

The u3a York Times

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Chair's Message

Welcome to the new u3a York Times. Please read the article by Beryl Oppenheim (our Events & Communications Lead) to find out more about the change from the NewsMail to this publication.

A reminder that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is being held on Saturday 11th April 2026 immediately after the Saturday Talk. This is an opportunity for members to know how we are performing financially and what we have done to achieve our charitable purpose 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.

At the end of 2025 I confirmed that our application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) had been approved by the Charity Commission. Since then, we have received a number of enquiries as to why we made the decision to change. The reasons were set out in detail at last year's AGM, but I have summarised them here as a reminder.

As an unincorporated charity, if things go wrong, the members and trustees may be held personally liable for any debts or liabilities. Trustees in particular are at risk of this as they are responsible for the decision making for University of the Third Age - York. The decision to change is set out below:

1. To minimise the risk for members and trustees.
2. To give the charity legal capacity to make undertakings in their own name because they become a legal entity. This means we can own freehold property, take on leasehold property, and enter into commercial contracts (to provide services and buy or sell goods) in the charity's name.
3. As a CIO we will be empowered to fundraise, should we need to do so in the future.

Those members who attended last year's AGM supported the need for change.

We have now signed up for new bank accounts and are waiting for the bank account details so that we can start trading as the CIO. Our new name will be u3a York and the new charity number is 1215778. All of these details will be updated on the website as soon as we start trading in the new name. We have also had to reapply to join the Third Age Trust, a formality but necessary for their governance. Our application has been approved.

In addition to the above the Board of Trustees has been reviewing the vision, mission and priorities for the new CIO. The proposal will be submitted to the first Board of Trustees meeting for the CIO for adoption and, if agreed, will then be shared with the members.

One of the priorities being looked into is the introduction of new technologies that will streamline business processes and support volunteers in all areas. It is also anticipated that this will help with implementing our communications strategy.

A very business driven message from me this time but I don't want to miss this opportunity to give a warm welcome to new members and to thank all of you who are existing members for your continued enthusiasm for leading and joining groups and attending all of the events. Without your support we would not exist and what a loss that would be.

Karen Sawyer
Chair, u3a York
chairyorku3a@gmail.com

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of "The u3a York Times". Isn't it lovely to enjoy warmer weather and the lighter nights. Thank you

to all those members who submitted ideas for the new name of our quarterly newsletter. Thank you to Peter Bacon for his striking and impressive design on the front cover. As you can see, the copies are now in colour.

We would like to say a big thank you to David Maughan Brown who has been our proofreader since we became editors three years ago, his input has been invaluable. He is now taking a well-earned break.

The u3a York Times will keep you up to date with what has been happening in our u3a York.

Thank you to all members who have sent articles for this edition. We would love to hear from members who have experiences to share about interesting or notable events. Many members have had books published, as the one from Mike Wash on page 14. We would enjoy reading about those.

We have over 130 diverse and engaging interest groups in our u3a and there is always room for more, so if you would like to start a group, please contact Samantha, our Groups Coordinator, at yorku3agroups@gmail.com. We welcome reports from all group leaders, as to what is happening in their group. News from the travel group is always entertaining and captivating.

Many of you have, over the years, sent stories and poems for members to enjoy reading. We will not be publishing those in the Times, but there is going to be a publication of creative writing which is just for members' stories and poems. Details of this new publication will be released shortly.

Please send any articles to editorYorku3a@gmail.com for the July edition. The closing date is 8th June.

Finally, a big welcome to new members of u3a York. We hope that you share many happy times with any of the groups which may interest you.

Nick and Sue
Editors, The u3a York Times
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Communications Lead Update

Many of you will be aware that we have been making some important changes to the way we communicate with you. The aim has been to ensure all members have the information they require about forthcoming events and opportunities as well as what has been going on generally regarding Travel, Groups, events and news about our members, while not overloading all of you with too many emails. I do hope you feel that we are striking the right balance.

We launched our “What’s on” email in January of this year – this email drops into your inbox or onto your doormat on or close to the first of the month, and should be your go-to document to find out what you are able to attend or book up for during the month, including new Groups, Travel opportunities ready to be booked, Saturday Talks and Socials, and other one-off events.

