

Registered Charity: 1038457



# Stray News

July 2023



## 1 "Out and About"

## **Welcome to the first of the newly revived Stray News Magazine**

Our aim has been to continue providing a showcase celebrating the great variety of learning activities organised by members of Harrogate u3a to share with each other – some practical, others recreational and most encouraging group discussion over shared issues.

We hope you will agree that members are certainly helping Harrogate u3a to fulfil the main guiding principles of the u3a movement, namely that members, through sharing their knowledge, skills and experience, can and do learn from each other.

A big thank you to the many group leaders and their members who have contributed photos, reports and thoughts about what they have been up to over the past year. With so many articles provided, it has been necessary to break the July magazine up into 3 sections to cater for the memory restrictions of our current website!

Realising that space was going to be an issue, we also chose not to make use this time of the amusing poems etc which had already appeared in other publications, but to highlight the wealth of local talent and activities as experienced by Harrogate u3a members themselves.

However, we do hold on to all contributions received, so they may yet appear in a future edition of Stray News . . .

with best wishes from the editorial team

*Catherine Sauzier and Beulah Chatten*

## Amblers' day out in York

Di Simpson

On a sunny day in May the Amblers set out to go to York, travelling by train, which made a change from the bus. We walked over Lendal Bridge and down the Judi Dench steps to arrive at the riverside. There we sat on seats looking at the river to have our picnic. Further along we found the entrance to the Abbey Gardens which were ablaze with flowers.

The photo shows us by the ruined Abbey. We really felt that we had a lovely day out.



## The Strollers



The Strollers have enjoyed a variety of walks since our 'first of the season' at Golden Acre Park in September, including Knaresborough, Harewood, Ripon and more recently Ripley.

Ripley was our walk last week, it's a walk we often do at this time of year, a circular through the bluebell woods. We were fortunate it was a lovely day and the bluebells were a picture.

*Barbara Peel – Group Leader*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the group members who have led walks for me during the last few difficult months. I have really appreciated all your help and am glad to be back with you once again.



*"Confused in Guernsey"*



## The Naturalists Group

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month; during the winter months we have indoor meetings with a speaker, during the summer months we are 'out and about'.

In **May 2022** we visited **Askham Bog**, a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve, and were fortunate to be shown around by Professor Alistair Fitter of York University, who was very informative.



The coach trip in **June** took us to **RSPB Bempton Cliffs**, where, as expected, we saw large numbers of various seabirds, including one rare Black Browed Albatross.



ASKHAM BOG



RAZOR BILLS AND GANNETS



WHITE SCAR CAVES



In **July** we had a 'Limestone Day', both below and above ground. Firstly, a small group went down into **White Scar Caves** and were shown around by an excellent guide; we were impressed by the huge number and variety of formations to be seen.





This was followed by a visit to **Scarclose** limestone area just below Ingleborough; Brian Wood shared his expertise about the geology and flora etc.

Then as usual we had a Fungi Foray in **October** with experts Denise and Mervin on hand to identify what we found.



**FROG ORCHID  
AT SCARCLOSE**



**DENISE CARTER LEADING THE FUNGI FORAY**



New members to the group are always welcome; If anyone would like a copy of this year's programme, please email me at [issybeard@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:issybeard@hotmail.co.uk) *Isobel Beard*



## Discover Yorkshire's Heritage Group visit Wentworth Woodhouse



On May 17<sup>TH</sup> a full coach set off from Harrogate to drive to Wentworth Woodhouse in South Yorkshire for our second visit. This time we were booked on to the Black Diamonds Tour of the house. We were shown around by two extremely interesting and very knowledgeable guides who took us not only into the more public rooms but into area of the house that the public don't usually get to see. We were shown the servants' corridors and working areas, where we learnt that the Fitzwilliam family had their own bakery, confectioners and even a candle maker.

After the tour, and time to wander around the extensive gardens, which were looking beautiful with so many azaleas and rhododendrons in bloom, we boarded the coach again for the short journey to Wentworth Garden Centre. Most of the group managed to find time to visit the cafeteria, browse amongst the plants and other merchandise and make a few purchases. Some of us also took a look around the older parts of the formal gardens where there is a maze, a sunken garden and rock garden and an ice house. They even had a bear pit!

*Cheryl Johnston*





## Discover Yorkshire's Heritage Group visit York Mansion House on 23 April

This grand house was built to impress as the city grew in importance and we had a fascinating tour with a knowledgeable guide who entertained us with amusing stories as well as the history of this great house.

Each year a new mayor was elected by the local aldermen and he had to provide all that was needed for the empty building – furniture, crockery, glassware, cooks, servants etc – and entertain many people, including providing two meals a week for important guests. An expensive position!

It was difficult to imagine how up to 300 meals could be cooked in the small, dark kitchen.

