

WAKEFIELD & DISTRICT u3a NEWSLETTER

September 2026

Notes From The Chair

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who attended Brook House on Monday 14th September and renewed their membership. Welcome to all those who became new members and I hope you are enjoying our u3a. It is a huge help to our group coordinators and our treasurer Michael Manders if we can have it done on the same day. If you have not yet paid your membership, please do so as soon as possible. You can pay online, all the information is on the website. You can renew your membership at a coffee morning on the third Friday of every month. When you next attend your group you can give the money and form to the Group Coordinator.

There are now 4 groups running at The Grange: Craft and Chat, Creative Writing, Guitar for Beginners and History. We have been made very welcome at The Grange thanks to Dean Smith CEO, Hayley Pennock and Ella Gibbs. Over the course of time more groups will be established at The Grange and we hope for a long and mutually beneficial relationship. Thank you to Janet Andrews, Gerard Caygill, Barbara Morris and Roz Scott for being our pioneer group coordinators at The Grange.

The growth of Wakefield and District u3a over the past 2 years has been nothing short of remarkable! While other u3a's around the country are complaining about loss of membership and difficulty finding committee members we are going from strength to strength. The support of our members has been our motivation. A hard-working committee has enabled our u3a to develop new groups, operate a working up to date website and Facebook page. All our groups now have a member of the committee who acts as their liaison to bring the committee and groups closer together. Thanks to the events team led by Susan Sutcliffe for ever more interesting trips and events. I'm looking forward to the wine tasting next month!

We must not however become complacent! As our membership increases there is still a pressing need for new Group coordinators, committee members and members to carry out non committee roles like Jill Booth who is our photographer and Hilary Fowler who helps set up new groups and guides new group coordinators. If anyone is interested in any of these roles please contact me at rugbyplant@hotmail.com or speak to me at a coffee morning.

Sunday 4th October is Silver Sunday at The Ridings. This our opportunity to get our message out to the public. Many other organisations will be at The Ridings on the day. We will have a stand on the day and would like to have some volunteers who could spare an hour or two to help man the stand and talk to any prospective new members. Please contact either myself on the mail displayed above or any member of the committee

On Tuesday 13th October we are hosting, for the first time, the South Yorkshire Network meeting. We will be meeting with Barnsley, Doncaster, Dronfield, Rotherham and Sheffield. It gives us an opportunity to raise with other u3a's in our region any problems or concerns and to share best practice. These concerns are then taken by our regional representatives to the next u3a council meeting.

Friday 27th November is the next group coordinators meeting at Brook House commencing at 10.00am. Tea, coffee, and bacon or vegetarian rolls will be provided. Please mark this in your calendar and be there. If anyone has any ideas for a new group please let me have them in advance. Similarly if there is anything you would like on the agenda. Please bring along your admin assistant as well. Anyone even thinking about becoming a group coordinator is very welcome to come along.

Paul Scott (Chair)

History Group

September saw the first meeting of the new history group at The Grange in Pontefract. It was great to meet the 23 people who turned up for the introductory meeting and a second meeting is planned for Wednesday 14 October.

At our Wakefield meeting this month we looked at the lives and legacies of Florence Nightingale & Mary Seacole. They were both pioneering women who provided vital care to soldiers during the Crimean War, but they came from very different backgrounds.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was born in Italy to a wealthy upper-middle-class British family. She received a high-level education and was appointed by the British government to superintend a team of official nurses at the military hospital in Scutari. She focused heavily on sanitary reform, ventilation, and cleanliness, drastically lowering the hospital's death rate. She is remembered as the "Lady with the Lamp" and the founder of modern professional nursing.

Mary Seacole (1805–1881) was born in Jamaica with a Jamaican mother and a Scottish soldier father. She learned traditional healing and herbal medicine from her mother. She offered her services to the British War Office as a nurse but was rejected. She funded her own journey to the Crimea, where she established the British Hotel near Balaclava to provide food, shelter, and comfort to recovering

soldiers, while also offering battlefield aid. Despite fame and high regard from soldiers and royalty in the 1850s, Mary Seacole died destitute in London in 1881 and faded from public memory for nearly a century due to racial and gender prejudices. She has been recognised more recently, being voted the Greatest



Black Briton in 2004.