This month we are delighted to launch our new quarterly newsletter, The u3a York Times. Once again thank you to Brian Parkin (pictured here receiving his gift voucher from our Chair, Karen Sawyer) who won the prize for suggesting the title. Also, a big thank you to Peter Bacon for the eye-catching design on the cover.



The u3a York Times is intended to keep you up to date on what has been going on in u3a York. We will include reports from our Groups, especially those currently open to new members, and news about all the Travel that has been going on during the previous quarter, and hope that these will whet your appetite for taking part in the future. We also welcome news from our members about any interesting or notable events – challenges, awards, publishing books, please let us know what you have been up to. We also intend to include a crossword and other puzzles from the next issue. As you can imagine, The u3a York Times is still in its infancy, so do expect some changes over the coming issues.

The u3a York Times will be published on the first of January, April, July, and October and the deadline for any articles will be the 8th of the previous month. Any submissions should be sent to the Editors, at editorYorku3a@gmail.com or by post to the Editors, u3a York, 15A Clifford Street, YO1 9RG.

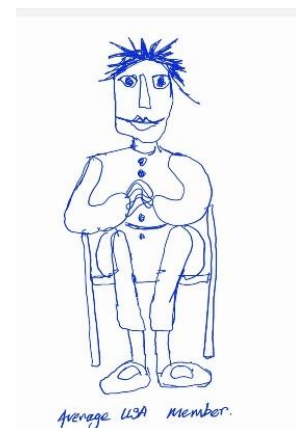
Beryl Oppenheim
Events and Communications Lead, u3a York
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News from the Groups

Drawing for Life

LIFE DRAWING is a long running group on the first Tuesday of every month from 2 to 4pm in the Woolman Room.

Come and try our Life Drawing Group. It's been a great part of the u3a creative monthly calendar for many years. The current friendly group would be glad of some extra members.



Sitting for short poses for each other (with our clothes on!) we enjoy relaxed sketching, chatting and comparing results good and bad. You don't have to be an artist or able at sketching at all. It's a good way to express yourself or to find your abilities in quirky forms. Think Picasso.

We haven't been able to attract a tutor but we're all happy to exchange tips or support for any difficulties and share ideas about materials.

Come and get to know people in a quiet, friendly setting.

Bring a cheap sketch pad and pencil, pen or crayons, or just come for the coffee and biscuits if you like. We'll all have a try at drawing you. Looking forward to meeting you.

If you are interested in joining, please get in touch with me via the u3a York website https://york.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/life-drawing

Eleanor O'Flynn
Life Drawing
lifedrawing@yorku3a.com

Listening To Literature

Do you enjoy 'listening' to your 'reading', maybe while driving, relaxing, or doing household jobs? If so, you would be welcome to join us. We meet to discuss literature that we've listened to. Members take it in turns to choose the books.

We meet at my home on Badger Hill, to the east of York off the Hull Road generally on the third Friday each month, 1.45pm-3.15pm.

There will be no charge.

17th April – Wives and Daughters by Mrs Gaskell

19th June – Yet to be chosen

If you'd like to join us, but prefer reading a physical copy that will be fine, though we don't guarantee that what we listen to will always be available in print.

Elisa Main
elisamain@yahoo.co.uk

Eco Friendly Support Group

We meet once a month, on second Friday afternoons, 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.

On 13th March I will lead the topic of Overfishing.

On 10th April Gillian will give a short presentation based on the book "My Head for a Tree" by Martin Goodman. It is about the Bishnoi people, living in Rajasthan, being the world's First Eco-Warriors, going to great lengths to live a life, protecting nature and animals. They continue to follow rules, first set out in the 16th century.

Timing and Venue - 1.30pm - 3.15pm, at my home in Badger Hill

There is no charge.

Elisa Main
elisamain@yahoo.co.uk

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. Occasionally subtitled films are suggested, sometimes on different days.

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 Choral', 'Come see me in the good light', 'Nuremberg', 'Wake up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery', 'It was just an Accident', 'The Tale of Silyan', 'Goodbye June', 'Sentimental Value', 'Peter Hujar's Day', 'Becoming Victoria Wood', 'Hamnet', 'H is for Hawk', 'Nouvelle Vague', 'My Father's Shadow', 'Wuthering Heights', 'Hamlet' and 'The Testament of Ann Lee'.

