

Time to spare? Join us for social & learning opportunities in Ilkley, Otley and adjoining areas.

2023 Issue 12



What do these four images have in common?
Turn to pages 2 & 3 to find out.



Win afternoon tea for two at Bettys in Ilkley. See back page for details of our prize draw.

Our local u3a has over 100 interest groups and 1,800 members. Reach our website by scanning this QR code or just enter Ilkley & District u3a into any internet search facility. Look at the back page for other ways to contact us.



What links these images? These groups have all been started recently...



My introduction to jazz was not a great experience. As a young child in the early 1960s, I endured the easy listening of Acker Bilk and Kenny Ball on a small black and white TV with my mother, whilst my much older sister was in her bedroom playing Beatles' records!

Like many of my generation, I enjoyed the vibrant, eclectic music scene of the mid to late '60s especially the evolution of Blues (John Mayall, Chicken Shack) through the likes of Cream to progressive rock. It was at this point I was introduced to jazz rock (or jazz fusion as it's better known), with Nucleus and Soft Machine my favourites.



Jazz singer
Beverley Beirne

This led me to jazz legend Miles Davis ('In a Silent Way' and 'Bitches Brew'), and from there to his earlier work.

Jazz with its complexity, improvisation and creativity still fascinates me and with

the development of streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music, there is easy access to a great number of artists and their work over the last century.

When my partner and I moved to Ilkley we joined u3a and I signed up for the Jazz Appreciation Group. That incarnation of the group never really got going but there was a core of interested members and we worked up a plan. Namely, I would pick up the organisational part whilst others would offer their knowledge and expertise to deliver a varied and stimulating programme, including finding guest speakers to talk on a particular subject.

We meet twice a month on a Monday afternoon at Church House adjacent to the Parish Church in the centre of Ilkley. For more information visit the u3a website and look for Jazz under the section called groups.

Speakers at our meetings include Steve Crocker, the driving force of Jazz Leeds, and acclaimed jazz singer Beverley Beirne.

We look forward to meeting you.

Rob Whitemore
Group Leader,
Jazz Appreciation

Dreary meetings forbidden at the Non-Fiction Book Group!

'It was a dark and stormy night...' except at the Non-Fiction Book Group meeting. No fluffy fiction, or weighty long-winded tomes that are crying out for a good copy editor. And no topic too simplistic, pithy, humdrum, complex or monotonous. However, we do look for works that excite or spark an interest rather than yet another uninspiring and repetitive view of a topic.

The group has operated for about a year and has covered a diverse set of topics. We started out ambitiously with 'The Periodic Table.' Written by Primo Levi, a chemist who survived Auschwitz, the book makes metaphorical connections between chemical elements and his life, interweaving the discipline with his world views. Beautiful prose written with flashes of humour but a bit challenging for those without some chemistry.

In complete contrast, 'Wayfinding: The Art and Science of How We Find and Lose our Way' by Michael Bond interweaves cognitive science with how humans interact within physical worlds and what influences that interaction. Very apropos for the environment in this valley but also surprising that it only dealt with the natural environment and not with the timely 'lost in cyberspace' concept.

We ended the year with 'How Civil Wars Start and How to Stop Them' by Barbara Walter, an expert in the study of civil wars globally. This very readable book provided significant thinking points for today, but the group, for the most part, panned it as a mainly American-centric view of the problem written in a non-evidentially based way.

The group has also tackled quantum physics; a journalist's account of the Vietnam war; ten maps that are shaping global politics; travels in India including

caste wars, corruption, and terrorism; a critique of capitalism; the attempted assimilation of Native Americans in the 19th century; the BBC; and an examination of stoicism and how those early ideas still relate today.

How are the books selected? Each member proposes titles for a long list which is circulated back to the group for a vote. Once the short list has been developed, each member selects one from that list to present to the group. Consequently, no book is just one member's pet topic and everyone reads and discusses something of personal interest. Books are not necessarily read in advance which leads to a lively discussion as no one (not even the introducer) can be sure that the book selected is what was expected or frankly worth a read. Our engaging discussions involve a bit of description (what is it about?), a bit of analysis (has it been done effectively?), a bit of interpretation (what is the author

No ordinary walk!

Take a walk on the wild side, which is the four-‘legged’ wild side. But leave those four-legged fuzzy friends behind. Instead pick up a couple of poles and set off for a good low impact workout – go Nordic walking!

Nordic walking originated in Finland and is a little like cross country skiing without the skis. It was initially developed in the 1930s as a summer training exercise for cross country skiers that evolved into a recreational activity by the 1980s. Today over 10 million people participate in about 40 countries.

