

York u3a york

NewsMail

No 32

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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

Dragon Boat Race

Chair's Message

It's the time of year when most of our Group Leaders take a well earned break. Conversely, our Membership Team and Office Volunteers go into overdrive to get all the renewals processed for over nearly 1900 members. Overall, that task is going really well with over 1000 members renewed so far. Thank you for your continued support.

As with everything, things do go wrong, so some of you may have experienced a delay in receiving your renewal invitation or difficulties with your passwords. Both of these issues have now been resolved and we thank you for your patience.

If you do need any help with renewing your membership, please contact membershipyorku3a@gmail.com or call into the office (during opening times).

The Board of Trustees is also busy. We are organising our Open Day which is planned for Thursday 25th September, 2025, so put it in your diary. Because of the success of previous years, we are changing things a bit this year. We had so many people attending that it was very disruptive for the Friends Meeting House staff and visitors, so we're holding the event at another location, The Priory Street Centre. We will have more space and be able to try out a few new things.

We're also changing the timing. There will be two sessions, one starting at 10:30am and another at 1:30pm. Details of the programme will be published on the website later but it will be an opportunity for members and non-members to come along and meet the Group Leaders, take part in some taster sessions and listen to a few short talks. We really hope you are able to attend and we look forward to welcoming you.

We are also reviewing how we communicate with our members. We're looking into the methods and frequency of communications. A big task and we will be seeking your views, so please take some time out to complete the survey when it comes through.

The normal business of the Board has continued. We recently approved and published a new Health and Safety Policy. Please take some time to visit the website and familiarise yourself with it.

We are continuing with our application to become a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and I'll let you know when this is approved by the Charity Commission.

On a final note, what a wonderful summer so far! I know the heat can be challenging for some, so please remember to keep hydrated and stay as cool as possible. No hosing yourself down though! We look forward to welcoming you back when the activities restart in September.

Karen Sawyer
Chair

Editorial

Welcome to the August edition of York u3a Newsmail. Thank you to all members who have submitted articles, especially Group Leaders, who ensure that there is a diverse range of interests and activities in our u3a. We look forward to looking at photographs which are sent, but remind everyone that they are in colour if you look at the Newsmail on line.

If anyone has an idea for a new group, which is currently not available, please contact Samantha Triggs, our Groups Co-ordinator on 07584 121 167

To anyone who would like to submit an item of interest, anecdote, story or puzzle, the closing date for the October Newsmail is September 29th. Send to editorYorku3a@gmail.com

Please make sure that articles are no longer than 700 words.

Finally, welcome to new members. If you are new to York u3a, or simply curious about the full range of activities on offer, we encourage you to browse the website regularly for new group listings and event announcements.

Volunteering is at the heart of our community, and there are many ways to get involved, whether by helping at meetings, leading a group, or contributing ideas to our social programme. We hope everyone enjoys the summer and that grandchildren or young relatives who have received exam results have met expectations!

Nick and Sue Tompkin (Editors)

BRAIN TEASER

**Where does today come
before yesterday?**

York 20th Annual 50+ Festival – Parade Saturday 27th September

York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) is holding a Festival, from Saturday 20th September to Wednesday 1st October, to celebrate the energy, creativity, and contributions of older people. The event also seeks to challenge ageism.

York u3a is participating by holding our Open Day during the same week but we would also like to be represented on the Day of Celebration and the Central Parade in York.

As part of the celebration, eco-friendly leaves will be created by groups, young and old to symbolise growth, connection and wisdom. These will be paraded through the city on Saturday 27th September culminating in a civic welcome, bringing the community together in a vibrant display of unity and recognition.

YOPA would love to see u3a members on the parade (which I am promised will not be a 5k run) and for them to encourage grandchildren and great-grandchildren to join them. They are hoping to have over 1000 people walking on the parade.

Full details have yet to be released by YOPA but will be available on their website yorkassembly.org.uk in due course. We will also be updating our website with details of the timings and the start and end point.

Karen Sawyer: Chair

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. When available, on a different day, a subtitled film is also suggested, often a Sunday morning.

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 'The Phoenician Scheme', 'The Salt Path', 'The Ballad of Wallis Island', 'Good One', 'How to Train Your Dragon 2025', 'From Hilde with Love' and 'Jurassic World: Re-birth'. **Elisa Main 01904 438976 Email: filmsplus@yorku3a.com**

Travel Team News

The Travel Team invites you to an exciting day trip for November. We have organised a guided visit to the World Heritage Site of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Gardens in the morning. In the afternoon we will visit Ripon, the smallest city in Yorkshire and the third smallest city in England. Some people will enjoy free time there, perhaps to visit the lovely cathedral or browse the shops. We have, however, organised an optional visit to the Courthouse Museum where crime and punishment in the 1800s will be highlighted. Full details are in this Newsmail and can be accessed from the Travel page of the website [HERE](#).

Normally this Newsmail would have reports of our recent day trips and our five-day visit to Norfolk. However, we have discovered that we can add more photos to reports by publishing them on the internet and have started a [new link](#) from the Travel page to all our more recent reports. As we build on this facility, look forward to the power of the mobile phone to give us colour records of where we have been! But if you do not have internet access, do not despair – there is now a file of our reports in the u3a office.