Elisa Main
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Travel Team Report

The Travel Team have provided an activity in each of December, January and February.



In December our Christmas activity was an interesting visit to Beverley where most of us visited the Christmas Tree Festival at Beverley Minster. Despite the rain we also found our way to various other locations including the art gallery. In the afternoon we enjoyed a delicious festive afternoon tea at Murton Park.

In January we had a local trip not requiring a coach. We visited the Mansion House and then the Guildhall in York. Members found it very interesting to see inside these historic buildings of such importance to the City of York.



We had an overwhelming response for the visit to Jodrell Bank planned for February – nearly 100 members wanted to participate, when we normally take 50 in our coach. As a result, we organised another visit. Both visits went very well, in good weather, enabling us to appreciate the full site at Jodrell Bank. The history of



Jodrell Bank is fascinating and the research being done there continues to be very important.

The full reports of these visits are on the Travel page of the website.

Sheila McKilligan
travelteamyorku3a@gmail.com

Members Round-up

Cross Country Skiing in Seefeld

I first went to Seefeld in Austria in 1976. On that occasion I went to learn to downhill ski, and with a passion ignited for the sport I returned for many years. Last week, the beginning of February, was 50 years since that first visit, and now I was going back to Seefeld to cross country ski, a passion which took over from

downhill skiing in 1989, and which I've pursued annually since. Mostly, my yearly trips have been to northern Finland, to the beautiful area of Akaslompolo, and to Norway, to the area known as Venabu near the Rondane National Park. But for three years now I've returned to Seefeld with its 245 kms of cross-country ski trails of all levels of difficulty in the Region.

Seefeld, at an altitude of 1,180 metres and home to the winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976, is one of five villages situated in the Tyrol's beautiful high plateau, near to the Austrian German border. Each of the five villages has its own story but my favourite areas apart from Seefeld are Leutasch and Wildmoos.

The high Leutasch valley, just a short bus ride from Seefeld, stretches for sixteen kms through the Alps, south of the Zugspitz, Germany's highest peak (2,962 metres above sea level). It is situated in the middle of the Wetterstein mountain range, a chain of limestone peaks marking the border between Austria and Germany. The pristine landscape of Leutasch with its forests and alpine meadows, crystal clear lakes and the spectacular Geisterklam Gorge is a hiker's dream in summer, whilst in winter the valley is transformed into a cross-country skier's paradise with cut tracks (lopje) stretching the length of the valley and passing through many small traditional farms.

Wildmoos is another plateau area near to Seefeld, surrounded by thick forests, dramatic mountain peaks, and home to Wildmoosalm, a farm, mountain hut, and restaurant serving delicious Apple Strudel. In winter Wildmoos is a real winter wonderland with some of the most beautiful cross country ski trails in the Tyrol.

It was these three areas, Seefeld, Leutasch, and Wildmoos, where my husband Tim and I spent our week skiing. After weeks of rain and grey skies at home, the sparkling snow, the

mountains, the sunshine and the cloudless blue skies were a delight. On the first and fifth days we skied in and above the Seefeld valley, breaking our days for hot chocolate and Goulash soup. On the second day we caught the bus to Wildmoos and enjoyed the many cross country skiing trails and the Apple Strudel. However, if I had to choose my favourite days of this week they were the three we spent in the Leutasch valley, skiing in the upper region on two occasions and all the way down to the end of the valley and back on another occasion. I was in my element, gliding in the lopje, drinking in the landscape, surrounded by the mountains, peace, and tranquillity, all in sunshine beneath blue skies. But I was also alarmed: there were times in the week when it felt almost too hot to ski despite reducing our clothing to one layer, and as the week progressed we watched the snow melting before our eyes, then one afternoon and evening it rained. This was the first week of February, it shouldn't be like this high up in the Alps, the rain, if temperatures had not been so high, would have been snow, and the snow should not have been disappearing.

So, with that 50-year anniversary in mind I couldn't help reflecting on the changes I'd witnessed since my first visit. Each of the last three years we'd visited Seefeld at a different time: first in late February 2023, there was hardly enough snow to ski widely in the area; then in late December 2024 when there was so little snow many of the cross-country ski trails were closed. This year it was the first week of February 2026, surely the height of the snow season. There was enough snow for many of the trails to be open but not all of them, by the end of the week there were vast areas of brown grass where the snow had disappeared, and many of the mountain peaks were bare rock, no longer snow covered.