What distinguishes Nordic walking from other activities is its poles and the technique. Unlike trekking poles, Nordic poles with their slanted rubber feet and secure hand-straps work in opposition to your legs. That is, your left arm works with your right foot, and vice versa for right arm and left foot, following the natural arm swing when walking. This alternating, single-pole planting and push-off propels you forward. Easy to learn and its health and fitness benefits are substantial.



Done properly, Nordic walking works 80–90% of your muscles (in contrast to running which uses only 40%). You can experience a 20% increase in calorie use compared to ordinary walking. Because it activates core, shoulder, back, arm and leg muscles, it can be a full body workout. Research has shown significant health benefits resulting in improved posture, cardiovascular, and bones. And one of its key rewards is that it's done in a de-stressing environment – the open air. So no additional cost.

Ilkley & District u3a has a small Nordic walking group which walks every Wednesday morning for about two hours, currently at 2.5–3 miles an hour, with a coffee shop reward at the end.

For more information, see Nordic Walking under Groups on our website.

Elaine Toms, Group Leader, Nordic Walking

Walking Cricket

This autumn a new group was introduced to Ilkley u3a – Walking Cricket and I've been taking part. In Yorkshire, the sport started in 2019 as part of an initiative between the community arm of the Yorkshire Cricket Foundation (YCF) and the u3a. The objective was to make cricket accessible to older adults and to introduce a new way of building skills and friendships.



Walking Cricket in action!

The Ilkley u3a Walking Cricket sessions are held indoors on a Monday morning at Aireborough Leisure Centre in Guiseley. We intend moving outside in the summer to Ben Rhydding Sports Club. Currently there are about 25 members, with 14 or so attending each week and interest continues to grow. There's a mix of ages and genders and it's an entirely non-judgemental environment. Both underarm and overarm bowling are allowed and belting the ball hard is not. The focus is on fun, encouragement, mobility and team spirit with a bit of competitiveness thrown in.

At the taster session in September 2022, Mac McKechnie from the YCF came along to support the group leader and

to show us how it's done. He's developed the sport for the u3a and he's a member of the Wakefield u3a Walking Cricket team. Walking Cricket is just like the real thing, the main differences being that there's a softer ball and bat and no running is allowed – harder than it sounds! In each session everyone has the chance to bowl, bat and field. We move positions every over to maintain mental interest and physical movement.

Talking to fellow participants about what had prompted them to give it a try and to keep coming along, the main themes were about having fun, meeting new people and being curious about how it worked. People also talked about

▶ really trying to say?) and an overall evaluation (should we give it stars or is it best shredded for recycling?).

This group still has space for new members. We have identified upcoming reading including British imperialism, traditions, an anthropological look at British behaviour, and the social and political divisiveness within the US.

The group meets in the Bar T'at cellar function room (no lift) on the third Thursday in each month. Feel free to sit in on a meeting to see if it 'rocks your boat.' For more information, look for Non-Fiction Book Group on our website under Groups



Elaine Toms, Group Leader, Non-Fiction Book Group

Why does u3a bother to have a social media presence? Good question!

Perhaps quite a few of you, like me, don't do social media. Our reasons may vary from 'just don't want to', 'can't', 'not bothered'. And that's fine. We have that choice. But businesses or organisations like the u3a need an effective social media strategy.

For instance, did you know that in five years' time, our potential next tranche of members won't be 'Baby Boomers' (1946–1964) but will be the less numerous and more tech savvy 'Generation X' (1965–1979).

The current 55–65 age group, the last of the 'Baby Boomers' (me included, just...), have different priorities and use the internet more. I do. It gives me the freedom to look up and find anything I want. It enabled me to research and set up my own business; find where to go on holiday and plan everything to the nth degree. Lots of stuff. For example, the ability to find out more about something I hate. Thought I hated. Didn't want. Social Media.

No, I don't think I'll join Twitter and Facebook. But since joining the



Communications Team at Ilkley & District u3a, my eyes have been opened. In a good way.

I'm now learning all about how to publish a magazine and all that encompasses. Using some of my old skills, but in the true u3a ethos, learning! A lot.

The bit of the team I didn't get, was the Facebook and Twitter posts. Because I

thought I had no interest in them. Wrong! We have a very talented and accomplished volunteer in Helen Stevens. Helen still works as a freelance editor and proof-reader, so we are very lucky indeed to have



Helen Stevens who manages our social media accounts

her working with us and promoting what we do widely across social media. It's all there for you to access freely. Just search Ilkley & District u3a Facebook or Twitter to see for yourself.

John Butler of Ravenshead u3a gave an online national Drop-In Session for Third Age Trust (TAT) on the use of social media referencing Ilkley u3a as an example of getting it right. Well done our Helen!

For the u3a to reach new people, change is required. So, if like me, you shied away from social media, try looking there at what we produce for your Delectation and Delight! **JB**



Members of Ilkley & District u3a Walking Cricket Group

▶ trying something a bit different and it being a really nice way of 'exercising without really noticing'.