We have been planning our 2026 five-day visit to Suffolk for some time and this Newsmail contains details of the trip, also on the Travel page of the website [HERE](#). Once again, we are using the services of Airedale who have helped us to create successful trips in the last two years. We have aimed to provide different types of visits, hopefully of interest to many people – connections to artists and their work, a visit to the burial place of a 7th century Anglo-Saxon king, stately homes, some history of Suffolk and even the history of horse racing! Don't dither about applying – the allocation date for rooms is 28th August!

Then, looking ahead in 2025, KEEP THE DATE for our Christmas visit and festive afternoon tea – TUESDAY 9TH DECEMBER! More details in the October Newsmail.

Sheila McKilligan
chairtravelukyorku3a@gmail.com

York u3a Open Day

Priory Street Centre

September 25th

1st Session at 10.30 am

2nd Session at 1.30 pm

Water Fitness Group

There are still places 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 Acomb 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 the end of the sessions for a free swim for those who enjoy swimming. The cost is £25 for 8 sessions.

Many of us go to the café afterwards for a hot drink and “get together”. We are a gregarious group, who, like all u3a groups, have made many lasting friendships during our time with the water fitness group.

Please contact :-

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

Sue Tompkin (Secretary) email sunic911@gmail.com Tel 07894831756

Eco Friendly Support Group

We meet once a month to share and inspire each other in our efforts to care for our environment. We would welcome new members.

Topics are led by volunteers from within the group. In June our topic was ‘Deforestation’ and in July we had an outing to Allerton Waste Disposal Park. On 12th September the topic is ‘York and Climate Change’.

Friday afternoons once a month, generally on second Fridays, our next meetings are on 12th September and 10th October.

Timing. - 1.30pm - 3.15pm

Venue. - at my home in Badger Hill

There is no charge.

If you are interested do contact me -

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

FOUNTAINS ABBEY AND STUDLEY ROYAL WITH AFTERNOON

VISIT TO RIPON Tuesday 4th November

Cost: £18.00 if you are a National Trust Member and bring your card

£39.00 if you are not a National Trust Member

£9.00 for optional tour of Courthouse Museum in Ripon

In the morning, we have a guided tour of the World Heritage Site of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden. Fountains Abbey is a well-preserved ruin of a Cistercian monastery founded in the valley of the River Skell near Ripon in 1132. It flourished and became wealthy until its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539. The Abbey buildings and land were then in the hands of various wealthy individuals, until, in 1767, it was sold to William Aislabie who owned the adjoining Studley Royal estate. It was Aislabie who created the beautiful water gardens. We hope to tour the ruins of the abbey as well as the water gardens. All of this when the area should be particularly lovely with the autumn colours of the many trees in the valley. The visitor centre at Fountains Abbey houses a large café serving many National Trust favourites, as well as a shop.

In the afternoon we drive to Ripon where you can have free time or join our optional guided tour of the Courthouse Museum. Ripon has many small shops and a selection of cafes. In addition, it has a beautiful medieval cathedral, free to visit. A pleasant place to spend an afternoon. The optional tour, for a maximum of 30, is designed first of all to explore the Georgian courthouse, virtually unchanged since its construction in 1830, although it was in use as a court up until 1998. Learn about justice in the 1800s, hearing real life cases of those accused and their sentences – fines, hard labour, or even transportation to Australia. And what happened to the accused after sentencing? Even re-enact a historical trial – how would it feel to await sentence for some of the crimes of that era? The museum invites visitors to immerse themselves in history – a thought-provoking visit, as well as fun.

Members with any mobility concerns should note the following. The abbey and water gardens at Fountains Abbey are about half a mile down a slope into the valley from the visitor centre where we park the coach. If that is difficult, we can book minibus transport from the visitor centre to a flatter access point, but it needs to be booked in advance. From the same access point there are five personal mobility vehicles available to hire, if that would be helpful for anyone. Please request minibus transport or a personal mobility vehicle clearly on your booking form if that would be helpful. The Courthouse has floors on several levels and some narrow doors.

Continued on page 9

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Fountains Abbey has toilets available at the visitor centre and, in the valley, beside the water gardens. The Courthouse has no toilets available for visitors' use but there are public toilets available nearby. The cost includes coach travel, driver's gratuity and a guided tour at Fountains Abbey.

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

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

Organiser: Sheila McKilligan

Bookings close on **21st August**, 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 (https://york.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/travel-uk/), 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 allocated a place. If you cancel, then you are released from payment only if a replacement can be found.

Brainteaser

**A farmer had 50 cows and took
one shot that get them all.**

How did he do it?

Visit Suffolk

The Travel Team have arranged a 5-day holiday to Suffolk from Monday 8 to Friday 12 June 2026. We will be based for four nights at the 4-star Mill Hotel, Sudbury, a converted watermill, on the banks of the River Stour, with breakfast and dinner included. The old water wheel remains a centrepiece in the restaurant. The water meadows stretch away from the river on the opposite bank from the hotel, making it a very attractive location, close to the centre of the market town of Sudbury.

We will travel by coach and visit Burghley House, on the way south. Burghley is one of the largest and grandest of the surviving houses of the sixteenth century. There are two lovely gardens to visit, the Garden of Surprises, and the Sculpture Garden.

On our drive south we will visit Anglesey Abbey, a National Trust property with an elegant house, extensive gardens and a working watermill on the Quay Water.

