WAKEFIELD & DISTRICT u3a

October 2026



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Happy Halloween to all our readers!! Enjoy trick or treating with your grandchildren – a good English tradition!! With the parents' permission if you have any general photographs of the evening please share them so we can show the world we are just quite "normal" people!

If you have any business with Michael Manders, our treasurer, please arrive early before members are arriving or wait until the talk has started then members are not delayed in getting into the coffee morning and it prevents a queue forming. Thank you for your cooperation.

Friday 27th November at Brookhouse commencing at 10.00am is the first of this years Group Coordinators meetings. I would urge as many Coordinators as possible to attend. Would you also kindly bring any member of your group who is helping with the administration or with the finances. Please let me know if you are

going to be attending. If you have anything that you would like to discuss or you have a question please contact me on

rugbyplant@hotmail.com.

Any member who thinks they might want to find out about being a group Coordinator is welcome. Just inform me on the e-mail address above.

The Grange now has four groups running successfully with nearly 50 new members attending. I want to find out if there is enough interest in having a monthly coffee morning at The Grange. It would be on the same basis as the monthly coffee morning at Brookhouse, coffee tea and biscuits then a speaker. Please let me know if you would be interested.

Thank you to the Events Team who are working hard to organise interesting events and outings. Please support Susan and her team by taking part in the events organised.

If you have not yet renewed your membership and intend to do so, will you please rejoin at your earliest opportunity.

Thank you to all our members and Group Coordinators for continued support and hard work.



Paul Scott

Chair

Emergency Contact Details

When you recently renewed your membership you should have received a new membership card for 2026/27. Please remember to complete your emergency contact details on the card and carry your card with you (in an accessible place) at every group meeting you attend, the monthly coffee morning and any u3a social event. We hope it will never need to be used 🤞

History Groups



The November history groups will be held at The Grange, Pontefract on Wednesday 11 November at 2 p.m. and at Sandal Methodist Church Hall, Barnsley Road, Wakefield on Thursday 19 November at 2 p.m. The subject will be the The Gunpowder Plot.

New members welcome - please contact Barbara Morris - babsamorris@gmail.com

Coffee Morning



Our next monthly coffee morning will be on Friday 20 November at Brook House, Barnsley Road, Wakefield when our speaker will be Pete Mellor and the talk is about The Assassination of President Kennedy. An event we will all remember.

Doors open at 10.00 a.m. and there is a £2 per person charge at the door which includes refreshments.



Barbara Morris

Sing n Strum

Sing n Strum have been asked if we could do some Christmas singing (carols and traditional songs) outside Twine (a pretty new shop that's opened on Ropergate in Pontefract) to entertain, and maybe attract, customers. We've accepted ... 👍 👍 👍

Rex

Wednesday Luncheon Group

The Wednesday luncheon group has re-started at Gaskells, as of this coming week. October, the 14th.

However, November, the 11th. and January, the 20th. are available as I have space for anyone interested. Please contact David Jones in the first instance. As I have 16 places available, with 2 tables of 8 for 12 noon on those Wednesdays.

The December, 16th. Xmas lunch is fully booked with 12 members having paid their deposit.

February half term conflicts with other plans. So March, April and May have yet to be organised and is usually booked ahead in January.

David Jones



Pontefract Craft and Chat



We now have a successful Craft & Chat group meeting on a Monday afternoon from 1.30-3.30pm at The Grange on Carleton Road. After a few hiccups with arrangements for furniture and refreshments, we have a full complement of 15 ladies plus me. Lots of crafting from handbag making, embroidery, patchwork, knitting, to newbie crocheters. Lots of laughter and happy chatting.

A really great group of ladies !

Roz Scott

U3a Walking Group

On Tuesday 13th October the group met at the Asda car park in Wakefield. This walk was led by Elizabeth and Joe. Thank you.

Leaving the car park from a point near to the place where the Asda vans load up we followed a path that took us to the south side of Pugneys Country Park. Turning left we walked around the lake past the café (photo) and down to the other end of the lake where we walked along the side of the river Calder (photo). Doing a u turn before we reached the Denby Dale Road we followed the paths and across a bridge over a stream to walk up the hill at the side of the edge of the Portobello estate. Turning left along Milnthorpe lane, followed by Castle Road (photo) and Manygates Lane we arrived at Sandal Castle. After passing the café on our left there is a footpath over a stile where we descended to Milnthorpe Lane. A short walk to the right and then left onto Sandal Pugneys (photo) brought us to a T junction. Here we turned left to follow a path which ends at the Aldi supermarket.