Also, some of our members attended a theatre production of The 5 mistakes in History, the acclaimed storytelling show that highlighted human errors that changed global history...

For more information on either the Wakefield or Pontefract History Groups contact: babsamorris@gmail.com

Theatre Group

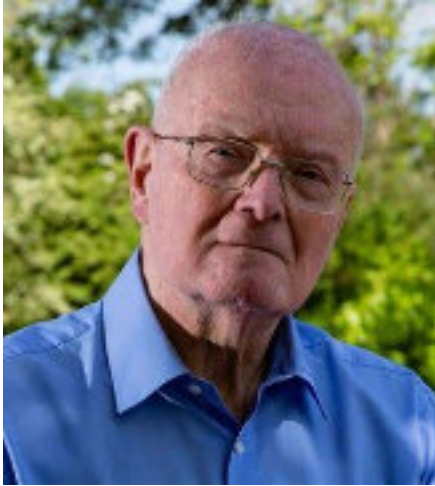
Members of the Theatre Group attended 2 shows in September. We travelled back in time to the 1960's and sang and danced to The Mersey Beatles and also saw Blackadder Goes Forth, set during the First World War. The show follows Captain Edmund Blackadder, Lieutenant George, and Private Baldrick trapped in the trenches as they try to escape going over the top for the inevitable "big push"

For more information on the Theatre Group contact: babsamorris@gmail.com

Coffee Morning

We love seeing our members at our monthly social coffee morning at Brook House, Barnsley Road on the third Friday in the month. Doors open at 10.00 a.m. We charge £2 per person which includes refreshments. Come along to meet old friends and make new ones.

On Friday 18 September we welcomed Bernard Lockett as our guest speaker. He is a lifelong enthusiast and authority on W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan,



serving as a Trustee for the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival and working with the National Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company. He provided an interesting and enjoyable talk despite our technical problems which we apologise for and hope did not spoil our members' enjoyment of this event.

Our next coffee morning is on Friday 16 October when our speaker is Catherine Taggart with a talk entitled Do Crocodiles Really Cry.....

For more information on the coffee morning contact:

babsamorris@gmail.com

Barbara Morris

Social Events

A super day out at West Yorkshire Police Training Centre at Carr Gate for 23 u3a members on 12th September.

Certainly a date to be repeated Mrs Sutcliffe.



We had chance to be fingerprinted to make a key ring keepsake at the CSI demo, met the horses and grooms from the Mounted Division, visited the Casualty Prevention Van to see what speeds we get photographed at and saw the dogs and handlers in pursuit of a villain, and the tactical team all armoured up with the Dog Support Unit.

We observed the drones used to help find another villain and the arms unit take him down, visited the Control Room for a “live” 999 call which we had to answer and had a chance to sit inside the helicopter and understand their roles in the air.

The visit culminated in a fantastic display of a Police Chase using a Stinger and 3 Police cars boxing the car in with the Road Policing Unit - which some of us had chance to participate in including doing a “wheelie” now known as a ‘J Turn’ - not sure if I’ve recovered from it!

A fantastic entertaining day showing our local Police Force in a positive way in difficult times, also showing a good display of young cadets and volunteer cadets and PCSO’s.