Our group leader, Liz (who also runs the Leeds u3a Walking Cricket group at Headingley) was mentioned as being a real plus. She is endlessly patient with questions about rules and what scores what. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to take a turn at umpiring. Liz also encourages us to get together

for coffee in the leisure centre café afterwards and always sends us a weekly email summarising key points such as how many attended and how many runs were scored.

Some participants like to watch cricket, some have played cricket before, some not; it really doesn't matter. I got the opportunity to play girls' cricket at secondary school. This was unheard of then and our problem was finding

other schools that were also doing it so we could get a match. My claim to fame – some 45 years ago – is bowling out Ray Illingworth's daughter with a perfectly placed yorker.

Crucially, at Walking Cricket we don't take ourselves too seriously and always support and applaud one another, especially when a catch is involved! It's about learning new, or unearthing long forgotten, cricket skills but it's also about making new friends and having fun. We hope to get involved in playing some friendly matches soon, with the emphasis very much on friendliness. Do come along and give it a spin, it might bowl you over.

For more information visit our website and look for Walking Cricket under the section called groups.

With thanks to Richard Rundle and Dave Elliott for the images on this page.

Diane Preston
Member, Walking Cricket Group

Remember these?

Watching an Antiques Show Special on toys, I was thrilled to see such beautiful and novel things. Some were made by disabled soldiers from the First World War. Others included a set of automaton animals from the 1950s. But the nostalgia, looking back was heart-warming.



It's always interesting to know a little about the history of toys especially those still being played with by today's children.

For example, did you know that **Barbie** was manufactured by Mattel and launched in 1959? She became the figurehead of Mattel dolls and has been an important part of the toy fashion doll market for over six decades.

Subbuteo is a table top football game invented by Peter Adolph. After he was demobbed from the RAF after the Second World War, he searched for a new business opportunity.

Adapting his game from something called 'Newfooty', he made numerous improvements. These included changing the heavy lead bases under the model players to lighter materials, using for his prototype a button from his mother's coat and a washer! The name? Well, after being refused a trademark to call the game 'Hobby', he called it Subbuteo. This is derived from the neo-Latin scientific name Falco Subbuteo – the Eurasian hobby.

The **Lego** Group began in 1932 in the workshop of a Danish carpenter (Ole Kirk Christiansen) who made wooden toys. In 1947, the company expanded to begin producing plastic toys. The plastic interlocking bricks we know today were a development of



the traditional stacking wooden blocks of the time. The Lego Group's motto, created in 1936 and still used today, is 'only the best is good enough' and was created by Christiansen to encourage his employees never to skimp on quality, a value he believed in strongly.

If you have fond (or scary!) memories of toys or teddies, scooters, trikes etc. from your childhood, share your stories with us by writing in to the editor@ilkleyu3a.org

JB



Neighbourhoods of the future – cultivating neighbourhoods that care

Have your say and get involved. To learn more, scan this QR code or use internet search for Agile Aging. This is taken from an article in Third Age Matters Summer 2022 magazine.



'A multigenerational neighbourhood embodies equality of opportunity and talent. It ensures that older adults are seen as contributors and consumers in the same way that

every other working adult or younger person should be. Let's imagine a fresh collaborative approach which recognises that older people are not a burden, but still have the potential to contribute to their communities.' Sam Mauger, u3a Chief Executive said at the launch of the Agile Ageing Alliance (AAA) report 'Cultivating Neighbourhoods That Care.'

It says that developers should focus on building age-friendly housing within multigenerational neighbourhoods to combat loneliness in all age

groups. These might include large open courtyards with clear pathways, enclosed social spaces with plants and seating areas, large balconies, pharmacies on the ground floor, interactive shading and wayfinding systems for comfort and security.

AAA founder, Ian Spero, said 'Older people today so not want to be pigeonholed. If they are thinking of scaling down, we know they are looking to move to environments which support their lifestyle, which should include gardens, restaurants and public space for socialising. What's missing is a commonly agreed view of 'what good looks like', making it hard to plan.' JB

Book Reviews

Unlike most book groups we don't have a set book. Each member chooses a book they have read, fact or fiction, and we discuss it. I have found some good authors



from this and also which ones to avoid!

One of the best books I have read recently is 'House by the Lake' by

Thomas Harding. It's the true story of the occupants of a small house built by a lake near Berlin in the late

19th century. The house had several owners including a Jewish doctor who had the house taken from him by the Nazis. When the Iron Curtain went up, the house was literally just behind it, the border being at the bottom of the house's garden which edged onto the lake. A fascinating social history of Germany through a tumultuous century.

We meet at the Red Lion in Burley, usually the third Monday of the month, at 2pm.

We would welcome new members! So, if you're interested, contact me. Just look on the u3a website under Groups.

