

York u3a york

NewsMail

No 29

February 2025



15a Clifford Street YORK YO1 9RG

Phone : 01904 289293

Web: yorku3a.com

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OFFICE OPENING TIMES

Tuesday 10am to Midday

Wednesday 1pm to 3pm

Thursday 10am to Midday

Friday 10am to Midday

FRONT COVER PICTURE

Someone looks pleased to see the snow in York

Chair's Message

Welcome to the first edition of the Newsmail for 2025. There is a little bit of business to do. Firstly, a reminder that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is being held on Saturday 12th April, 2025, immediately after the Saturday Talk. It's really important that you, the members, are aware of how we are doing financially and what the future direction is, so, if you can, please attend. If you can't get there in person then you can join us on Zoom. Full details of the agenda will come out in March but, as advance notice, we will be putting forward a resolution to change our charitable status from an unincorporated charity to a charitable incorporated organisation.

As the AGM is coming up, this is a great opportunity to become a Trustee and help with our financial governance and with shaping the future. If you wish to seek nomination then please contact the Secretary, Alice Leyland, at secretaryyorku3a@gmail.com for a nomination form or download a copy from the website.

Secondly, as you know, the u3a only operates because members come forward to do the tasks that keep us going. Thank you to all of you who have already done so. For those of you who have a few hours a week you can spare us there are lots of opportunities. I've listed below where we need more support, so please have a look at the website (<https://york.u3asite.uk/volunteering-opportunities/>) for details. In summary though we are looking for members who can help in the following areas:

Bookkeeping / accounts - supporting the Treasurer to do the accounts. *This is an urgent one, our current Accounts Officer is leaving us and we need someone to take over.*

Assistant Equipment Manager - fiddling with wires and pushing knobs!

Membership Lead / Trustee - someone to take the lead role with our Membership team.

Minute taking - once every four months taking minutes at the Board of Trustee meetings. This is a shared role.

That's the business done. I wanted to pass on a thank you from Shasha Wei who asked for members to come forward and participate in some research on chronic hand pain. She says:

"I am also deeply grateful to everyone who participated in my study. Thanks to your help, I have successfully completed data collection for participants with chronic hand pain, marking a major milestone in my research. Once again, thank you for your invaluable support."

How lovely to receive a thank you and it reminds me to send them to others as well.

There is very little for me to add to this first message for 2025. We're looking forward to being able to offer you a year of interesting opportunities with new groups, travel and other one-off events.

Karen Sawyer Chair

Editorial

Welcome to the February Newsmail. Firstly, we would like to make an apology concerning the December edition. We mistakenly printed November 2024 on the cover. Apologies for the error. You would have thought that the great big Christmas Tree on the front cover would have given us a clue. We must have been so excited about forthcoming Christmas events, that it caused us to make this blunder!

Thank you to all members and group leaders who have sent articles for this edition. We also have photos of some groups' Christmas lunches. Many lasting friendships are formed in u3a groups.

It is good to see that the students, Sophie and Sasha, thanked all those members who became involved in their research. We took part in a memory experiment, which was very interesting. I always thought that I had a good memory, but I was soon disabused of this fact when I returned two days later to do the same memory task...couldn't remember a thing!

At the time of the previous editorial, the weather was icy cold and storm Bert was approaching. Not much has changed, as it has recently been so cold and then storm Eowyn arrived with a vengeance. Let us hope that by the time the next Newsmail is due, we will be writing about beautiful Spring weather.

A big welcome to new members. We hope you find activities you enjoy, whilst at the same time making new friends.

Please send us any group reports, articles, anecdotes, puzzles and stories (750 words maximum for stories.) The closing date for the April edition is Monday, March 24th.

Please send to editorYorku3a@gmail.com

Nick and Sue Tompkin (Editors)

We are no longer collecting
DVDs and Jigsaws in the office.
Please do not bring any more.

Thank you.

List of Lost Property

Small brooch with blue stone.	Found	14.12.23
Door key X10027144K	Found in office	21.08.23
Contigo black and gold drinks flask		25.07.24
Grey ladies suede gloves – fur lined		
Men's black leather gloves	Woolman room	31.01.24
Clear umbrella, Fell room (Author's or Advanced crossword group)		24.06.24

Black Thermal Insulation wool hat

Men's grey knitted gloves

Woolly scarf, grey, blue, grey, black, cream narrow stripes

Woolly scarf, stripes in various shades of blue

If you recognise any of these as belonging to you, can you please collect from the office asap. If they are not collected by the 28th February they will be passed on to a charity shop



u3a Spirituality Group

For the past nine years, the U3A Spirituality Group has been a welcoming space for individuals to explore the profound understanding that we are *Spirit having a human experience*. As a group, we support one another in navigating our unique spiritual journeys, fostering growth, connection, and understanding.

Each session is centred on a specific topic, which I, as the group leader, introduce to spark discussion. From the challenges we face in the 3D physical world to the expansive realms of 4D and 5D higher consciousness, we delve into a wide variety of subjects. These discussions are enriched by the contributions of group members, who share their insights, experiences, and perspectives.

A highlight of every session is our guided group meditation, where we focus on raising our frequency to align with the transformative energies of this time. Together, we aim to cultivate a sense of peace and clarity that empowers us to face life's challenges while connecting with the galactic awakening unfolding around us.

Our group is open to all with an open mind and heart, regardless of background, religion, or belief system. Whether you are beginning your spiritual exploration or have been on this path for years, you will find a supportive and inclusive environment to share and grow.

Join us as we navigate the journey of Spirit together, lifting each other up through meaningful discussion, shared wisdom, and collective meditation.

All are welcome!

Bob Ocean

Rummikub 2 Group

The group has expanded and changed location and date. The group now meets in the afternoon on the 3rd Monday of the month in the Penn Room.

The relocation has enabled everyone on the waiting list to join the group. In the Penn Room it is possible to have 7 tables of 4 playing Rummikub, so we have space at the moment.

If you would like to try Rummikub, please come along to one of our sessions or send me an email gerri.kostrzewa@gmail.com.