In addition, I reflected on the plight of Alpine glaciers. Decreasing snowfall and increasing heatwaves in the mountains are likely to lead to the disappearance of all the glaciers in the Alps by the end of the century. Scientists have predicted that glaciers in the European Alps are likely to reach their peak rate of extinction in only eight years, with more than one hundred due to melt permanently by 2033 according to one of the studies. It is hard to deny today that the melting of Alpine glaciers driven by human-caused global warming is one of the clearest signs of the climate crisis.

Fifty years ago I would not have seen trails closed in the peak winter season, nor snow melt on such a rapid and widespread basis, and did not even think that the glaciers, looking such a permanent feature, could retreat so quickly and be in danger of disappearing completely, possibly within the lifetime of the next generation to me. I am lucky and grateful to have had so many wonderful years of skiing, and hope to have many more to come, but I also hope that we can begin to stem the climate crisis so that future generations will also be able to enjoy the winter wonderland and the winter activities which have enriched my life beyond measure.

Sandy D. Franklin

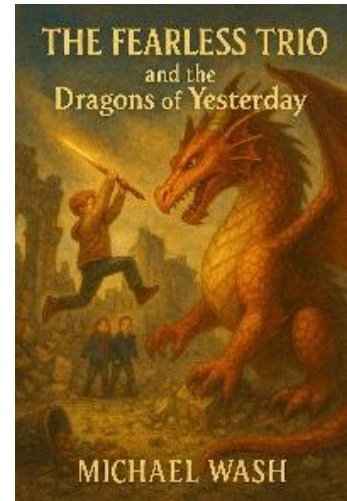
Fantasy book launch for children, and choir performances on the horizon

So, what does the outgoing Chairman of York Philharmonic Male Voice Choir do with his time now he is not fully occupied with Choir matters?

Write children's books of course! Mike Wash, York resident and u3a member is already an established author of self-

development and business books. He has recently published the first of what he says is a series of three books.

“The Fearless Trio and the Dragons of Yesterday” is a fantasy adventure exploring the world of Dragons and their influence on children through their shadows. This magical tale quietly explores big themes of love and teamwork between siblings, believing in your



own abilities, and taking responsibility even when scary. Through Dragons, portals and bullies, children see courage in action, learn to face down wrongful power with truth, facing fears and discovering how important it is to stick together as a family.

After an intensive year leading the choir through centenary celebrations Mike now is thoroughly enjoying singing and learning new repertoire that will form the bedrock of performances throughout the year.

For an update on choir events see <https://www.yorkphilchoir.org.uk/> and for those who have children between the ages of 7 and 12 then his book is now available on [Amazon](#).

Mike Wash

Honorary Members' Stories

Anne Ryder

A friend encouraged Anne to join in 1994 following early retirement from a career with Terry's. She shared the following happy memories of her time with York u3a.

Anne initially joined the Gardening group, was Treasurer for 10 years and is still an active member. She has gardened at private

houses, The Homestead, and a school in Clifton. The group had over 150 members at the time, but it was reduced when the Pocklington and Haxby & Wigginton u3as were established. She also visited many gardens where open days were being held. Her own garden was around a third of an acre and she held open days there (called Cream Teas). These were more like a small garden fete with stalls, books and auctions raising over £1000 for charity.

If that wasn't enough, she soon joined the Flower Arranging group. As the leader for this group was moving, she took up the role of Group Leader. Under her leadership the group took on more members and people came from all over the York area to join. In fact, it was so successful that the group had to keep moving to increasingly larger rooms. She did this for over 23 years before eventually retiring, sadly no-one has taken over, so the group has now stopped meeting.

Despite being a busy member and Group Leader Anne joined the Country Walks group and enjoyed the beautiful countryside, and a few lunches in the country pubs!

Anne has been on many short breaks with York u3a, going to Scotland, the Lake District and Wales. She has made many friends over the years and still takes other members out in her car if they are unable to get themselves around. Having been to so many places and been so heavily involved in York u3a Anne couldn't pick out one memorable moment saying that there had been so many.

Anne wouldn't hesitate to recommend York u3a. She described it as a great place to make friends and to do things that make you happy. In her words, it's all about friendship.