While we are in Suffolk, we plan the following excursions:

- A visit to Sutton Hoo, one of the country's most significant Anglo-Saxon sites. In June 1939 a mound on Edith Pretty's estate was broken into to discover a rotting ship and the burial place of an Anglo-Saxon king, dating from the 7th century. He was buried with priceless treasures which are now in the British Museum, but some replicas of the treasure are in a museum on site. We have arranged a tour of the site and a talk about its significance.
- A visit to the National Trust property surrounding Flatford Mill, in the countryside where John Constable (1776-1837) produced some of his most famous paintings. We have arranged a tour of the area, although we can no longer enter the buildings, which are rented to the Field Studies Council.
- Free time in Sudbury, an ancient market town surrounded by water meadows. Sudbury has thrived on the textile industry, firstly with wool, then silk. It still has a silk mill today, producing luxury fabrics.
- A visit to the house in Sudbury where Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) was born, close to our hotel. A statue of Thomas Gainsborough stands on Sudbury Market Place.
- A visit to Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich, a Tudor mansion, now a museum and art gallery, with the largest collection of works by Constable and Gainsborough outside London.
- A visit to the National Horse Racing Museum, a fascinating museum recording the history of horse racing, what happens to a horse's body when they race, and much else. Your ticket includes entrance to Palace House, a gallery of British sporting art. At 11 am each day there is the opportunity to meet retired racehorses and hear about their careers.
- A visit to the medieval wool town of Lavenham, which is probably the best-known and best-preserved wool town, with some wonderful medieval buildings, many of them half-timbered, and dating from the period

1400-1500. We have arranged a guided walk there to show us some of the highlights of this interesting town. We will also visit the 16th century timber-framed Guildhall, a National Trust property. It is small, so we may have to visit in small groups.

Note that there will be one pickup at Memorial Gardens, at 7.30 am on Monday 8 June.

We are aware that the three tours arranged will require some walking. For anyone with mobility concerns who does not wish to participate in the whole tour, there are small museums and pleasant coffee shops at all the sites involved. This holiday is again being arranged through Airedale, the travel agent who arranged our successful trips to Dorset and Norfolk. The pricing is explained below.

Cost: Dependent on how many people come, but each of the prices below will be increased by:-

£45.00 if you are NOT a member of the National Trust.

£724.00 per person if we have 45 passengers

£744.00 per person if we have 40 passengers

£764.00 per person if we have 35 passengers

Single rooms: We have fifteen single rooms. There is no supplement for the first five rooms.

For the other ten double rooms for single occupancy there will be a supplement of £100.

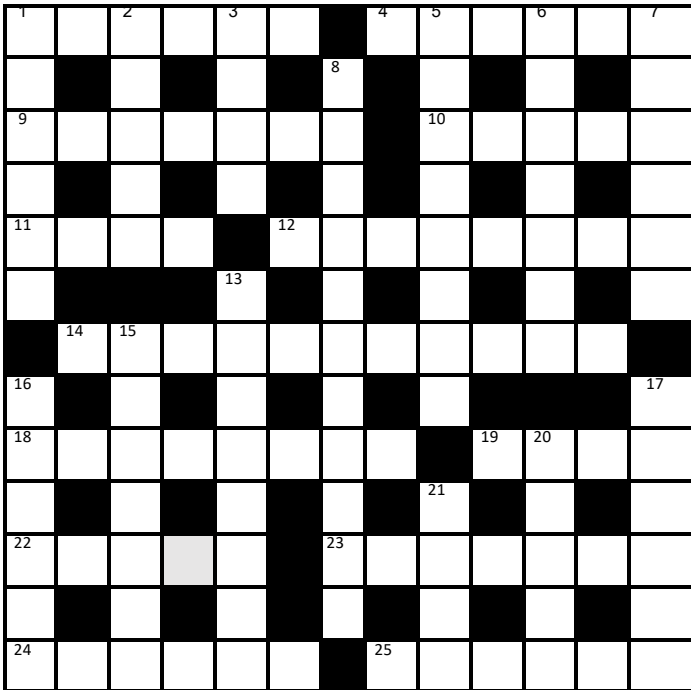
Non-refundable deposit: £75.00 per person to be paid after 29 August 2025, when places will be allocated.

Balance payable: You will be told during the week beginning 23 February 2026 what your final balance will be, according to the costs above. The final balance must be paid by 13 March 2026. You will be told the arrangements for payment when you receive notice of the precise final balance.

Airedale's booking terms can be found here. You are strongly advised to have your own travel insurance in place from the time of booking until the trip itself.

If you wish to come, please complete the online booking form OR printed form. If you use the printed form, please mail it with a cheque for your deposit to arrive by the deadline date of 28 August. Note that all passengers must be members of York u3a now and in June 2026, and booking a place is a commitment to pay.

If the trip is oversubscribed, there will be a random selection for places and single rooms as necessary. Confirmation that you either have a place or are on the waiting list will be sent on 29 August 2025. Your deposit, if not already sent as a cheque, will then be required by 19 September 2025. Your booking is a commitment to pay. If you cancel, then you are released from payment only if a replacement can be found.