Catherine Liversedge, Group Leader, Book Reviews Group

Quizzes – what for?

Fun!
Socialising!
Making new friends!
Exercising the little grey cells?
Competing?
Sound familiar?

The u3a subject advice on setting up a group explains how Madeley & District have been running a monthly quiz night for the past five years and they are the most popular of all their activities other than the monthly talk!

They offer advice on the recipe for a slick quiz, how to:

- prepare questions (with an example of one of theirs)
- create a team
- present a quiz
- mark
- make a scorecard and what prizes to give!

So! Fancy setting up a new group? What are you waiting for???? Details on u3a.org/ subject advise or scan this QR code.



By the way, our u3a enters a team of four once a month for a national u3a quiz held on zoom. It's hosted by Ayr u3a and started as a distraction from lockdown.

Still going strong. Each round has 10 questions and breakout rooms are used so each team can deliberate on the answers before sending the answer sheet back to the quiz master electronically. A unique experience, just like the real thing but without anyone to buy the next round.

The name of our team? The Baht'at of course! JB

Word-Cross. Crossword?

Have you ever thought about the history of a crossword puzzle, when you're doing one? We sit down to enjoy our various games, but how often do we question how they got invented? Or by whom? Or when?

Well, the very first crossword was published in 1913 in the USA Sunday newspaper called the 'New York World.' Arthur Wynne, the creator was born and raised in England, but only invented them after he'd moved to the USA.

Initially, these puzzles were called Word-Cross and were diamond shaped and contained no internal black squares. Within a decade, crossword puzzles were featured in almost all American newspapers.

Reading for Fun in Otley

My u3a group is Reading for Fun in Otley and it has an ever-increasing number of members, currently 22. We don't have a waiting list. We meet every third Wednesday at 2pm at the Otley Partnership room on Mercury Row. (Blue door at the bus station end, next to the barbers.)

Members pay £5 up front for three months, which covers the room rental as well as hot drinks. We have between 10 and 12 members attending every month and the group chooses what we read. Every now and then, we each read a book of our own choice and return the following month to 'sell it' to the group. The only thing we don't usually read is non-fiction although we have just read our first autobiography!

I would recommend a novel by Jean Auel, called 'Clan of the Cave Bears'. It was a book everyone enjoyed and a great discussion followed.

If you're interested in joining us, contact me. Look for Reading for Fun in Otley on the u3a website under Groupst.

Steph Lee, Group Leader

British puzzles quickly developed their own style and in particular, the cryptic crossword became established and rapidly gained popularity.

DID YOU KNOW? That the Third Age Trust (TAT) runs u3a Online Learning Events and of the many subjects covered, has been one on Cryptic Crosswords. Look on our website for this and other events hosted via Zoom.

We are lucky enough to have a Crosswords Compiling Group here at Ilkley & District u3a. In May 2022 there were more than 121 u3a crossword groups in the UK!

If you've missed seeing the crossword in this issue, please let us know by writing to editor@ilkleyu3a.org JB

u3a Ukulele Group – Guppies (Grove Ukulele Players)

'How many more songs are there to go?', the event organiser blurted out rudely in the middle of our performance; she had clearly had enough. This was a rare low point for the u3a Grove Ukulele Players. But we raised £50 for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance and managed to laugh about it.

Five days later, we did another concert (with fewer songs) and got our usual warm response. One member of the



Singing for Pleasure!

I had been looking for a choir for years. First, I joined a Can't Sing Choir but the musical director decided we could actually sing and entered us into a festival to sing Zadok the Priest. The choir folded! People who think they can't sing don't feel up to festivals or Handel. Then I joined a Rock Choir and I realised I don't actually like much rock music.

But when I retired, I discovered the u3a Singing for Pleasure (SfP) group. And what a pleasure it is! Great musical director, excellent accompanist and lovely people plus a cup of tea and biscuit at the break. Most importantly however, the music! I have really expanded my musical repertoire – John Rutter (love him), John Taverner (ditto), classical church music, madrigals and more – all quite new to me.

Circumstances, just for now, mean I've had to give up SfP but it's a lovely, lovely choir. Come and join them!

They meet on Tuesdays, weekly 10am to noon at St John's Church Hall in Ben Rhydding. [CM](#)

audience, who had dementia, used to play the ukulele and he was moved to tears (in a good way). Other concerts have included Audley Clevedon in Ben Rhydding, u3a events at Clarke Foley and a concert in a member's drive for Ilkley Live in the summer. For the audience, understanding the plinky plonky nature of the instrument is important – it's a rhythm instrument – and singing along is always encouraged. But, for me, it's the obvious enjoyment and collegiality of the group that carries each performance.