There is a room charge of £3 per session.

The next sessions are 17 February and 17 March, I will be there from 1:30pm.

Gerri Kostrzewa

Rummikub 2 Group Leader

HISTORY MAN LAUNCHES NEW WALKS FOR 2025

The weather forecasts may be dire ,but there's the prospect of light relief from March. FOUR new walks will feature in this year's itinerary:

- * SCOUNDREL - debunking the myth of Dick Turpin
- * LOST CINEMAS OF YORK - silents to sound
- * ALCUIN - Saxon York's most precious son
- * STREETLIFE - fairs & freaks, ballads & buskers

For full details check out the u3a website and be sure to book early.

Richard Taylor

RESEARCH STUDENT'S THANKS

Participate in Psychology Experiment (Advert in Dec Newsmail)

This is great, I have already had several responses!

Thank you again for including it for me. It is a massive help.

All the best, **Sophie O'Reilly**

Hello There,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to sincerely thank you for your kind support in sharing my participant recruitment request within the u3a group. I am also deeply grateful to everyone who participated in my study.

Thanks to your help, I have successfully completed data collection for participants with chronic hand pain, marking a major milestone in my research.

Once again, thank you for your invaluable support. Wishing you and everyone in the group a wonderful Christmas holiday!

Best wishes **Shasha Wei**

Food & Drink Quiz

1. Which country drinks the most coffee per capita?
2. Where did sushi originate?
3. What is the world's best-selling stout beer?
4. What meat is used in a shepherd's pie?
5. What is the difference between brandy and cognac?
6. What is the rarest and most expensive spice in the world by weight?
7. What cheese is traditionally made from the milk of a donkey?
8. Which country is credited with inventing ice cream?

Saturday Talks

Saturday Talks take place at 10.30 on (usually) the second Saturday morning of each month, in the Central Methodist Church Hall in St Saviour-gate. Parking is available nearby and tea/coffee is served from 9.45. Admission is £3, payable in cash on the door, and tea/coffee is £1.

If you are unable to come in person, most can be attended on Zoom and we ask for a contribution of £3. A link will be sent out during the previous week and a recording made available after the talk.

Saturday 8th March Kissing in Shakespeare Brian Cummings

'If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me', says Rosalind in *As You Like It*. It is a line that is as fresh (and fruity) and full of new meaning in our own times as it was in Shakespeare's, when Rosalind was played by an adolescent boy. The English were famously good kissers in the Renaissance, and there are over two hundred kisses mentioned in Shakespeare's work - some Platonic, some Freudian. What do they signify? And what do they tell us about the theatrical world of gesture, action, and the body? This talk will discuss kissing in order to understand its significance in Shakespeare's work and today.

Brian Cummings is Anniversary Professor in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York. His latest book, *Bibliophobia: the End and the Beginning of the Book* (OUP, 2022) was based on his Clarendon Lectures at Oxford; he has also given the Shakespeare Birthday Lecture in Washington DC and the Erasmus Birthday Lecture in Amsterdam. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Saturday 12th April York's Historical pageant Brian Hague

Following retirement from a varied maths-and-science-based career which included analysing clinical trials data and helping to set up a commercial bank, Brian Hague is now pursuing a lifelong interest in history. In Winchester, where he lived until four years ago, he researched a pageant held in 1908 which portrayed the city's history. On moving to York he joined the u3a, became a founder member of our archaeology group, and began researching York's own historical pageant.

The York pageant took place in 1909 in the Museum Gardens, enacted by a cast of over 2500. During six performances it drew an audience totalling 30,000 which included visitors travelling to York on special excursion trains; press coverage was not just national but international. In his talk, Brian will look at how the pageant was publicised, scripts written, costumes and props designed and made, and souvenirs produced for sale. He will give examples of scenes and characters (which might surprise history buffs) and explain why the York event came to be regarded as the exemplar of Edwardian historical pageants.

Liz Swinbank and Anna Baldwin Joint Talks Secretaries

Water Fitness Group

We still have plenty of space for anyone who would like to join our water fitness group. You do not have to be a swimmer! We meet at the Better Energise Pool on Cornlands Road every Monday (apart from Bank Holidays) from 1.30 to 2.30pm. The gentle exercises take place in the shallow end, where we have lots of fun whilst contributing to our general fitness. There is time at the beginning and end of the sessions for a free swim, for those who enjoy swimming, and the non-swimmers usually stay in the shallow end having a chat. The cost is £25 for 6 sessions.

Many of us go to the café afterwards, for a hot drink and “get together”. We are a gregarious group, who have made many friends during our time with the water fitness group.



Here we are enjoying a delicious Christmas lunch at the Plough Inn. If you would like further details about joining this group.

please contact:-

Anne Fox (Group Leader) email:- anne25fox@gmail.com

Sue Tompkin (Secretary) Tel 07894831756

email sunic911@gmail.com

Socials, Events and Volunteering

Saturday Socials usually take place on the fourth Saturday of each month (with some variation depending on room availability) at the Friends Meeting House, typically alternating between informative talks and social events where members can play card or strategic games. Admission is £3 to include tea/coffee and biscuits.

This year we are planning to expand the Socials to some weekday afternoons to allow for members who are unable to get to the Saturday events, perhaps because of family or other commitments. We have an exciting programme for the first half of 2025 so please keep an eye on the website as we provide updates. However, the programme for February and March is finalised and will provide some old favourites as well as new themes!

What's Coming Up

On **Saturday 15 February** (please note this is the third Saturday of the month) starting at 10am we will have the "Games Social" - Typically, the morning starts with a half hour of chatting/gossiping over some coffee/tea and the odd cake/biscuit, followed by about two hours of board games such as Scrabble, Poker, Backgammon, Canasta, Rummikub, Ticket to Ride, plus any games brought along by enthusiastic participants (new games always welcomed!!). Members participating for the first time will always feel very welcome as the session is fully hosted and it is a great opportunity to meet like-minded members and make new friends. We were delighted that so many new members came to the last Games Social so would love to see this continue. Watch out for the email and please register to attend as spaces are limited.