Cryptic Crossword

ACROSS

1. Metal with a little hesitation is in charge (6) 4. Very brief follower (6) 9. Second rate lives can be in sight (7) 10. Going either side of one for the vegetable (5) 11. Instrument headless for another (4) 12. I appear in weird sitcoms showing indifference (8) 14. Assembly for anyone (4,7) 18. Peacekeepers second little one to take apart (8) 19. Amongst a middle part (4) 22. Timorous creature in computer (5) 23. Bird that crossed the road for a reason (7) 24. Nearer about to undertake again (6) 25. I press around steeples (6)

DOWN

1. Crazy volley is adorable (6) 2. A second group is an advantage (5) 3. Tidal flows in backwaters? (4) 5. They love themselves best (8) 6. A second one is often sought (7) 7. Monday may become a driving force (6) 8. Climate bird in top spot (11) 13. Bring about an expert technician (8) 15. Dispatch the river for your stance (7) 16. Seasonal accountant (6) 17. A lecturer is so attractive (6) 20. Remark without right as a constructor (5) 21. Feeble disability (4)

Saturday Talks

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

We have a great programme of talks planned for the next year - here are details of the first two.

Saturday 13th September Terri Apter Grandparenting

Terri Apter is a psychologist, writer and Fellow Emerita of Newnham College Cambridge, her books on family dynamics (mothers and teenage daughters, sisters, in-laws) have been published to international acclaim and translated into many languages. She combines writing, research, reviewing, ice-skating and grandparenting four amazing grandchildren.

In this talk, Terri explores how becoming a grandparent changes family dynamics. She will discuss how parenting a child, who is now a parent themselves, awakens issues about identity and boundaries, and stirs up past feelings of both resentment and gratitude that play out as grandparents engage with the newest family members. The increasing role of grandparents in child care in the context of parental work pressures, cost of living and compelling theories about the evolutionary role of grandmothers in human development will all be considered.

Saturday 11th October Stephanie Brown

Minster and Markets: Mapping Murder in Medieval York

Stephanie Brown is a Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Hull, and is a BBC/ AHRC New Generation Thinker. Her research explores how violence, punishment and policing were shaped by social and cultural contexts from medieval to modern times. The Medieval Murder Map project maps fourteenth-century homicide cases recorded in York and Oxford. It uses digital mapping to uncover patterns of violence, revealing how everyday spaces became flashpoints for conflict, and asks what these records can tell us about law, community and the meaning of justice in a town shaped by commerce, religion and urban life. Stephanie led research on the York map, and her talk explores homicide in York using coroners' rolls from 1345 to 1385. Who were the suspects and victims? Where and when did homicides happen? How do you investigate crime without a modern police force? Were there distinct clusters of murder, and what social and cultural mechanisms may have been involved? We look forward to seeing you if you are able to come along to either of these events. If you are unable to come to the talks in person, most can be attended on Zoom and we ask for a contribution of £3 for Zoom attendance. A link will be sent out during the previous week and a recording made available after the talk.

Liz Swinbank and Anna Baldwin Joint Talks Secretaries

Yoga, relaxation and optional café social after:

STATUS:- Active, open to new members

LEADER:- Anna Semlyen Tel 07891 989310

WHEN:- Weekly on Wednesday Mornings 11am to 12.15pm
Wednesday 17th Sept -17th Dec (not 8th October)

VENUE:- York Youth Hostel

COST:- By BACS for the course £32.50 (13 Sessions)

Yoga is a mind-body practice with poses (for strength and length), breath work, meditation, and relaxation. Yoga aims to unite and balance the mind, body, and spirit. It is not a religion. We will focus on easier, effective poses to promote mind-body balance, with variations to suit everyone's capabilities.

Even if you are limited in movement, or have your own exercise preferences or physiotherapy, you are very welcome to come, do your own practice and relax. Requests are welcome. All exercises are optional. Chairs are available. Music isn't usually played.

Experienced teacher, yoga author, back-care specialist established 1996.

All welcome including beginners, provided you can get off the floor unaided. Access to the Seebohm Room is by 13 steps.

Free parking (input registration at reception).

Please aim to bring your own yoga/exercise mat, a block/small cushion and blanket. Props are not essential so if you forget it'll be ok. It is a carpeted room, the warmest available for gentle yoga.

Participants will be asked to complete health information for the teacher.

Optional YHA café after class -a beautiful conservatory or outdoor benches at the back overlooking gardens. Class is exclusively for u3a members, anyone can come to the cafe social at 12.20pm.

Anna Semlyen Tel 07891 989310

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Three adventurous travelers from The Digital Photography Group set out for Bempton Cliffs on the morning of June 10th. Patrick, Anita and I were blessed with good weather as we ventured into East Yorkshire, arriving in Bempton in time to get a good parking place plus a table with a view, to begin enthusiastically with the inevitable cup of coffee each, to set us in good stead for our stroll across the cliffs to the viewing points.

We were not disappointed with our visit. There were so many birds to see including numerous gannets, kittiwakes, guillemots and thankfully some puffins, plus a handsome jackdaw sitting on a post.

The views at Bempton are spectacular, accompanied by a cacophony of various bird calls.

We were so fortunate to see the beautiful gannets at such close range as they flew in and out of their nests on the cliff tops as well as on the side of the cliffs. There were hundreds of them. The kittiwakes and guillemots were sticking close to the cliffs flying in and out, to and from the rough sea.



It was very, very windy so quite comical to see the little feet of the gannets wobbling away as they battled the wind to land.

Many of the puffins must have been in their burrows but we were lucky enough to see a handful either sitting by their homes or dashing in and out to sea and back.