It seems there's no limit to the songs that can be adapted for the humble ukulele. Being of a certain age, the Guppies prefer songs from the 1950s, '60s and '70s although we have introduced some more modern songs. The group started

Stringed instruments made easy... with Lee Wellbrook

Imagine a January Saturday morning, icy and freezing and you get up early to go to the Clarke Foley Centre for 10am to listen to a speaker who was standing in at the last minute for a cancellation. You would do this if you'd heard him speak before, because this is Lee Wellbrook.

Husband of Jacqui, our recently elected new Chair at Ilkley & District u3a, they came up from Thanet last year and, I think it has to be said, they are a superb addition to Yorkshire!

I'd heard Lee speak at an Art Appreciation group meeting last November on The Art of the Album Cover. It was riveting, interesting and delivered so many little-known facts



in September 2021 and now has about 20 members (both men and women – helpful for the harmonies) and our enthusiasm and team spirit can't be matched. Over the last year or so we have become a very strong social group. Isn't that a key part of what the u3a is all about?

No previous musical experience, music theory or audition is necessary to join the group but we certainly have stronger players who lift us. Our group leader, Jeannie, tells us that learning to play the ukulele has been a highlight of her retirement that she wants to share that with others. Her passion for the instrument is another key part of the group's success.

Watch out for our concerts in 2023 and don't forget to sing along. No knowledge of George Formby required.

[Diane Preston](#)



about the history of album covers and how art was used on album covers and by whom and how, that we all went home the better for having listened to him!

This particular morning was no exception. When you hear someone like him speak about a passion of theirs, the enthusiasm is palpable. A self-taught ▶

u3a in a spin – what next?

Ilkley & District u3a has made an exciting start to the year with a ground breaking partnership scheme to benefit members' physical health and wellbeing. This cooperation with one of the jewels of the locality, Ilkley Lawn Tennis & Squash Club (ILTSC), could lead to similar arrangements over the whole country. Early results for these pioneering arrangements are looking extremely positive,

Longstanding u3a stalwart, trustee

Peter Mate, came up with an idea to benefit both u3a members and ILTSC. u3a members could use the club at certain times to improve their health and wellbeing by attending tailor-made activities. The club would benefit from extra income when its facilities were otherwise underutilised.

ILTSC decided to offer specially planned sessions during their downtimes. Tailored activities would



u3a Spin Class. Peter Mate u3a organiser (left) and Gareth the Instructor (right)

take place under the eye of their fitness professionals in studios. This would be organised and coordinated by another u3a legend, trustee Neil Stevens.

The outcome was the u3a Fitness Hub offering three different Pilates groups, a Silver Spin studio session and a Move

Health matters in later life!

I never knew just how much subject advice there is on the Third Age Trust (TAT) website. It was a bit like looking up a word in the dictionary... one thing kept leading to another. Fascinating! There's a lot of work been done by u3a members to help others who want to set up a new group, whatever it may be. TAT have a network of over 70 national subject advisers who write about their 'specialist subject' and suggest how to set up a similar group in other u3a branches.

One item I came across was 'Health Matters', written by Dr Richard Franklin, which you can find by scanning this QR code.



We don't currently have a Health and Wellbeing group in Ilkley & District u3a. If you're interested in setting one up, please contact the new groups' co-ordinator using the QR code below.

Dr Franklin writes about the pressures on our National Health Service, which have never been greater than they are now. He outlines how, as a consequence, there is a growing need for us all to take some responsibility for our own health. Raising health awareness is therefore particularly important now so we can better understand how to stay healthier for longer.

While people are living longer today, the period for which we remain in self-assessed 'good health' is only up to our mid-60s. Many factors influence our health as we age, some we can change and some we can't. But for those that we can, health awareness could be invaluable. So, this is a key objective of existing Health and Wellbeing Groups. Typically, these take the form of monthly meetings at which a wide range of health topics are discussed, often with a guest speaker.



(However, please note that it would be important at the outset to stress that the purpose of any such group is most definitely not to provide a forum for discussing personal medical problems. This would be entirely inappropriate and would put u3a in a compromising position.) JB



To suggest a new group on this or any other subject, scan this QR code and someone will be in touch to help and support the process. Or email newgroups@ilkleyu3a.org

▶ guitarist (with a pure maths degree, hence the ability to 'hear' patterns in music) who, as youngster realised that guitars meant girls, continued the interest in music and stringed instruments which would last all his life. The girls stopped when he met Jacqui.

Lee brought 8 instruments with him (all of which cost £5 he'd have us believe), but there are more at home. He started with the story of his acoustic guitar, which he designed and made by hand a few years ago. We learned how the sound coming from them varies with the different woods used. Whether it's American Walnut, European Spruce, Rosewood and so on, they all help to produce a unique noise. How the size matters depending on whether it's to be played in a pub... or a parlour. And so much more.