Simon Jenkins

Recorder Group

The Recorder Group gave a concert on Tuesday 20th October at Wakefield Cathedral as part of their ongoing Tuesday lunchtime concert series.

The music played ranged from Irish and Scottish folk melodies to Elizabethan madrigals, a Baroque Trumpet Sonata to Waltzing Matilda and Dance Macabre (a tone poem describing the devil playing a violin to entice skeletons from their grave to dance until dawn) - very fitting for the up-coming All Hallows Eve.



The audience sang along to Waltzing Matilda and clapped along to our encore of the Can-Can. All in all, a most enjoyable concert.

The next concert is a joint Christmas concert with our excellent Wind band at 1.30 on Friday 18th December at Manygates Music Centre.

£5 a ticket, refreshments, a raffle and wonderful music to get you into the Christmas Spirit.

David Johnson





New Groups

Monday Morning Quiz - Wakefield & District

The group will run fortnightly, first session on 23rd November from 10 am to 12 noon
Chesney's, Regent Street, Featherstone, WF7 5EW
You're invited to our first Wakefield and District u3a Monday Morning Quiz

- Warm welcome
- Music Quiz
- General Knowledge Quiz
- Half-time Puzzle
- Pictures and Voices Quiz
- Bingo Quiz
- Feedback to help with future possible quizzes



Hot drinks available to purchase or bring your own drink in a safe flask
Come along to give it a go. Email Stephen Flicker on sflicker111@gmail.com or contact him via the email enquiry form on the website https://wakefield-and-district.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/monday-morning-quiz/

Ukulele group

A reminder that David Broadbent is planning to run another beginners' ukulele group in the new year. It is intended again to be at the Brookhouse at the same time, 1.00-2.30 on Fridays. People with a little experience would also be welcome. Get in touch either with David on david_broadbent@btinternet.com or me, on fowler_hilary@hotmail.com.
Hilary Fowler

Rotary Crocus Planting – October 2026 (Community Event)

A reminder about the crocus planting. The first session was on 24 October, but there will still be a number of further sessions. Get in touch with Stephen Flicker on sflicker111@gmail.com if you're in a position to help out.
As a way of raising awareness of the End Polio campaign, Rotary International will be planting crocus corms around the country. The Rotary Club of Normanton, have funded 8,000 crocus corms to be planted around Normanton, Sharlston, Featherstone, Castleford, Crofton and Walton."

Hilary Fowler



Member News

I'm a member of the Sing and Strum group which I absolutely love.

I make Christmas wreaths for a hobby, and I've been invited to take part in Nostell Priory's Christmas Fair on the 7th & 8th of November - I will be exhibiting most of my wreaths and hopefully selling a few too. I'm not a business just a local Hobbyist. I began making the wreaths as my own bit of Occupational Therapy after I lost my wonderful Dad to Oesophageal & Renal cancer- I looked after Dad for the last 3 yrs of his life; he also had Dementia, 💔I had Dad move in with me which was fabulous - Dad was and will always be my hero. It was Elsie Orr who told me about U3A. Elsie has been a member for years and has joined many of the groups that U3A have to offer. Elsie is currently part of the Ukulele group, she's a very accomplished musician and artist.

I am so flattered to have beaten the competition and secured a place at the prestigious venue that is Nostell Priory. About 30 plus years ago I had my very first Craft stall at Nostell Priory and my Dad loved helping me to make my then products and setting up the craft stall/s that were to follow. He always had a great enthusiasm for life and was extremely proud of everything and anything that I did as only your parents are (if you're lucky like I was to have had lovely, supportive parents - who are obviously biased too 😊) .

The above is a tiny glimpse into my current situation.

Please see below a couple of my Christmas wreaths. I don't make the wreaths for a profit, I'm hoping they'll become a self-funding hobby.Thank you for taking the time to read the above - I appreciate it's a bit long winded.