In March we will host two Socials, both starting what we hope will be continuing themes that members can engage with. On the afternoon of **Tuesday 18 March** we will hold our first "Words and Music" event where u3a members entertain each other with readings either of something they have written themselves or a favourite poem or piece of prose, interspersed with some bursts of music. If this proves popular we do hope to hold this regularly so please let me know what you think and whether you would be willing to take part in the future.

On **Saturday 29th March** (fifth Saturday of the month) at 10am we will have the first in our series of “Café Scientifique” where someone knowledgeable on any aspect of research (general science or social sciences) gives a very informal chat on their subject. I will start the ball rolling with a talk entitled “Fresh insights into antibiotic resistance – what can we do?” and we already have a further exciting topic coming later in the year. If you or any family or friends have a topic you love or are currently researching, do please let me know and we will find a slot.

Feedback always welcome

Thank you so much to all the members who have already contacted me with feedback or ideas, please keep them coming to

eventsleadYorku3a@gmail.com.

Why not get more involved?

We continue to need volunteers for a variety of roles - as you know, York u3a is a charity run by members for members and without people willing to give their time nothing would be able to happen. Over the coming weeks we are planning to send out a survey to assess members’ willingness to volunteer for various roles – we are still grateful even if you are only able to commit to a few hours every couple of months. So please look out for the email with the survey and respond and we will be in touch to see what we can work out.

Beryl Oppenheim (Events and Volunteering Lead), Anna Baldwin (social Secretary) and Eleanor O’Flynn (Volunteers Coordinator)
[**volcoordinatorYorku3a@gmail.com**](mailto:volcoordinatorYorku3a@gmail.com)

Cathedral Anagram Quiz

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. PRION | 2. CLEAN STEW |
| 3. AN BLASTS | 4. DALEK WIFE |
| 5. FIEFS HELD | 6. LAST SUP |
| 7. OIL PLOVER | 8. RUBY SAILS |
| 9. RAMDUH | 10. CHIEF DILL |

David Milburn

Travel Team News

Recent Trips. Christmas was the theme for our trips in both November and December. In November we visited Chatsworth where the house was dressed for Christmas, and there was a Christmas market. In December we had another excellent Christmas lunch at the Masonic Hall. Reports of these are in this edition of *Newsmail*.

Future Trips. In March our day trip will visit museums and galleries in both Barnsley and Doncaster. Although it was originally designed as a repeat of our oversubscribed Barnsley trip last March, one of the museums is no longer open. Spending an afternoon in Doncaster's Danum Gallery Library and Museum is a very worthy replacement to highlight another city and its history. Our April trip is to the National Coal Mining Museum near Wakefield. Full details of these trips are in this *Newsmail*, with booking forms online or in the office.

More Information. Details of all our UK trips are on the website york.u3asite/u3a_groups/travel-uk

Email any questions or comments to chairtravelukyorku3a@gmail.com

Sheila McKilligan – Travel Team

VISIT NATIONAL COAL MINING MUSEUM

WEDNESDAY 23rd APRIL 2025 Cost: £35.00

Our April trip will be to the National Coal Mining Museum, near Wakefield.

The tour will include a visit underground and a walk around the surface facilities. Each tour will be accompanied by an ex-miner who will give his expert commentary on the workings of the mine as well as guiding us through the new underground exhibition highlighting the different working conditions in the mine through the ages.

There is a café on site and picnic grounds for those wishing to bring their own food.

The tours will take the full day and, as mentioned, will include a trip underground to the actual mine and a walk around the surface facilities.

The surface tour could include some steep inclines and steps. Please note these conditions when deciding whether to join us.

Further information can be found on the NCM website - <https://www.ncm.org.uk/your-visit/>

Coach pickups are 8.30am Fulford Main Street, opposite Pavilion Hotel; 8.45am Memorial Gardens, Leeman Road; 9.00am Tadcaster Road corner with Middlethorpe Grove.

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The cost includes coach travel, the tours, and driver's gratuity.

The u3a Travel UK mobile phone number on the day is 07939 601636.

Organiser: Joe Davidson

Bookings close on **21st February**, places will be allocated the next day and a waiting list will be started if the trip is oversubscribed. You will receive confirmation as to whether you have a place or are on the waiting list. The closing date is early to enable us to give numbers to the venue.

To apply for a place:

EITHER complete the **online** booking form on the Travel section of the website (yorku3a.com), a request for payment by bank transfer will be sent to you if allocated a place

OR complete a **paper** booking form and send it with a cheque, which will not be cashed until the place; has been confirmed. Paper forms are available to download from the website or can be collected from the office.

Your booking is a commitment to pay. If you cancel, then you are released from payment only if a replacement can be found.

Would you like to join the Travel Team?

Two of our members are leaving York, so we are looking for others to help us run our monthly day trips.

We are looking for enthusiastic people who can find interesting places to visit within 100 miles of York and then organise for a coachload of our members to visit. Team members usually organise at least one trip per year.

We are a friendly group of people and will give you whatever support you need – you won't be on your own. We meet once every two months and conduct a lot of our business by email.

If you are interested in this fascinating opportunity, do email me, and we will arrange for you to come and meet us.

Sheila McKilligan, chairtravelukyorku3a@gmail.com

York u3a Christmas Lunch 12th December 2024

For the second year in succession, and as it was deemed such a success last year, the venue for our lunch was again the Masonic Hall in Duncombe Place, adjacent to the Minster.

It really is a most beautiful venue, packed with history, and because people were arriving on foot in ones and twos, there was time to take in the atmosphere, purchase alcoholic (or other!) refreshment, and to chat. So when we finally arrived at the tables, there was already a most convivial atmosphere, further helped by being seated at tables for six, beautifully laid, rather than the arrangement of bigger tables last year.