We were then shown Lee's instruments and listened as he played to us and unravelled the history of a brass and chrome Resonator, a DoBro, a beautiful 1982 Telecaster Fender, a Cigar Box guitar, an A-style mandolin, an Octave mandolin and a 6 stringed banjo. Wow!

Thank you Lee for sharing some of your guitars, telling us about the artists who played the different instruments, the different genres they were used for and for making it all come alive.

Contact lee.wellbrook@gmail.com for information on courses he runs both here at Ilkley and online for the Third Age Trust. JB

► Freely hour, appealing to different interests and levels of fitness.

The result was astonishing. Signing day saw lines of interested participants at the Tennis Club, many of them for the first time. Some people signed up on the day for a fee of £24 covering eight sessions. and 75 people enjoyed nibbles and drinks while they queued, and queue they did.

Neil Stevens and his helpers found themselves signing up a much greater number of people than expected. He and his wife joined classes and Neil has even been seen taking the register at some sessions. It is early days, but the classes are full. A quick poll of members revealed huge satisfaction. Pilates is an activity which is bound to have participants with different levels of fitness and experience. So, feedback on these classes differed but all said they liked it better each session, as they are varied and the leader responsive to the opinions of the participants.

Spin – high-level, high-speed cycling – was by its nature chosen by people who were fitter and perhaps younger than others. TV screens give cues for hills or flat cycling and music sets the pace. One person said she would have preferred not to have ‘pop music’ but was ridiculed by her daughter, approaching her 60s, who told her that was the way it was done these days.

Moving Freely is attended by the writer. Attendees are all keen to recover equilibrium and challenge their bodies with bending, moving and balancing, feeling they are improving each session.

The club, it’s reported, are delighted. Going forward, other classes may be added and many see this initiative as relevant across u3a.

‘We were stunned that the first sessions sold out and it shows a real need. There are so many of us in Ilkley & District u3a that we are a force to be reckoned with,’ said Peter Mate, ‘it’s a win/win situation.’

Janet Garland

A longer version of this article appears on our website. Search for Ilkley u3a / Group News / Media Reports or scan this QR code on a smart phone or Tablet.



Making everyone feel welcome

Disco Dancing and the Workhouse. Really?

For many of us who grew up in the 1960s and '70s, life revolved around pop music with 'Top of the Pops' on Thursday evening being essential viewing.

My first experience of disco dancing was at a primary school Christmas party when, after jelly and ice cream, some Beatles’ records were played. The only dancing I had any clue about was the Twist and despite being the



Otley Workhouse

only boy to get up onto the floor, I didn’t care – I was enjoying myself! At university, I discovered the real thing, with the pulsating beat, coloured lights, and freeform dancing that had become the norm.

Researching my family history, I discovered that my great-great-grandfather, Timothy, had died in the Birmingham workhouse. My interest in the subject grew after I discovered that many ex-workhouse



Ben Rhydding Scout hut becomes a perfect disco dance venue

How good does it feel to see a friendly face?

Have you ever walked into a room for the first time and been overwhelmed by a sea of faces, none of which are familiar? I guess this has happened to all of us from time to time. I’m sure we all agree that this is an off-putting and uncomfortable experience.

Move on now to your retirement, your decision to join u3a, your positive welcome to any groups you have joined, and maybe your attendance at one of

the Saturday morning talks held on the third Saturday of the month. How good did it feel to see a friendly welcoming smile from someone at the door? Or maybe someone introduced you to a couple of other members. If you have experienced this, you will have met one of our Welcoming and Engaging Team who are keen to help you enjoy your morning and to make new friends.

If you haven’t come to a Saturday talk yet, give it a try. Look out for one of our Welcomers, wearing a u3a lanyard and make yourself known to them. You might even decide to join the team!!

Jean Smith
Membership Secretary



Eileen, Lorelie and Bonnie serve the coffee at a u3a Saturday Talk



Barbara, Margaret and Brenda from the u3a Saturday Talk welcome team

► buildings still stood, such as the old Wharfedale Hospital in Otley and the former Raikeswood Hospital in Skipton. I could even go and see exactly where Timothy spent his final days. I eventually visited virtually every surviving workhouse in Britain, creating a large website on the subject and writing a number of books. I've also been invited on TV shows such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* To tell the likes of Mary Berry and Una Stubbs about their workhouse ancestors. Timothy would be amazed!

My pleasure in dancing of all sorts has never gone away and I realised I could start a u3a group for disco dancing. I canvassed for interest, found a venue, acquired a few disco lights, and loaded up a laptop full of tunes. We now have around sixteen members enjoying our fortnightly 'bop' and a cuppa.

So, what links the disco and the workhouse? I guess that's me! It's worth saying that workhouse inmates did have occasional entertainments provided especially at Christmas. Though dancing, sadly, was never on the menu

Peter Higginbotham

For more on Peter's work search for workhouses.org.uk

To find out more about our disco group search the internet for Ilkley & District u3a and look for the listing of groups.