Sorry about that and for dropping the 'C' bomb - Christmas! Elsie has been such a great support to me throughout life and especially during these past few months, the early stages of the grieving process. She's been just like a mum to me - My Surrogate Mum and the friends that I have made in the Sing and Strum group- you couldn't wish to meet a more supportive, fun loving, talented bunch of people.





Dee Thompson

Music Appreciation

A few technical problems affected our listening this month as our equipment seemed to take a dislike to some CDs and also refused some bluetooth connections, however we took the Advice of The IT Crowd and turned it off and on again which resolved some of the issues!

Music brought by our members included: -

Tony Joe White: Rainy Night In Georgia
Santana: Black Magic Woman
Shostakovich: Suite for Jazz Orchestra No.2 Walz
The Beatles: She's Leaving Home
Simon Dupree & The Big Sound: Kites
Mark Knopfler: Quality Shoe
Small Faces: Itchycoo Park
Mystery: How Do You Feel?
Little Feat: Willin'
Tommy Emmanuel: Locomotivation



Shostakovich: The Gadfly
Slade: Get Down And Get With it
J J Cale: After Midnight
Small Faces: Lazy Sunday
Julie Driscol, Brian Auger & The Trinity: This Wheel's On Fire

The Music Appreciation Group meets on the third Monday of the month above Walton Community Library. We don't meet in December so we'll be having a little fuddle and maybe a quiz in our November session

Mike Bywater

Wednesday Art Group

Our pictures this time are from Jenny Crafer, of some poppies in her garden, which I thought would be good as we near Remembrance Day. They show the process and the materials Jenny used, in this case pastels. I also pestered the Wednesday Art Group to provide some Halloween Art, and as I didn't want to fill the whole Newsletter with large paintings, I have dotted them around, to give a Halloween feel to the Newsletter, with a few shown here, credits for all the pictures included will be at the end, hopefully in the order they appear. My thanks to everyone who entered into the 'spirit' of Halloween, some great pictures!

Kathy Genn















Creative Writing

A couple of poems sent in by members of Helen Collingwood's creative writing group: -

Halloween



Johnathon's heart beat rapidly
Jessica shivered with fear
They didn't dare walk down the street
They couldn't go anywhere near.

They feared the effigies in the garden
The haunting screams heard in the night
The ghoulish figures appeared in the mist
It was truly a frightening sight.

Graves with blood splattered headstones
Which increased in number each year
The epitaphs carved deeply in stone
"An unfortunate being lays here"

On Halloween night it was worse
When witches, ghouls and zombies abound
They didn't know where they'd be safe
They felt danger was all around.

But as Samhain tradition dictates
They ventured out in their disguises
For trick or treat adventures await
But would this lead to their demises?

They approached the house with trepidation
Clinging together whilst creeping along
They screamed when the figures started moving
But kept going, the temptation too strong.



When they arrived at the door it creaked open
Carved pumpkins leered at them all around
"Trick or treat" They shouted in unison
Will their bodies ever be found ?