Lunch consisted of the “usual” three courses: butternut squash soup or prawn cocktail (really generous helpings of prawns!); turkey or salmon with all the trimmings; Christmas pudding or fruit Pavlova; coffee served with a selection of mince pies, brownies and white chocolate dipped strawberries (particularly delicious!). The latter were consumed to the accompaniment of the usual cringe-worthy “Cracker” jokes: my favorite, what do donkeys send at Christmas? Mule-tide greetings! Sadly, for the second successive year I was banned by the organizer (Hilary!) from telling MY Christmas joke. Maybe next year...!

A final bonus for some of the members was a tour of the Hall explaining some of the history of the Masons in particular in relation to the City of York. Perhaps if we come back to this venue next Christmas (and surely, we really ought to!!) such a tour could be organised as part of the day.

Thank you to all the people that made the day such a success – not forgetting the two really hard-working waitresses.

Paul Davies

VISIT TO MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES IN BARNSELY AND DONCASTER THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025 Cost: £19.00

In March 2024 we had a very interesting trip to two museums and an art gallery in Barnsley. Because the trip was heavily oversubscribed, it was planned to repeat it this year. However, one of the museums is not open, so this year’s trip enables you to see a museum and art gallery in Doncaster as well.

In the morning, we will travel to Barnsley where the coach will drop us beside the Barnsley Museum and Discovery Centre, located within the Town Hall, an interesting building in its own right. The well-presented museum traces the history of Barnsley and its people. It also has a coffee shop and shop.

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Close to the Town Hall, with another coffee shop, there is the Cooper Gallery which has an interesting collection of paintings and drawings by British and European artists.

The Town Hall is in the centre of Barnsley, so you can also take a stroll around the town centre if the weather is suitable.

In the afternoon, the coach will take us to the Danum Gallery Library and Museum (DGLAM) in Doncaster. This spectacular building has preserved the original façade of the Doncaster High School for Girls inside a glass structure and modern roof. The museum tells the story of Doncaster from its Roman past to its more recent industrial background.

There is a spacious art gallery with ceramics, jewellery and textiles as well as paintings and sculptures. The building also houses the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Regimental Museum showing how that regiment has many connections to the history of Britain.

On the lower ground floor there is the Rail Heritage Centre with two locomotives built in Doncaster now here on loan from the National Railway Museum in York. This centre is not in competition with the National Railway Museum, but looks at Doncaster in relation to railways.

Coach pickups are 8.30am Fulford Main Street, opposite Pavilion Hotel; 8.45am Memorial Gardens, Leeman Road; 9.00am Tadcaster Road corner with Middlethorpe Grove.

The cost includes coach travel, driver's gratuity, and coffee or tea and a scone at the end of the afternoon. Refreshments are included because the café at DGLAM is too small to accommodate our group.

The u3a Travel UK mobile phone number on the day is 07939 601636.

Organiser: Sheila McKilligan

Bookings close on **21st February**, places will be allocated the next day and a waiting list will be started if the trip is oversubscribed. You will receive confirmation as to whether you have a place or are on the waiting list.

To apply for a place:

EITHER complete the **online** booking form on the Travel section of the website (yorku3a.com), a request for payment by bank transfer will be sent to you if allocated a place

OR complete a **paper** booking form and send it with a cheque, which will not be cashed until the place has been confirmed. Paper forms are available to download from the website or can be collected from the office

Your booking is a commitment to pay. If you cancel, then you are released from payment only if a replacement can be found.

Chatsworth House 14th Nov 2024

I was really looking forward to my trip to Chatsworth House and Christmas Market on Thursday 14th November 2024. I had never been before and I had no idea what to expect, but friends had told me how amazing the house was, and I was not to be disappointed.

The coach left York just after 9 am arriving at Chatsworth around 11 am. We were then all given a ticket for our booked 1.30 pm timed slot for the house.

The day was ours to explore and enjoy as we liked. The coach would depart at 4 pm.



Located at the side of the stunning stately home, in front of the Stables, was the Christmas Market packed with stalls of all kinds, housed in individual "sheds" with the odd food van dotted around the market.



The market had everything you'd want from a market: burgers, hot dogs, hot chocolate, mulled wine, hot roasted chestnuts and a variety of stalls selling Christmas gifts, food and other decorative wares, gifts and Christmas items. A feast for the eyes,

and plenty to entice to buy as Christmas presents.

I arrived at the house promptly for the 1.30 pm entry. Limiting the number of people at any one time made it comfortable to walk around and enjoy each room and display.

The house rooms were filled with Christmas wonder and the sights, sounds and scents of the season. Christmas decorations galore, I have never seen so many baubles.

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A Christmas wonderland at its best, room after room left in me in awe as to what was around the next corner.

The House decorations were beautiful, such attention to detail. My favourite was the main table laid out as the Christmas feast, and I so enjoyed looking for the tiny mice. It was wonderful.



I shopped in the gift shop before having a quick walk around part of the garden. I

would have liked to have done more in the garden but sadly I had run out of time. How had the day gone so fast?

I would gladly 100% visit again, and I do hope that everyone else on the trip enjoyed it as much as I did. A most delightful, fun and very magical experience.

Viv Nicholls

Guess the Year Quiz

1. When was the National Lottery launched?
2. When was Keir Starmer born?
3. In what year was the battle of Waterloo?
4. In what year did the Titanic sink?
5. The Olympic Games were held in London in 1908 and 2012 and which other year?
6. In what year was Charles I executed?
7. When was the world Wide Web opened to the public?
8. When was Richard III, formerly Duke of York, killed in battle?
9. When was York Minster South Transept set on fire by a lightning strike?
10. When was Dick Turpin executed?

David Milburn

A recipe series featuring delicious healthy food for low impact living, contributing to lowering your carbon footprint in the climate emergency.

Cottage Pie

Hearty, nourishing, delicious. Winter comfort food.

At this time of year we are relying on root crops that can be stored and keep their nutrients well. You'll want, however, to have a dish of green vegetables alongside this lovely dish, for freshness and lightness, so see what kales and cabbages are still available locally – or on your allotment – and just steam or stir-fry them quickly. Some thinly sliced leeks would be nice too. That is then a balance not just of nutrients but of different food and cooking types: long and slow, short and fast, above and below ground. Different energies.

