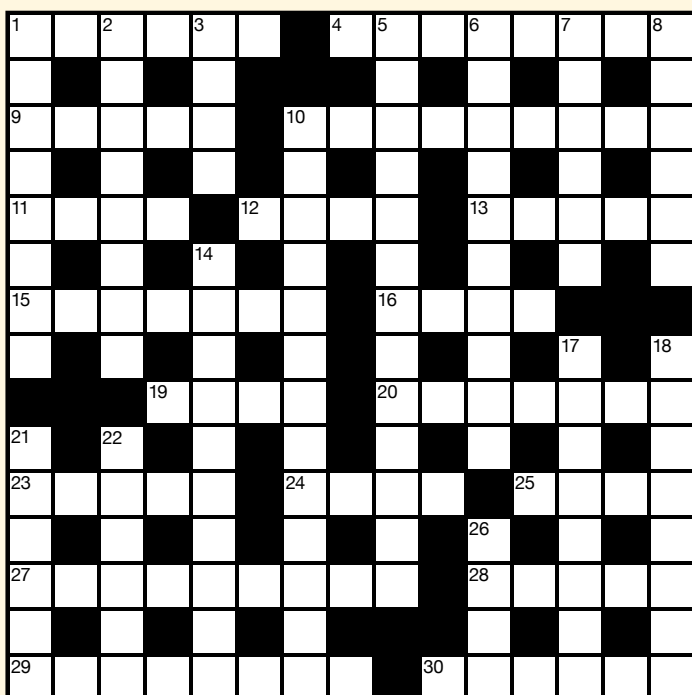
The afternoons, each chiselled more
Made worse by legislative decree
Are duller, darker by the day.
The clocks go back, and so do we

And what of mellow fruitfulness?
Just obscure apples bloom and swell
And pears as well, strange sorts, the ones
That supermarkets never sell

Stand forth then autumn. Be addressed,
You thief of time, you dreary bore
You stand and bow as winter comes
Stumbling, hobbling through the door

Roy Anderson

local interests, there is an emerging awareness of international connections which may involve learning languages, shared summer schools, cultural visits, and exchanges. To promote and enable international online interconnections, the u3a created a virtual university (<https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>) where members may participate in both independent, at-your-own-pace courses or those with a designated schedule and instructor.



Art crossword

Across

- 1/14 Give a minor saint a make-over in work by 9 (6,10)
- 4 Obstinate stinker's first bath delivered (8)
- 9 Unexpectedly large barman? (5)
- 10 The 23, 28 was his mark in new term (9)
- 11 A service returned from a great distance (4)
- 12 Leaves without first years (4)
- 13 Start to paint royal features (5)
- 15 Provide too many weapons in this delivery? (7)
- 16 Bad smell eradicated from

- garden pavilion for peer (4)
- 19 Half of Ilkley out getting new oven (4)
- 20 Illness with a complicated name I avoid to start with (7)
- 23 Mozart composed a little of this music (5)
- 24 Fever as former Tory leader loses his head (4)
- 25 Maybe dairy found a ready market originally (4)
- 27 American protestant people, with nobody accepting technology (9)
- 28 Look out for ticker in sleepless period? (5)
- 29 Doctor is slain after admitting love affairs (8)

- 30 Alternative water supply for writer of 21,25 (6)

Down

- 1 It lifts up to reveal pants (8)
- 2 Thankless lot sound as if they're under fire (8)
- 3 Philosopher from Staines, we hear (4)
- 5 Taste gin, rum, i.e. ingredients that may be at the front of a bar (4,9)
- 6 Jewish celebration in pub, with German state hotel housing unknown number (3,7)
- 7 Fancy – a tenor out of control! (6)
- 8 Race into an unusual arrangement (6)

- 10 Organisation reviewed net emigration (13)

- 14 See 1 Across
- 17 Prepare army for space war? (8)
- 18 Halt a jam developing at tourist site (3,5)
- 21 I'm caught by excessively careful creature (6)
- 22 Get old and silly: what's to be done? (6)
- 26 Not so many beheaded, ending in jug (4)

For solution scan QR code or go to ilkleyu3a.org and follow links to News and The Eye.