A look at one of our largest interest groups

Northern Towns Group

As a 'newbie' to u3a, I attended a new members' meeting towards the end of 2012. Little did I know that the meeting was contrived to attract new groups and group leaders.

We were seated in groups of four with a trustee or experienced member joining each table. The trustee joining our table, Neil Stevens, politely asked what kind of groups we would like to see operating in u3a. After a short silence, Neil suggested that a group that visited northern towns might be of interest. Still gullible, I retorted, 'Oh, yes, I would be interested in that!' The die was cast and I left the room not sure what I had committed myself to.

Our first visit took eight of us to Skipton on the third Thursday of February 2013 travelling in an Ilkley Community mini bus. We took advantage of a local guide who showed us all the highlights of Skipton and included a visit to the castle. It was a bitterly cold day and as we posed for our group photo (which gave us all a blue tinge), we decided that we would limit our outdoor visits from March to October. Newly retired from primary school teaching, I found myself counting our group in and out of the café. Old habits die hard!

Since that first visit, we have visited many northern towns from Lancaster

to Hull, and from Hawes to Sheffield, plus many towns and villages in between. Our visits appeal to a wide range of interests and include history, architecture, geographical aspects and



Memories of a very wet visit to Wakefield

unique features linked to the town in question. It's so good to share one's own interests with like-minded people. Many of our members are new to the area and delight in finding out more about their new location.

We have been proud to boast over the years that it does not rain on the third Thursday of the month, which is when the Northern Towns Group meets up, but the weather man has seriously let us down this year. Participants will remember our visit to Bradford, and, oh my goodness, didn't we get a soaking in Wakefield? Despite it all, our stalwart members still smiled at the end of the day and agreed that they had had a most enjoyable time.

As we emerged from lockdown, we chose to visit our immediate area on half day visits to avoid coach travel and joining together as a large group for lunch. So, we found ourselves exploring Menston, Otley, Guiseley and so on. It was fascinating to discover the wealth of social and developmental history on our own doorsteps.

Food is always an important feature of our visits as exemplified by the 62 members who came to a pre-Christmas lunch at Otley Golf Club recently! ►

The University of the 3rd Age (u3a)

Join the u3a today,
A place to learn, somewhere to play.
It has no walls, no roof, no glass,
And no exams for you to pass.

Join a course and see it through,
Or leave it, if it's not for you.
There is so much on offer there,
You'll surely find something to share.

Led, not taught, join all the rest,
Those with a common interest.
For a modest annual fee,
Come inside, you can be free.

Push loneliness into the past,
Here, your opportunities are vast.
Lots of new friends you can make,
Share with them – have tea, and cake!
Learn something new, or something old,
Leave the house, time to be bold.

Old dogs *can* be taught new tricks,
So stop hiding behind the bricks.
You'll find subjects without measure,
Surely one will be a treasure.

And if *your* favourite isn't listed,
Then tell someone, why not suggest it?
We're always open to a new thought,
Don't be shy, and don't feel fraught.

You'd be surprised what people choose,
It's all win-win; you cannot lose.
Subtle prizes here, no limit,
But to win, you must be in it.

So come and join us, now, today,
Make your choice the u3a.

Denise Gaines Marsden

► From humble beginnings (and most of our founder members are still part of the group), we now have 110 members on our list and are determined that no one shall be turned away, but I have to admit that it's quite a relief that not everyone chooses to attend every visit.

For members considering starting a new interest group, GO FOR IT! I think the secret to its organisation is to delegate. Our group has a core of key organisers: Bonnie for transport, Mike for keeping our accounts on the straight and narrow and John for the tour guide system and endless sound advice. In addition, we have wonderful, friendly and dedicated members who are always ready to lend a hand where needed.

...And Neil... yes, I have forgiven you for putting me on the spot!

Jean Smith



A very substantial buffet meal at Wakefield

Railway enthusiasts learn about 'fly on the wall' documentary

Over 70 members and friends of the u3a railway group attended a fascinating presentation by Paul Middleton, Director of Mechanical Engineering at North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Paul joined the NYMR as an apprentice and is known to most as 'Piglet' from the Channel Five 'fly on the wall' TV series 'The Yorkshire Steam Railway.'

The invitation to visit Ilkley came during a visit to the locomotive sheds by the railway group during the summer.

Suspicions that these 'fly on the wall' documentaries make the most of everyday incidents were confirmed but it does make for good TV. The public clearly approve because three seasons have been completed and the benefits of major TV coverage for the heritage railway is immense.

Everyday challenges of running an 18 mile railway that also uses BR tracks to reach Whitby were of particular interest to the group.