After a morning of watching, listening and taking photos, we then enjoyed our lunch in the spacious cafe before very happily setting off on our journey home.

The three of us thoroughly enjoyed the sights and sounds of a wonderful day. Bempton RSPB nature reserve is such an amazing experience.

By Anne Crawford

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 and engaging talks and social events where members can play card or strategic games. Admission is £3 to include tea/coffee and biscuits and all these do need to be booked in advance to help us manage numbers.

As many of you know, this year we are trying out expanding the socials to some weekdays to allow for members who are unable to get to the Saturday events perhaps because of family or other commitments. We now have the full programme for Socials for 2025 on the website, so please do take a look.

What's Coming Up Soon

We will be taking a break in August and the next scheduled Saturday Social will be on Saturday 27th September 2025.

On **Saturday 27 September starting at 10am** we will be having a talk by Gay Marris who will be giving a talk entitled "Writing About Murder, And Other Everyday Things". Gay is a retired research scientist who currently lives in York and has recently published a novel called "A Curtain Twitcher's Book of Murder". Gay grew up in the suburbs of London in the 1960s and she will be telling us something about her life then, and how that inspired this novel, and talking about her experiences of becoming a published author. Please do join us for what will be an extremely interesting and entertaining talk.

Feedback always welcome

Thank you so much to all the members who have already contacted me with feedback or ideas. We are currently planning our programme for 2026, so if you have a special interest that you would love to share with us, or know of anyone else who might be able to give an interesting presentation do let me know on eventsleadyorku3a@gmail.com.

Why not get more involved?

We always require new volunteers to help out or take the place of others who are no longer able to undertake this work, so if you do find yourself with some time to spare, please do get in touch for an informal chat. For very specific requirements for volunteers we will continue to send out emails requesting assistance and explaining exactly what is required. **Beryl Oppenheim (Events and Volunteering Lead)**

Walks around York

Our “Walks around York” walk on Monday, 21 July, started at Micklegate Bar and headed off past Scarcroft School and some allotments towards Tadcaster Road and the Tyburn site, where many executions were carried out—most notably that of Dick Turpin.

The walk continued onto Hob Moor, where we saw the Hob Stone, a combination of two stones: an effigy of a knight, and a basin stone used as a plague stone, to disinfect money and prevent the spread of the plague.

Next, we went round York Railway Pond, which is a peaceful haven for wildlife nestling amongst housing estates in Dringhouses.

We continued onto Tadcaster Road by the Cross Keys pub, and then down Cherry Lane to the Knavesmire. We then walked



across the Knavesmire to Bishopthorpe Road and down to the river.

We walked along the riverside past Rowntree Park to Skeldergate Bridge, where we ascended the walls to return to the starting point at Micklegate Bar. We rounded off the walk with a tasty lunch at The Bar Convent cafe.

With thanks to Sue & Ian Southam for leading the walk and also to the group leader, Steve Holman.

The group will now take a summer break and return in September.

Christine Ogden

Three Poems about Life, the Universe & Everything

Stone in the Pond

The looking-glass gives back the trees and sky:
Most see-through, most opaque, the mystery stands.
But when a boy, a yard away, plops in a stone
The surface curls, erupts, goes brown, goes mad.
That which seemed hard is yielding, malleable,
And swallows it whole into its wet world.
The boy, bored with such commonplace, turns away,
The looking-glass returns to still,
And gives back trees and sky again.

Dust to Dust

The sky is light
And everything below is heavy and dark:
That and all activity
Wears mountain peaks to dim and dusty plains.
But why then do we strive? In hope some vortex,
Some eddying gust, will raise the dust,
And fling it anticlockwise in the eyes of destiny.
It can be: for those proud peaks were thrown up once
To stand for a while, against the dripping drift.
So too the up-rippling ocean wave: and majestic twirling
Galaxies, infinite number in infinite void:
And that speck of dirt which organized itself
To grow tall and become Us.
Seen that way, the sky is nothingness,
The dark and heavy, reaching for the sky, is all.

1976 - Viking 1 lands on Mars & brings home some rock samples

All those billion dollars' worth of hardware!
It would have been so simple for a man
To have stepped – crunch! – upon the sand
To have picked with seasoned eye a likely spot
To have stretched forth his godlike hand
And gathered up some few morsels of dust.
For a shilling's worth of software, a moment's task.

Anthony Ridge

Collaboration for a Century of Singing

Something special is happening in the York singing community. We have never had so much collaboration and shared experiences of the joy of singing together: from the now annual Choir Festival at Joseph Rowntree Theatre where over 40 choirs from the York area over a period of a week showcase their talent, to more recently where a choir was brought together by York u3a choir leader and York's well known musician, Don Pears, to record a Christmas CD of Carols. This production happened over a weekend where we came together in the national Centre for Early Music with a 50 piece orchestra led by one of the country's lead conductors, Simon Wright, to record Don's own compositions.

One of Simon's projects is to compose a piece for this year's BBC's Last Night of the Proms. Each day involved six hours of singing through 24 Carols supported by a professional production/recording team. The choir included members from the u3a choir, York Philharmonic Male Voice Choir ('The Phil') and Don's own singing group Singphonia.

Further evidence of choir collaboration can be experienced this year at the Barbican Centre on the 21st Sept. Here 'The Phil' are performing with five other choirs and a brass band ensemble in celebration of their Centenary year. Tickets available from the Barbican.