Sally Thompson

A Halloween Poem

When midnight strikes and the moon hangs low

Ghosts will dance in the mist below

Strange things stir from their midnight sleep

Closer and closer to you they'll creep



A knock on the door, but nobody's there

Just a whisper of darkness that chills the air

Tap, tap, tap then a ghostly sigh

And two glowing eyes drift slowly by

You can lock your windows, and bolt every door

But still hear footsteps across the floor

For on Halloween, when the clock strikes three



The scariest monster might be YOU or ME

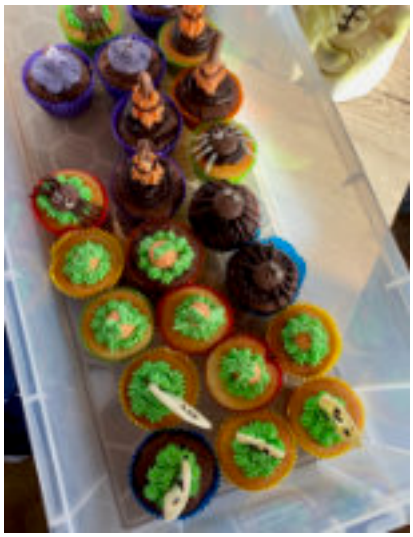
By Maggie Walker

Walking Cricket

Walking Cricketers had a Witches Only Match

And Ghouls only with a Halloween Theme

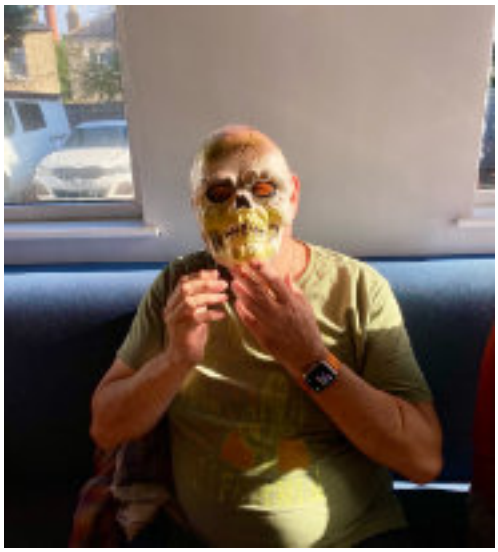
Jill Booth











New Group Ideas

Below is a table showing new groups people have put forward as ones they would like to see. Please note, some of these groups are already running in Wakefield, but members from the Pontefract area have expressed an interest in attending them in the Pontefract area.

If you think you might be able to help by becoming a group coordinator and setting up a group, whether in Pontefract or Wakefield, please get in touch with any committee member, who will give you any help you need to do this. We

need people to step forward. We have also now encouraged people to get some help, and a number of groups have a group coordinator, who works with an 'Administrative Assistant' who helps them.

It can be very rewarding, as you will have seen from the articles in this Newsletter. Our u3a is popular and many of our groups are full, so we do need to set up more groups. Any other suggestions are welcome, and you are welcome to join us at the Group Coordinators Meeting on 27th November at Brook House if you would like to talk to other group coordinators about this.

New Group Suggestions	
Birdwatching	Languages German, Latin, Spanish
Board games	Literature
Book club	Local history
Bridge	Mah Jong
Calligraphy	Military History
Cribbage	Music
Choir	Pickleball
Cycling	Pilates
Cooking	Puzzles and Games
Dancing ballroom and sequence	Railways
Dining out	Reading
Dog Walking	Sing and strum
English	Sports
Folk Music	Table tennis
Friend chat	Tai chi
Flower arranging	Theatre
Geology	Trips
History of Art	Walking
Historic places	Yoga

If you are interested in either setting up a group, or attending the Group Coordinators Meeting please contact: -

Hilary Fowler, on fowler_hilary@hotmail.com,

or contact any committee member via our website

https://wakefield-and-district.u3asite.uk/

Please note we need to know numbers attending, as I believe there could be bacon butties on offer! It is an opportunity to see how the groups operate, and the issues that are discussed at this meeting.

And Finally

A big Thank You to everyone who has contributed to this special Halloween Edition of the Newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed the Halloween-enhanced photos courtesy of Jill Booth, the ghoulish Walking Cricket photos, poems from Creative Writing, and the paintings from our Wednesday Art Group.

Send in your Christmas news, pictures, etc. for the next Newsletter. I realise it still feels a bit early, but it will be the end of November when the next edition comes out, and the one after that will be too late for pre-Christmas silliness. though any fuddles can be included there of course! Last-minute from Hilary, it is proposed to hold a Spanish Beginners' Group next year, more details next month.

Also Virgin Media is closing ntlworld, blueyonder, virgin.net and virginmedia.com emails and moving users to Junara, you should receive a letter, but remember to notify us if you change your email address, at kathchrisgenn@gmail.com or tell your group coordinator, as this will need changing on our Beacon database.

Credits for the Art Group pictures dotted through the Newsletter, in order of appearance, of course and apologies for my decriptions: -

Bat: Yours Truly

Ghostly Abbey:Graham

Pumpkin: Alison

Witch: Mary

Ghostly ladies reflection: Mira

Day of the Dead Skeleton: Cynthia

Ghost: Yours Truly

Ghostly Graves: Cynthia

Ghost: Mike

Witch: Cynthia

Blue Pumpkin: Joyce

Pumpkins: Ruth

Photos of pumpkins carved by Pat's grandchildren, lovely!



Kathy