Members all remembered the instruction not to use the toilet while the train is standing in the station. Without going into detail, that is how train carriage toilets of the 1950s operated. So a recent project was to retrofit waste tanks to all 45 carriages that run on the railway. And, of course,



installing a method of emptying them hygienically.

Paul also explained that the railway uses 2.5 tonnes of coal per day and that the Motive Power Depot based in Grosmont maintains 10 operational steam locomotives, 4 steam locomotives under restoration and has 30 full time staff with a further 100 volunteers.

The u3a Railway Group meets fortnightly on a Tuesday afternoon in the Clarke Foley centre from October through to Easter and arranges various visits of interest during the summer months. To express interest in joining this thriving group, look for the group details on the Ilkley & District u3a website.

What's in a name? Burh, Burg, Borough?

The Northern Towns Group visited a very wet (say **torrential**) Wakefield in late October, where we had the great pleasure of a conducted tour of Westgate by Kevin Trickett MBE. What Kevin doesn't



Kevin Trickett MBE

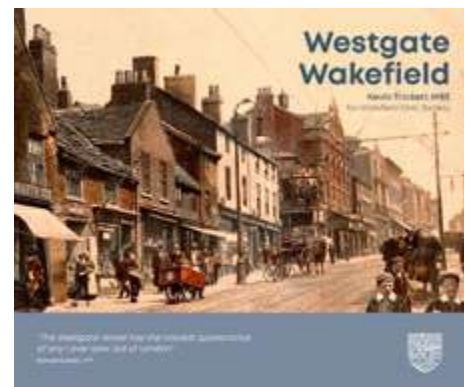
know about Wakefield isn't worth mentioning and his passion for it is catching!

The tour was based on his recent publication 'Westgate, Wakefield' and

started with a talk about its origins. We were quite taken with the word Burhs or Burgs, which started as military fortresses to accommodate armies but also acted as places of refuge where the local populace could take shelter in the event of an attack.

The word borough derives from this Old English word and appears as modern English bury, -brough, Scots burgh, borg in Scandinavian languages, Burg in German.

The burg element, which means 'castle' or 'fortress', is often confused with berg meaning 'hill' or 'mountain' (e.g. iceberg, inselberg). Hence the berg element in Bergen or Heidelberg relates to a hill, rather than a fort. In some



cases, the berg element in place names has converged towards burg/borough; for instance Farnborough, from fernaberga (fern-hill).

There will be lots of names you'll no doubt now be pondering... Scarborough, Middlesborough et al! JB

Find out more about u3a in Ilkley & District

Visit our website by searching the Internet for Ilkley u3a or scan this QR Code.



Follow us on Facebook or Twitter. Links on our website.

Email us at info@ilkleyu3a.org

Visit us when we hold our regular drop-in sessions on the first and third Friday mornings of most months from 10.30am to 12 noon at the Clarke Foley Centre, Cunliffe Road, Ilkley LS29 9DZ. We are also at The Otley Core, Orchardgate, Otley, LS21 3NX four or five times a year. Details on our website.

How we are organised The u3a is all about members and activities. No-one gets paid for being a group leader, or a trustee or helping prepare refreshments for activities. Without members contributing in this way, our u3a would not function, would not exist.

We don't all want to stand up in front of an audience and give talks! But there are so many ways YOU could help! Every offer helps to keep our u3a alive and able to provide so much to everyone.

Spare time on your hands? Want to socialise with those who share your interests and hobbies or maybe embrace lifelong learning? Join us. Over 1,800 members can't all be wrong!

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The digital edition of The Eye is available courtesy of the website team who do an amazing job of keeping everyone informed of the latest news on everything related to u3a.

Finally thanks to Bettys for kind permission to use their images in the promotion of the prize draw.

Win afternoon tea at Bettys on The Grove in Ilkley

The publication of this magazine is scheduled to coincide with the Coronation of King Charles III. To help celebrate, readers of The Eye have the opportunity to enter a draw to win an afternoon tea for two at Bettys on The Grove in Ilkley. There will also be two runners up prizes of a £20 gift voucher to spend on anything you wish at this famous tea room.

To enter online: Scan this QR code on a smart phone or tablet to enter by the closing date Tuesday 31st October 2023. Alternatively use internet search for Ilkley & District u3a magazine.



To enter by post: Fill in and clip the coupon below then mail to u3a c/o Clarke Foley Community Centre, Cunliffe Road, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 9DZ to arrive by closing date Tuesday 31st October 2023.



The winner will be drawn shortly after the closing date and contacted via the details provided on their entry form. One entry per person. Open to anyone over 18 except officers of u3a and members of The Eye publishing committee.



Your Name

Contact 'phone number

Email address

Postcode

Are you a member of u3a YES/NO

If yes, which branch

Did you read The Eye on screen, in print or both

How did you know about The Eye

Any comments to make about this issue