<https://www.yorkbarbican.co.uk/whats-on/york-phil-2025/>



City of York Council and York Older People's Assembly

COMBINED SLIPPER SOCIAL AND INFORMATION FAIR

Friday 19th September 2025

10:30 am – 12:30 pm

At New Earswick Folk Hall, Hawthorn Terrace, YO32 4AQ

You are invited to book a stand for the combined Slipper Social and Information Fair.

Places are limited so do get your booking in early to secure a space: it is by invitation only.

Bring your own table coverings and display, set up from 10:00am.

Please complete and return the application form (see details below) to this email address (note there is no charge for this event).

Contact Name:

Organisation:

Address:

Phone:

Many thanks, and look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes.

Alice.

York Older People's Assembly

St Sampson's Centre, Church Street, YORK YO1 8BE

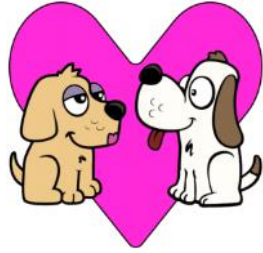
yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com

www.yorkassembly.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1101018



12 SONG PICTOGRAMS



The Chair

The Chair "She's done it again!", exclaimed Doreen as she trundled into the dining room at St. Emilia's Rest Home for Retired Gentlefolk. Josephine, one of the care assistants, looked up as she helped David into his seat at a table by the door. "What's that, dear?", she asked. "She's sitting in my chair. Again", Doreen complained. "She's always doing it. She knows that that chair by the window is my chair. It's where I always sit." Doreen rammed her walking frame into a corner and plonked herself onto a seat next to David, her face dark with anger and frustration.

The table by the window was the only one in the dining room set for one person. Doreen, who was not of a sociable disposition, had immediately claimed it on coming to St Emilia's six years ago and now viewed it and its accompanying chair as her own. Glenda, on the other hand, was a recent arrival. She and Doreen had never hit it off. Doreen thought Glenda was fat, pompous and rude. Glenda considered Doreen snooty, bossy and rude. The two women had initially tolerated each other's presence but their strained relationship swiftly took a turn for the worse when Glenda ousted Doreen from her usual place in the dining room. "Never mind, dear," soothed Josephine, "there are plenty of other places to sit and you will both get the same food." "That's not the point," Doreen snorted, "she does it on purpose, just to annoy me." "Oh, I'm sure she doesn't mean to," said Josephine as she plumped the cushion at Doreen's back, "anyway, does it really matter to you that much?" "If it didn't matter to me, I wouldn't say anything, would I?" replied Doreen. "It's the principle of the thing. She just took over that seat as soon as she moved here. I tried to explain to her, nicely, that it has always been my chair but all she did was shrug her shoulders and tell me that she was allowed to sit wherever she wanted and if I didn't like it I could lump it." Doreen snatched her serviette off the table and thrust it into her lap. "Damn cheek of the woman." she muttered, darkly. "Somebody needs to take her down a peg or two." Josephine gave a little smile. "Never mind, dear, you'll just have to try and get here first." She patted Doreen gently on the shoulder and went off to fetch the soup. Doreen fumed her way through dinner. That was HER chair, had always been HER chair and some interfering old biddy who'd only just arrived was not going to take it away from her. She would complain to Harriet, the Manager.

Next day, Doreen marched into Harriet's office and vented her anger in such strong terms that the poor woman positively cowered in her chair. "And if you don't do something about it, then I will", threatened Doreen. Harriet was fulsome in her sympathy. However, as she pointed out as gently as she could, Doreen might consider the chair by the window as hers by default but, in truth, Glenda really was entitled to sit wherever she liked in the dining room. "Perhaps you could endeavour to get there first," Harriet concluded lamely, wilting under Doreen's icy glare. Doreen pointed an accusing finger. "Don't say I didn't warn you", she hissed.

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Despite attempts at mediation by Harriet and her staff, the issue of the dining chair rumbled on; an increasing source of rancour between the two women. A truce of sorts was called when, a couple of months later, St Emilia's gentle routine was disrupted. The dining room was closed for structural alterations and redecoration, with meals being served to residents in their rooms. For two weeks residents and staff were subjected to a barrage of hammering, sawing and drilling. Doreen spent the time considering how she could get one over on her adversary. She resolved that if she couldn't have the chair by the window, then Glenda was definitely not going to have it.