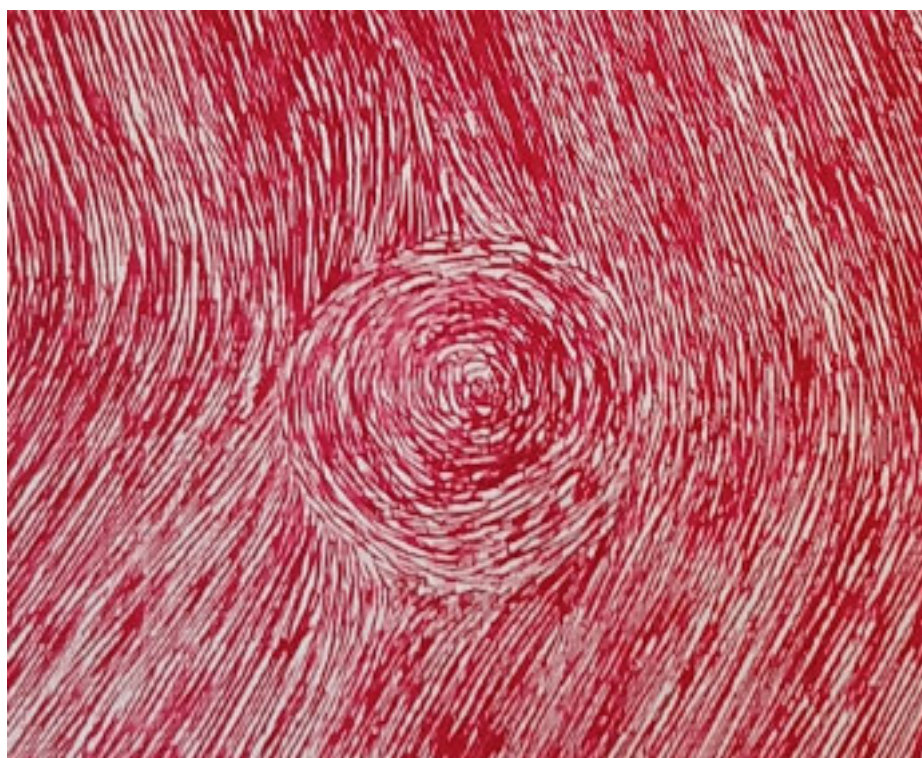
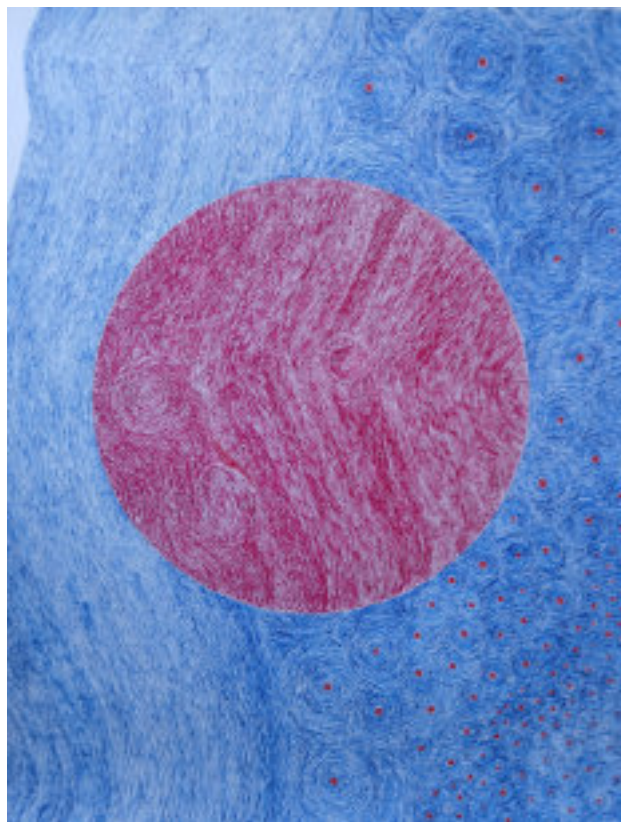
Jill Booth

Wednesday Art Group

A big Thank You to Alison, who has decided after 19 years of looking after us all, providing biscuits, apples from her tree, advice, and inviting us to her home for a coffee and cakes at the end of every year, and much more, that it is time she stepped back and found time to do some painting herself. I think we did manage to take her by surprise with these small gestures of our appreciation – she’ll be a hard act to follow!