Start by soaking some washed green or brown lentils or split peas for eight hours or so; it does make them much more comfortably digestible. There are UK grown pulses you can buy; most come from Europe so aren't too carbon greedy in transport terms. Drain and then cook in fresh water with stock or bouillon powder, till just soft. A pressure cooker is so useful for cooking pulses (and for making a quick soup), and saves considerable fuel.

Meanwhile, sauté what chopped root vegetables you have got your hands on (leave the parsnips out of this: we'll come to them later). Onions, carrots, turnips, celeriac are all good here. Some chopped mushrooms make this mixture rich and tasty. You could add some herbs you dried last year: marjoram or oregano, or maybe you've got thyme or rosemary still growing and fresh. Add a little water and cook gently till the vegetables begin to soften. Add the cooked lentils and some tamari – a more flavoursome and nutritious seasoning than salt.

Scrub some potatoes – there's such a wonderful variety grown in North Yorkshire, especially by Newfields at Fadmoor, who sell at Food Circle. These are going to be mashed, so try Marfona or Carola which are really fluffy and tasty, or Alouette, a lovely red skin variety. And scrub a few parsnips too. Chop both up small (then they cook more quickly and use less fuel) and cook till soft enough to mash. You can add some of the cooking water to your veg and lentil mix, but not so much that the mix is sloppy. Save any left over cooking water from the veg and lentils for a soup stock.

Mash the potatoes and parsnips together, with some good salt (remember the Blackthorn salt story?) and ground black pepper (organically sourced will mean growers in those tropical countries are not being poisoned by pesticides), and either local butter or rape seed oil, or some gorgeous European olive oil.

Then you need a dish that can go in the oven; put the veg and lentils in it and pile the potato and parsnip mash on top. Sprinkle with some sesame or poppy seed. Bake in a medium oven for about half an hour. Make sure you use the rest of the oven: you could bake some apples (plenty of local ones still around), or make some flap-jack (recipe next time), or cook a dish of brown rice for tomorrow.

Don't forget your quick vibrant greens to go with this tasty winter supper.

Laura Potts

Map Reading and Navigation Group 2025

Following the successful inauguration of a Map Reading and Navigation group (see December 2024 Newsmail, p. 13), we are actively planning to repeat the course during July and August 2025, based again at Welburn but spread over five or six sessions.



We can accommodate a maximum of 10 participants. Five members have already joined the waiting list and we invite anyone

else who would like to register an interest, but has not yet contacted us, to email Tania Dickinson via the group's web page :- (https://york.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/map-reading-navigation/).

Shortly we shall circulate preliminary information to all potential participants that will help us finalise exact dates, numbers and cost. We will maintain a waiting list in case there are drop-outs nearer the time.



Ann Simpson and Tania Dickinson (Group Leaders).

THE EARLY DAYS OF CINEMA

Having screened a variety of quite different films since September (Marx Brothers, Hitchcock, René Clair), we will now take another look at favourites from past years. Amongst the works are 'Our hospitality' (Buster Keaton 17/02), 'The Iron Mask' (Douglas Fairbanks 17/03), and ending with the magnificent 'Metropolis' (Lang 16/06).



Membership of the group has evolved, and these will be a first viewing for many, but, importantly, these films are so good they repay watching more than once; three or four times even.

We have covered films from 1890 to 1939, so both silent films and 'talkies' which appeared in 1927.

One of the great pleasures of this exploration is that there is an Aladdin's cave of extant movies, many of which have not been seen for decades. The emphasis is on comedy, fiction and drama, with two films in one session if time allows. Each screening is followed by a short discussion. Photos: Buster Keaton in 'Our Hospitality', and the underworld power station in Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis'.



Woolman Room 2.00 pm.

3rd Monday of each month, unless otherwise informed.

Information: Ian Watson earlycinema@yorku3a.com

u3a Spanish Stories and Current Events

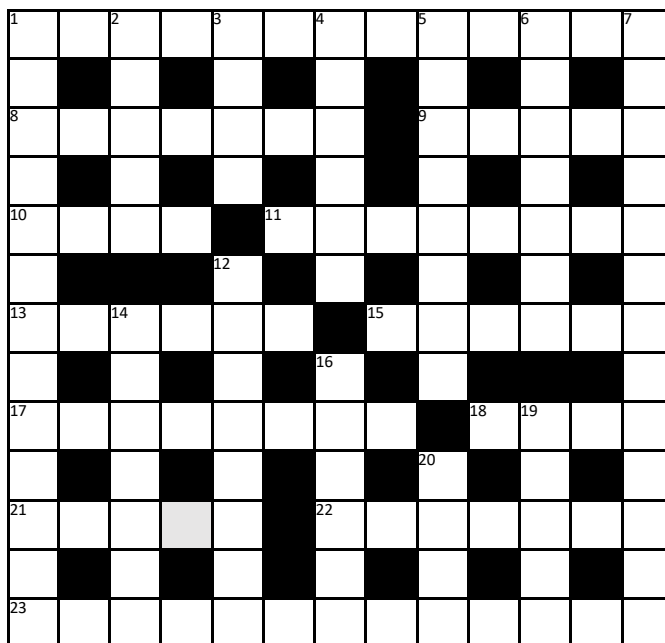
This group will meet 10.00-11.30 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month

We will use Spanish as much as possible and, on the first Tuesday of each month, we will all bring Spanish news items, working together on understanding them and listening to slowed-down radio reports. On the third Tuesdays, we will read selected simplified short stories to help develop vocabulary, grammar and the ability to talk about events in the past.

All materials will be sent out by email and you are free to print out any if you prefer paper copies.

The tutor, Harry Bell, is a former Spanish teacher who is now registered Blind and lives at Hartrigg Oaks, New Earswick, where the meetings will take place in the York Room (accessible by stairs or lift).