Eventually, order was restored. The dining room was reopened and to everyone's delight Harriet announced that, starting with Thursday's breakfast, meals could once again be taken in their proper setting. Thursday morning arrived and Doreen made her way slowly to the dining room. As fate would have it, she arrived at the same time as Glenda. The two women glared at each other for a moment, both prepared to make a dash for the coveted chair by the window. Suddenly, Doreen smiled. "This is all rather silly, isn't it," she said graciously. "We shouldn't fall out over a little thing like who sits where. Please feel free to sit on the chair by the window if you wish, I'm quite content to sit here." Glenda was surprised but nodded her appreciation of the gesture. Doreen parked her walking frame and sat next to David. She watched as, with a smug smile on her face, Glenda made her way to what she now considered to be her chair by the window. "That was kind of you, Doreen," said Josephine as she put a rack of toast on her table, "what's happened to make you change your mind?" "Oh, nothing," replied Doreen, "I had time to think during the break. You were right, Glenda can sit where she likes. If she wants that chair she can have it, it's not really that important, is it?" Suddenly there was a loud crack, followed by a scream and a tremendous crash from the other side of the dining room. Doreen and Josephine watched as Glenda's coveted chair collapsed beneath her. As she fell she grabbed desperately at the table but only succeeded in sending it and its contents crashing. Cups, saucers, plates and dishes flew in all directions. Glenda landed on her back in a most undignified heap, legs in the air, revealing a pair of startling pink bloomers. "Oh, my good lord!" Josephine gasped as other care assistants came running into the dining room. They all stared in horror at the sight which greeted them, then rushed to help Glenda whose plump figure now lay spreadeagled on the floor, covered in broken crockery, milk and cornflakes. "Oh dear," murmured Doreen, "how unfortunate." She turned back to her table and reached for the toast, a gratified smile on her face. It had been a hard sacrifice to make, but the small hacksaw she had 'borrowed' from the workmen to partly cut through the back legs of her beloved chair had proved most effective.

***The Ghost Lake* by Wendy Pratt. The Borough Press an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers Ltd paperback edition published 2025.**

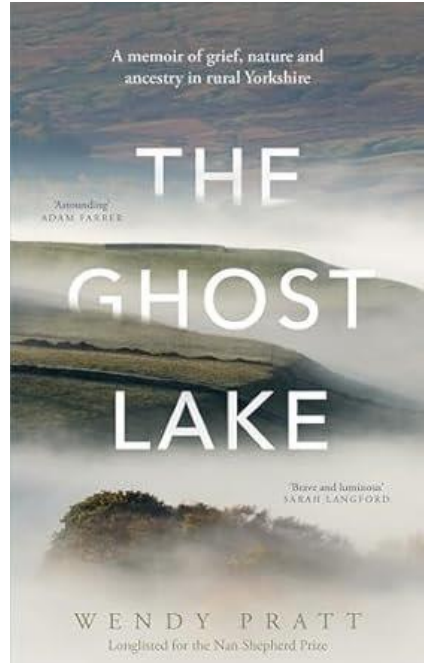
In this recently published memoir, *The Ghost Lake*, the Yorkshire writer Wendy Pratt writes about making a pilgrimage around the periphery of Paleolake Flixton, an extinct post-glacial lake in North Yorkshire a handful of miles south of Scarborough. She visits locations ‘that have acted as journey markers in her own life.’

Wendy takes ‘a series of deliberate journeys’ writing about ‘nature as refuge, and how belonging to landscape gives you a place to connect to your ancestors, even if those ancestors are only joined to you through the land you walk on.’

The main thread which runs through the narrative is the author’s history of a range of mental health issues including depression, social anxiety, and lack of self-esteem, all underlined by what appears to be undiagnosed autism. She wonders if she can ‘find a way to reconnect with myself by gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of the landscape I have always been embedded in.’

Although an early draft of *The Ghost Lake* was longlisted for the 2021 Nan Shepherd Prize, the pilgrimage, as described in the book, was made up of several individual trips which took place between June 2022 and July the following year.

The author’s first trip is to the Woodlands Cemetery on the edge of Scarborough where she visits the grave of her daughter Matilda who was stillborn in 2010. From the cemetery the author can see ancient woodland ‘studded with Bronze Age burial mounds’ and in the following month she explores nearby Seamer Beacon, the site of a Bronze Age burial ground not far from where the author grew up. Two months later she visits the Mesolithic site at Star Carr with her mum, both of whom are grieving, after the recent death of her father.



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Her mum still lived on the small-holding near Seamer which her parents had bought together and worked hard to own. Her dad had wanted to be buried on their land, and he eventually got his way, but his daughter writes 'burying a whole human is very, very complicated....'

In April 2023, on the anniversary of her daughter's birth and death, Wendy takes flowers to her daughter's grave then visits a Neolithic child burial site on Folkton Wold which is famously connected to three inscribed chalk objects known as the 'Folkton Drums'. Afterwards she writes:

"On the anniversary of my daughter's death, I am feeling the familiar, yearly panic about her being forgotten. My pilgrimage to selfhood, to rootedness and belonging, is weighed down today by a desire to know that the dead are not forgotten."

During her trips through these ancient landscapes, and to other locations linked to her own life and recent family history, Wendy Pratt explores themes such as loss, grief and belonging, birth and death, ritual and remembrance encountered by ordinary people over ten millennia and reflected in the landscape they have all walked on.

The Ghost Lake also includes a sizeable bibliography listing the books, articles, journals and websites which the author used in her research. Wendy can be contacted via her own website <https://wendyprattauthor.com/>

Jeff Taylor.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

1. Leader 4. Second 9. Visible 10. Onion 11. Lute 12. Stoicism 14. Open Meeting 18. Unstitch 19. Amid 22. Mouse 23 Chicken. 24. Reearn 25. Spires

DOWN.