Our pictures this month are from Gwil, we think it's impressionist, or maybe abstract, but anyway, he enjoyed doing it, which is the main object of our group. These show the journey, and also the detail in this. For want of a proper name, we've named it 'Planets' as I thought it looked like them. Well done Gwil!



Kathy Genn

Table tennis group

The Thursday table tennis group had a cake and coffee event supporting the Macmillan Cancer appeal at the last meeting of the month. With home made cakes and a raffle the group raised £118 in their tea break whilst playing table tennis.

Organiser Sheila Moorhouse said everyone was so kind and generous with help and generous donations for the raffle was all good fun in aid of a very good cause.



Picture shows Lynne, Linda, Anne and Bets after helping tidy up.

Nigel Smith

Recorder Group

The Recorder Group will soon be playing a lunchtime concert at Wakefield Cathedral. This will take place on Tuesday the 20th October 2026. The concert begins at 1,00 and lasts for 45mins.

The Cathedral is a wonderful building in which to perform music and we are lucky to have this, our second, opportunity to play to a Wakefield audience.

The concert is part of the ongoing weekly lunchtime series of concerts organised by the Cathedral. These concerts are free to attend, so if you are in

Wakefield on the 20th October do come along and lend us and the Cathedral your support.

David Johnson

Walking Group

On Tuesday 8th September the group met outside the Carr Gate Garden Centre on the old Bradford Road for a walk to and around Lofthouse Colliery Nature Park. This walk was led by Julie and Allen, thank you.

From The Garden Centre we took a path across fields to Lawns Lane and turned left. This leads to Castle Head Lane and after turning right onto Lingwell Nook Lane the nature park was reached and we turned left. Lingwell Nook Lane skirts around the nature park and after passing Lofthouse Pond the corner of a housing development is reached. Turning right and passing a playing field and then turning left at the path junction and climbing some steps Lingwell Gate Lane was reached. Here we turned right crossing the railway line and then left into Grand Stand Road. Crossing Kenmore Road and following Grand Stand Road again the junction with Lawns Lane is reached. Now we turned right and after about 50 yards turned left onto a path which took us across the M1 Motorway. The field path brought us out near to The Bay Horse pub on the Bradford Road. Turning left and walking along the road we crossed over the M1 again at the road junction. From here a path skirts around the Garden Centre and we returned to our starting point.



Walking Cricket

It was the final outing on Tuesday 15th September at our Summer Venue at Thornes CC - where we've had a superb few months playing outside at a great location where we've been received warmly and made welcome. After playing the morning matches we were treated to a marvellous finale Buffet by the staff enjoyed by us all.

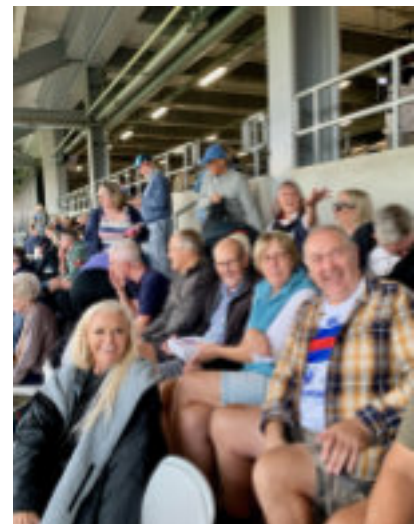
Can we give a big thanks to Anne & Chris Parkes for all their organisation, help and support and coaching throughout the year.

Also to everyone who assists the smooth running of the group by setting out pitches, scoring, umpiring, making drinks and washing up also the laundering of our vests and to Ron for transporting folks and equipment 🙏

Tuesdays will find us at our indoor venue at Back of the Net at Flanshaw -



On Thursday 24th September having received complimentary tickets from Yorkshire Cricket Foundation (many thanks) a dozen of us Cricket fans went to see an excellent match at Headingley featuring Sri Lanka v England in a



One Day International.

A great day out for us all with brilliant weather - sorry we lost by 16 runs.