Travel directions: bus numbers 1, 13 and 20 stop at Rowan Avenue, a few yards from the road into the Hartrigg Oaks development. The Post-code is YO32 4DY. When driving or walking in, come straight ahead to find the main Centre entrance and Reception on the right. **Samantha**



ACROSS

1. Season wear very evident in early January this year (6,7) 8. Suitable clothing for 1 across (7) 9. Softly deposited Scottish cloth (5) 10. Comes back to one (4) 11. Long show for charity (8) 13. Tea urn may brew temperament (6) 15. Weird timers found on bishops' heads (6) 17. Guys found on bonfires (8) 18. Computer key in a stew (4) 21. Unknown found in fallen tree will strive (5) 22. Second model from the keyboard (4,3) 23. Teach the forces a common mode of travel (5,8)

DOWN

1. Cowboy film may run for WW2 battle ground (7,6) 2. Negative sound from a horse (5) 3. First garden (4) 4. Hotter weather from the heater (6) 5. Pastry Chef's bed? (5-3) 6. Radiator holds hospital flower (7) 7. Part of Yorkshire colleges reserved for budding equestrians (6,7) 12. Sounds as if it may get sunnier at the resort (7) 14. Fat fate becomes material (7) 16. Heating drum? (6) 19. Room at the top (5) 20. Starting price four for the dodgy dealer (4)

Films Plus

We are a group who all enjoy watching and discussing films. We watch a film I've chosen, bearing in mind members' suggestions, at City Screen followed by discussion at a local bar. We generally meet late afternoon/early evenings on Tuesdays. I email or phone out the info the previous week.

New members are welcome. There is no obligation to come to all the meetings. Just come to the ones that interest you and fit in with your timing. We have members who come very frequently and others who join in only occasionally, those who know lots about films and those who know little. All are equally welcome.

Films are often foreign, sub-titled and sometimes have audio description. There's a lift up to the screens.

Recently we've seen and discussed 'A Complete Unknown', 'Maria', 'We Live in Time', 'Queer', 'Wicked', 'The Universal Theory', 'Conclave' and 'Paddington in Peru'.

Elisa Main

01904 438976

Email: filmsplus@yorku3a.com

Keep Dancing

As we got older, my wife and I stopped dancing. Now that we are both retired, apart from looking after grandchildren! we fancy doing some ballroom dancing again.

We only want to do this for pleasure and not to learn any new complex moves - just basic: Walz, Foxtrot, Quick Step and Tango with the odd Sequence Dance thrown in for good measure!

Are there other u3a members who would welcome a social ballroom dancing session, say once a month?

We would need to find a venue and some PA equipment but these shouldn't prove to be insurmountable.

If you are interested, please would you email me

Paul McCandless, at bojanglesukes@gmail.com

so that we can gauge whether there are sufficient people to set up a new group?

Keep Dancing, Ann and Paul

Eco Friendly Support Group

We meet once a month to learn about and discuss matters concerned with care for our environment. We would welcome new members.

Topics are led by volunteers from within the group. In February we will consider 'Pollution', in March 'Various topics' and in April 'The Benefits of Planting Trees'.

Here are details of the group. If you are interested and/or have suggestions of what we might discuss do contact me - Eco Friendly Support Group

Aim - To share and inspire each other in our efforts to care for the environment.

Friday afternoons once a month, generally on second Fridays, our next meetings are on 14th February, 14th March and 11th April.

Timing - 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Venue - at my home in Badger Hill

There is no charge.

Elisa Main elisamain@yahoo.co.uk If you aren't on email my phone number is **01904 438976**.



Walks Around York Group

Enjoying their
Christmas Lunch
Leader
Steve Holman

Fit and Flexible Class

Our last Class before Christmas, Monday 16th December, was a Joint Class that ran from 10:30am to 11:30am.

We proceeded through our regular Fit and Flexible routine with exercises for the mind and body that look good and are satisfying to perform..

Our exercises help with coordination, posture, balance and breathing. At the end of Class we really do have a sense of wellbeing. This was especially so at the end of our Joint Session as we finished with a flourish by using scarves for our "Water Wheel" exercise.

The music we use for this particular exercise is the "Secret Garden's Serenade to Spring" a beautiful inspiring piece of music that we love to finish on each week.

On this occasion we used scarves during the exercise, which was a lovely experience. We have already decided that next time we use scarves we will have one in each hand rather than swapping the scarf from one hand to the other. At the conclusion of Class all hands were required to transform the room by moving tables and chairs

and setting out the tables with various Christmas foods (Nibbles) from our wonderful M & S. Others helped in the kitchen bringing coffee and tea to the tables.

We enjoyed each other's company for the best part of an

hour and then again all hands willingly tidied everything away leaving the Hall looking as it had when we first arrived that morning.

Most of us stood for a photo near the Memorial Hall's Christmas Tree before leaving for our own Celebrations over the Christmas period before returning this New Year for our Spring Term.



Pam Simpson Leader of the Fit and Flexible Classes.

SINGING CAN ENRICH YOUR LIFE

Music exerts a powerful influence on us all. Singing can boost memory, build resilience, lighten your mood, reduce anxiety and depression, improve energy levels, improve your response to pain, and enhance your confidence and social well being.

But is this the reason why a choir of men keep singing for 100yrs? What keeps them together, what motivates them to organise themselves into a band of men giving performances spanning 100yrs?

I am in my 4th year as Chairman of the York Philharmonic Male Voice Choir, from coming out of COVID to celebrating our Centenary in 2025. In this time I have grown to love my role and recognise that it is more than a hobby. It is a vocation and privilege to be able to contribute
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to the choir's ongoing legacy, adding to the musicality of our great City so rich in talent and opportunity for the creative Arts.

Yet, I can't help feeling we have not shouted loud enough as to the benefits of joining our choir as we still need to grow in order to safeguard our future for another 100 yrs!

So, I am opening up a dialogue with the men of u3a and beyond. Please tell me, if you enjoy singing but have no experience in singing in a choir, what would it take for you to come down and sit in one of our rehearsals on a Monday night? You don't have to have had choral experience or even be able to read music.