1. Lovely 2. Asset 3. Ebbs 5. Egotist 6. Opinion 7. Dynamo 8. Weathercock 13. Engineer 15. Posture 16. Summer 17. Adonis 20. Maker 21. Limp

SONG PICTOGRAMS ANSWERS

1. Eye of the Tiger 2. The Sun always Shines on TV 3. Puppy Love
4. Shout 5. Cars 6. No Woman no Cry 7. Lean on me
8. Flowers in the Rain 9. Pretty Flamingo 10. Take Five
11. Twist and Shout 12. Wandering Star

BRAIN TEASERS ANSWERS

1. The Dictionary
2. He used his Camera

Loch Craignish, by Sandy D. Franklin

It was chance that took me to Loch Craignish. '*Exciting sea wilding project*' was the headline that caught my attention in a cursory glance at a magazine. It was May, a period of high pressure, even a heatwave, so with Spring at its finest we loaded our sea kayaks onto the car and set off for Argyll, west coast Scotland. I love Argyll not just for its many sea lochs penetrating far into the land but for its lushness too. It didn't disappoint. The trees were clothed in their fresh spring green, the land was carpeted with bluebells, primroses, red campion, wild garlic, sea pinks, rhododendrons, azaleas, and a few yellow flag irises just beginning to bloom. On arrival, the loch, perfectly still and complete with Shelduck, was bathed in an intense beautiful light. Loch Craignish with its smattering of islands, the Ardfen marina for launching the kayaks, the promise of sea eagles and osprey, and a sea wilding project to investigate was going to be exactly where I wanted to be.

Waking to a calm sunny morning we set off to kayak around Eilean Rìgh, the largest island in the loch. Privately owned it is covered with mature woodland of oak, ash, rowan, alder, birch, and hawthorn, along with carpets of bluebells and sea pinks. As we paddled down the east side of the island to the southern tip we were greeted with clear views of the Paps of Jura, floating on the silvery smooth sea. Rounding the tip of Eilean Rìgh to paddle back along its west coast a rocky and pebbly section of coastline looked a good place to land for coffee and a snack. Gingerly stepping over the seaweed we found a grassy spot to sit for a while. I love to sit on a deserted island, the sea all around me, the wildness embracing me, my kayak waiting for me to continue, and to see what turns up. Today a sea eagle turned up, hovering above us, the V shape of the bird in the air and its white tail leaving us no doubt about the identification. Such sightings make good days even better. As we paddled up the east coast back to Ardfen a gentle breeze allowed us to surf the small waves until the water calmed as we approached the marina. Pulling the kayaks out of the water we were tired, ready for a late lunch on the bench by the slipway, very satisfied and happy with our first sea paddle of the year.

We had another day to kayak but first we needed to find out more about the sea wilding project. We discovered it is a community based native oyster and seagrass restoration project, run by the charity Seawilding formed in 2018. Although Loch Craignish looks picture perfect from above, below the surface it is a different story where important biodiversity has been depleted. The charity's aim is to restore the seagrass meadows which have been lost, and already over 100,000 seeds have been planted, all with the help of volunteers. This will provide an important habitat for many species including spider crabs, scallops, and shoals of fish. It also sequesters carbon, helping to combat climate change.

Loch Craignish also once had a thriving native oyster population but today few are left. Since 2020 350,000 young oysters have been released onto the seabed, thanks to the sea wilding project.

. Many get eaten by crabs and starfish but many survive, and these oysters are now thriving and breeding. Hatchery-raised oysters are grown in the nursery to protect them from predators until they are mature enough to be released onto the seabed. It is hoped that this year many thousands more will be released, helped by the actively involved local community who have a real interest in restoring some of what has been lost in the sea loch due to overfishing, pollution and plastic.

Another surprising discovery was to hear that in May this year, 2025, for the first time seagrass, the ocean's only flowering plant with the appearance of an underwater meadow, took a stage at the Chelsea Flower show. This Seawilding garden draws inspiration from the vital work done by the Charity in restoring and reversing lost biodiversity to the marine environment, as well as highlighting the efforts of the Loch Craignish community. Danny Renton, CEO of Seawilding, says: "It is not just a garden; it's a story of how coastal communities can lead the fight to restore biodiversity and combat climate change. It's also a call to action for people, businesses, and communities to recognise the degraded state of our coastal and marine eco-systems, and to work together to restore ocean health."

The next day it was another perfectly calm morning on Loch Craignish, and we were going to paddle round the island of Eilean Mhic Chroin and its smattering of small islets. Hugging the east shore of Mhic Chroin I looked down into the clear water to the fronds of seaweed, jellyfish, and a sandy seabed. A cuckoo called, a curlew flew overhead, merganser and black guillemot bobbed on the water, ahead loomed the views of the Paps of Jura again.

The rocky shoreline was dense with lichen, sea pinks, globe flowers, more bluebells, and birds foot trefoil. Rounding a small islet we landed and scrambled onto the rocks to pause and to drink in the utter peace and relish the contentment that being in such an environment brings to me. At low tide Mhic Croin is attached to the mainland so we paddled back up the east coast returning to Ardfern marina, where yachts were being lifted back into the water, masts craned and attached, and sailors wheeling their laden trolleys to restock their boats after the winter in readiness for the coming season.

We'd had two wonderful days of sea kayaking whilst learning about sea wilding in Loch Craignish. Is there a better way to spend a Bank holiday than sea kayaking in this beautiful west coast loch knowing that it is on its way to being restored to its former glory thanks to the efforts of the local community I don't think so.

Postscript: Since returning from Loch Craignish I have learnt that there is a sea wilding project taking place almost on my doorstep. The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust are rewilding the Humber estuary, planting seagrass and native oysters to help to restore biodiversity. Another good news story.