Jill Booth

Music Appreciation Group

Another session listening to members' varied selections of music old and new. We each bring a piece of music (CD, usb stick or phone/bluetooth) with the only stipulation being that it is short enough for us all to have a turn. This month's music included:

Dido: White Flag

Nick Magnus: Headcase

Iron Butterfly: Easy Rider (Let the Wind Pay the way)

Ella Fitzgerald: Every Time We Say Goodbye

Jakatta: One Fine Day (Feat. Beth Hirsch)

The Byrds: Wild Mountain Thyme

Liz Jones & Broken Windows: The Ride

Betty Everett: It's In His Kiss

Pat Metheny: Electric Counterpoint (Slow)

Paul Carrack: You've Got A Friend

Bob Dylan: Forever Young

Albéniz: Suite Española No. 1: Asturias (arr. guitar), Sharon Isbin

J S Bach: Orchestral Suite No2 in B Minor, Badinerie

Hugh Laurie: Tipitina

The Ad Libs: The Boy From New York City

The Music Appreciation Group meets on the third Monday of the month above Walton Community Library



Demystifying AI

The Group met for their first meeting on the 15th September 2026.

We met at the Ossett Library. Although the room was open as an open reference resource, we didn't get any interruptions – just one small child very excited to be in the library.

There were just seven of us. The Group consisted of some members with no experience of AI at all and some that had more experience. This made for a great exchange of ideas. Things that had been tried and achieved mixed results and some members raised real concerns about the security of personal information.

As Group Coordinator I really enjoyed the meeting – not pretending to be an expert – but I learned a lot as well. Exactly what u3a is all about.

The room at Ossett Library is a nice size, but as it says in the Groups listing, a maximum of 10 at the meetings is appropriate.

This means there is still space for more members to join the Group.

Next meeting 29th September 2026 – note we have agreed different times, the meeting will now be starting at 2:15 and finishing at 3:45. In Ossett, this helps with parking.

John Rouse

Stuff

A lifetime of stuff

Dusty and clumsy

How did things get to this stage?

One day at a time

Big days and low days

Together days

And lonely days

Busy days

And lonely days

Add stuff

Keep stuff

At the end it is stuff

Some stuff is meaningless

Some stuff is full of meaning

Some sharing stuff

Some private stuff

Is the stuff life enhancing?

Is the stuff life declining?

Is this stuff a legacy?

What of this stuff after I am not here?

Will my stuff be cared for?

Or will my stuff be buried in a different hole?

Stuff was my important life's bits

Anon.

More Debates in 20th Century History

This group has got off to a flying start in its new venue, which has turned out to be very suitable, apart from a slight issue with parking. We're all looking forward to a stimulating and interesting series.

Ukulele group

David Broadbent is planning to run another beginners' ukulele group in the new year. It is intended again to be at Brook House at the same time, 1.00-2.30 on Fridays. People with a little experience would also be welcome. Look out for further information in future newsletters.

Quiz group

Stephen Flicker (who runs the Thursday pickleball group) is exploring setting up a quiz group, which will be on Mondays from 9.00-11.00.

Rotary Crocus Planting – October 2026 (Community Event)

u3a member Stephen Flicker says: "As a way of raising awareness of the End Polio campaign, Rotary International will be planting crocus corms around the

country. My club, The Rotary Club of Normanton, have funded 8,000 crocus corms to be planted around Normanton, Sharlston, Featherstone, Castleford, Crofton and Walton.”

Hilary Fowler

And Finally

A big thank you to everyone who has taken the time to send in articles for the Newsletter. It's good to see how our members are enjoying their Groups, and the outings arranged by Susan, that visit to West Yorkshire Police sounds as if it was brilliant!

Remember if you have time to try to get to the Silver Sunday Event at the Ridings on Sunday 4th October, to support our own organisation, and see what other organisations are doing in our area.

Once again, apologies if I have omitted anything, and I look forward to receiving your articles for the October issue, which I hope will have a Halloween feel, so send in your ghoulish entries!

Take Care

Kathy