You will be provided music sheets of course, sit next to an experienced member that can help you along and are under no pressure at all in having to sing individually or even to perform with us. Singing in a performance can be done when you feel you are ready, some take months, some take a year or so before they join us on stage. Yet the feel good factor of being part of the unique sound of a male voice choir in itself will enrich your evening' and if you stay and join it will enrich your life. We have members who joined over 50 yrs ago and enjoy describing how they and their family have grown with the choir and have experienced so many wonderful occasions with us.

There are many reasons why men join and stay with us - we are more than a choir, we are a community of singers who recognise the effect our music can have on ourselves and our audience. Many of our followers are now friends and support us at every occasion - the loyalty and involvement of many is something we are very grateful for.

We are blessed with a professional music team who direct and coach us, and are well organised by a committee adhering to all rules governed by our being a registered charity.

At one level we are award winning, have represented the UK and are internationally known, televised and sing to standing ovations. However, at the end of the day, we are just a group of men who want to sing together.

If you want to find out more then please contact us through our website. Here we have examples of us singing in concert, a film all about us and details about our forthcoming events.

<https://www.yorkphilchoir.org.uk/> or just turn up at the The Citadel, Gillygate, York YO31 7EA at 7.15pm Monday nights. If you fancy hearing us informally with a drink in your hand then 9.45pm after rehearsals, some us have an informal sing in The Snickleway pub in Goodramgate after rehearsals.

So men - let me know - what's stopping you? Why wouldn't you?

Mike Wash. Chairman of York Philharmonic Male Voice Choir and member of u3a.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

You bemoan the fact that the vacancy for a leader for a prospective Alligator Wrestling Group remains unfilled (an article in the newsletter some months ago). Such a group sounds interesting, and I would like to put my name forward as leader. My CV is impressive:

I have lived and worked in sub-Sahara countries, where crocodiles splash about abundantly in the swamps and rivers. However, I suspect alligators have sharper teeth and swishier tails than crocs.

I therefore ask if any help would be forthcoming from u3a resources for provision of equipment for the group. I would suggest a minimum requirement "at least" for the leader to be a pair of heavy duty gloves. Further protective clothing might be a diver's helmet. In fact, a full suit of armour would be welcome.

Where would the classes take place? There are several swimming pools in and around York, but research would need to be done to determine the number of alligators requiring accommodation during group sessions. Would the group be responsible for the reptiles when "not in use"? And would it be responsible for their feeding? Assuming they get no food during classes(!) I suspect this would be quite an expense. In case one of the reptiles turns nasty, I need to determine how fast they can swim. And would I be required to engage a qualified life-saver? Would u3a be prepared to cover any unexpected incident?

I expect the group to be well-subscribed, though there may be some defectors, accidental or otherwise, during sessions. If anyone out there has experience of these reptiles, and is still in possession of a full set of limbs, I would welcome applications for deputy leader. There could well be occasions when, for one reason or another, I might be unavailable.

I trust you were not suggesting nude wrestling? That could be dangerous!

Mike Heddon

The Visitor

My mother was sometimes able to behave like other people's mothers, but not always, or even often. By the time I was 13, I had observed many stages of behaviour following her drinking of gin, sherry, wine, cocktails, the list went on.

I was just learning to be a teenager when we had to leave our flat in Brighton because my father was going away to live with someone else. As a leaving present he bought us half a Georgian house in Marlow on Thames where my mother had an old friend. Our half of the house was beautiful, with a long living room, once a ballroom we were told, with an elegant terrace looking onto the garden and wistaria growing up the red brick wall. Ma ordered green velvet curtains and a midnight blue carpet. The fireplace was original Georgian, a pretty design which kept a coal fire going very well.

Outside there were stables for four horses, a barn and an acre of garden which included vegetables. There were also a gardener and a housekeeper. I was sad we had no horses to put in the stables nor any chance of getting even one. Ma didn't like them. The hinges on the substantial gate to the street had little crowns stamped on them. It would once have been the gate used by carriages after dropping off the occupants. The house next door had the grand entrance. It was said to have been built for one of George III's mistresses, which puzzled me as this George was said by our history teacher to be happily married with 15 children, indeed the first Hanoverian king not to have a mistress. Perhaps they meant George IV.

Anyway, there was also a folk story that went with the house, that it would tolerate no male occupants. The man who had lived there before us with his wife died in an aircraft accident and my father never moved in. The folk story also included the ghost of the said mistress, who wandered the downstairs. I never saw the rest of the house, next door. We moved in during the autumn and I went to school nearby. For a while we did quite well. I enjoyed walking by the river and found some stables where I could ride their horses and help with the care of them so that I needn't spend much time at home. Because my mother's drinking was consuming her again. It was hard for her to lose my father and sister, and I was very aware of being the wrong person for her. When she was drunk she wandered about the house and I kept fearing the ghost, but it was only Ma appearing round a corner.

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After six months, Ma said she was going away. And away she went, leaving me in the care of the housekeeper, who made very good coffee and walnut sponge cakes. She kept me company for one night then said she was staying no longer as she didn't like me. This did not seem unreasonable as I didn't particularly like her.

I had lunches at school. On my first evening alone I picked a lettuce from the garden to have with some bread for supper. I thought washing fresh lettuce leaves was unnecessary, a grown-up habit. Then I bit into something squashy which I quickly spat out, to see a slug move slowly across the kitchen floor. I washed lettuce after that. I had the dog, Jumble, for company.

On my third evening alone I sat on the floor of the big living room, reading, with Jumble. We were up one end of the room, where the coal fire burned in winter. It was still light, early summer. Suddenly Jumble got up, alert, and leapt to the door on the left. He then traversed the room to the right making strange sounds, little yelps and growls mixed. His hackles rose into a wave all up his back from tail to neck. I shrank back. Jumble walked, stiffly, slowly, across the room to the garden door where he stopped and jumped up and down, barking to be let out. Certain that Jumble had escorted the ghost, I waited a short time before letting him out so that the ghost could go through the door. When I opened it, Jumble rushed across the lawn to the rose bed in the centre, barking frantically and running round the bed. After about 5 minutes he calmed down and came back into the living room. I had seen nothing clearly, except a slight change in the light where the figure walked, almost a shimmer. I saw that it was rather short and small by our standards. I was never in doubt about the reality of this experience because of the dog's behaviour. Jumble had been protecting me, and I loved him for it.

A few days later my father rang and asked to speak to Ma. I had to admit I didn't know where she was, probably a nursing home somewhere. He arranged for me to go and stay with my godmother, where I spent the next several weeks.

I never liked the atmosphere of the house and felt particularly unsafe in the dining room, which was a recent addition to what had been a

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corner of the house by the stable. What had happened there I didn't know, but clearly something to be feared. Not long after the ghostly walk the ceiling fell through into my bedroom, spreading rubble over my bed. Fortunately I wasn't in it at the time. We moved out not long afterwards, Ma went to London and I became a boarder at my school.

Why Ma had thought this house with stables and barn suitable for herself and me I never knew. I did not tell her about the ghost's visit, nor anyone else. It seemed clear to me that I was the visitor in that house, the ghost must have been there for 200 years at least.

Clare Howgate

Cathedral Quiz Answers

1. RIPON
2. NEWCASTLE
3. ST ALBANS
4. WAKEFIELD
5. SHEFFIELD
6. ST PAULS
7. LIVERPOOL
8. SALISBURY
9. DURHAM
10. LICHFIELD

Guess the Year Answers

1. 1994
2. 1962
3. 1815
4. 1912
5. 1948
6. 1649
7. 1991
8. 1485
9. 1984
10. 1739

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

1. Winter weather. 8. Skiwear 9. Plaid 10. Echo 11. Telethon 13. Nature 15. Mitres 17. Effigies 18. Hash 21. Exert 22. Type two 23. Train Services.

DOWN

1. Western desert 2. Neigh 3. Eden 4. Warmer 5. Apple-Pie 6. Heather 7. Riding Schools 12. Brighton 14. Taffeta 16. Kettle 19. Attic 20. Spiv

Food & Drink Quiz Answers

1. Finland 2. Japan 3. Guinness 4. Lamb
5. Cognac must come from the Cognac region of France
6. Saffron 7. Pule 8. China

Richard III

A few years ago, a skeleton, discovered during excavation work in Leicester, was found to be the body of King Richard III. Since then, there have been many calls for the Yorkist king to be interred in the city of York where he rightfully belongs.

It is obvious that several of Shakespeare's plays are blatant propaganda jobs, designed to gain favour with the establishment of the time, presided over by Queen Elizabeth I, the most notorious of his plays being Henry V.

In reality, King Henry V was a terrorist. He led an army rampaging through France, murdering, raping and pillaging as they went. There was no justification for his invasion of France. He had no serious claim to the French throne and never pursued it after his victory at Agincourt. He just enjoyed the savagery he was inflicting.

But in Shakespeare's play, he is portrayed as noble, magnanimous, practically a saint. No virtue is withheld from his character. It is, in my opinion, the worst play that Shakespeare wrote; yet, even today, it is used by some people to provoke the kind of chauvinistic nationalism that has caused so much strife throughout history.

So if the Bard could paint such a thorough whitewash over Henry V, surely he would be just as capable of doing a vicious hatchet job on someone who was out of favour at the time.

Richard III was not just the last of the Yorkists, he was the last Plantagenet, the previous lot from the old Wars of the Roses era. We are Elizabethans now; peaceful, civilised, *Protestant*. We have moved on from those unruly old monarchs. So what better than to present a drama reminding people just how bad those old kings were.

The skeleton of Richard III shows that he had a slight deformation of the spine but it was nothing like the Quasimodo hunchback that appears in the play. The case that he arranged for the murders of the Duke of Gloucester and the princes in the tower is unproven although circumstantial evidence strongly points that way. But this is hardly worse than the way Shakespeare's beloved Tudors behaved: Henry VIII executing everyone that displeased him and even Elizabeth who, despite her declarations of a more tolerant regime, presided over a secret service who persecuted Catholics just as rigorously as Mary had slaughtered Protestants.

There is no mention in Shakespeare's play that Richard founded a court, later known as the Court of Requests, where people who could not afford legal representation could apply for their grievances to be heard - the beginning of the concept of Legal Aid. There is no mention that he improved bail conditions so that people accused of crimes could be spared gaol before their trial and so prevent their property being seized.

Or that he lifted the restrictions on the printing and sale of books. Or that he had statutes translated into English from the traditional French. Or that he tightened up the laws of property sales and those of weights and measures.

All this Richard achieved in his brief, two year reign. So is it not fitting that 'our' King Richard should be brought back to his native county.

The so called War of the Roses lasted approximately thirty years in the second half of the fifteenth century. I say 'so called' because the term was only coined long after? The biggest battle fought was that of Towton, just to the south of York in 1461. It remains the biggest battle ever fought on British soil both in terms of numbers of participants and number of casualties.

It was also the most decisive of the Roses battles, ending the domination of the Lancastrians who never regained it. It was fought in response to the battle of Wakefield three months earlier which had been a Lancastrian victory during which the then Duke of York, also called Richard, was captured and executed. His head was placed on a spike on Micklegate Bar accompanied by the caption "Let York gaze upon York".

So why was the Duke of York so despised by the people of York? Well the simple answer is that they were Lancastrians! At that time, the city of York was part of the Duchy of Lancaster, as was much of the north of England. The Duke of York would have had no more connection with the county of Yorkshire than the present Duke of York, Prince Andrew. The Yorkist stronghold was in the south of England. The War of the Roses wasn't Yorkshire versus Lancashire but North versus South. It was Yorkshiremen who were victorious at Wakefield and who were then slaughtered at Towton.

In contrast, however, Richard III *did* have strong connections with Yorkshire, having lived at Middleham Castle for much of his youth and, perhaps eager to heal the divisions of the country, visited the city of York several times during his reign. He even planned to be buried in the Minster.

All this was enough to win favour among the 'Lancastrian' population of this city, so perhaps it *is* fitting that his body should be interred where he requested.

John Walford.