The dining-room doubled as a committee room and was where guests were served huge meals of meat and fish, with very few vegetables, from enormous silver-plated vessels. Huge quantities of different wines and spirits were drunk with glasses being rinsed each time in bowls set at each place. The absence of lavatories meant that chamber pots were in use, a silver one still being kept in a glass cupboard!

Also on this floor was a large green room where portraits of royalty such as George II and William III and important business men surround the walls. The ceremonial swords and maces are also in this room and are used on special occasions such as the mayor-making ceremony. This room was used as a ballroom and, high above, was the Minstrels' Gallery where musicians entertained. The room also contained a hidden cabinet of curiosities including a

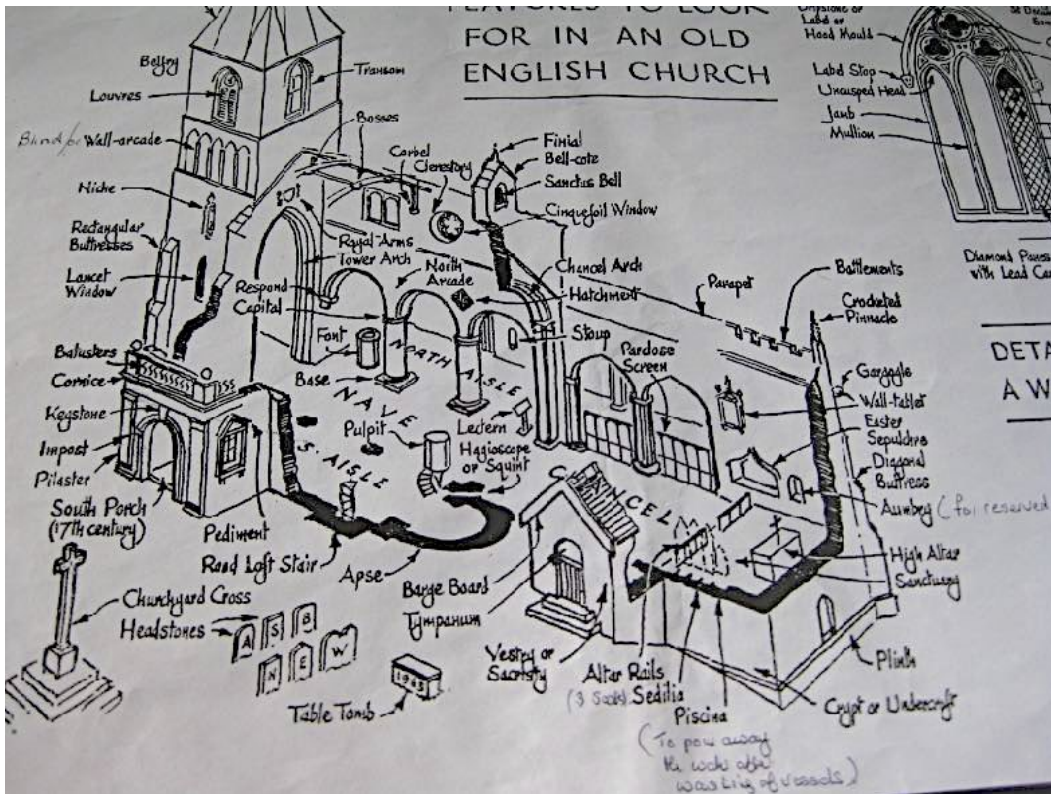
mummified cat found during the recent restoration of the building and believed to be a good-luck charm.

To finish the tour we viewed the extensive collection of silver vessels, the largest outside London. The tour provided a unique insight into Georgian York.

*John and Frances Russell*



## Looking at Churches Group celebrates 26 years and counting ...



The Looking at Churches group was started by Patrick Bishop followed by Michael Crosby, both true experts on the architecture of churches, cathedrals and their interiors and fitments. Many talks and visits later sadly both passed away but the group continues in a slightly different manner.

Now some of our members research, photograph, visit and then give excellent talks to our Group.

Recent talks have included –

- ❖ St Augustine's Abbey,
- ❖ The Sykes Churches Trail,
- ❖ Churches accessible on the Bus 36,
- ❖ Places and Occasions Music and 1000 years of Church Treasures in Yorkshire.

We also ask specialist speakers to give us talks which have included Fountains Abbey, Medieval glass in York and In the Steps of St Wilfred this year.

Our members give very short presentations on their favourite churches at our December meeting.

Each summer we have visits which included Pickering to see the wall paintings and Coxwold with many interesting internal features last year and trips to Beverley Minster and St Mary's Church and York Minster to see the stained glass are planned this year.

Next year we look forward to talks on St Oswald Churches, Church Vestments, and Preparation of Medieval Manuscripts.

We hope to build on our 26 years and look forward to welcoming new members.

*Bridget Page*







## U3A Gardening Group

The gardening group has had a good year with a wide variety of speakers. We began with a talk by Alan Chalk on a year in the life of a nursery, which was followed by Sarah Hopps telling us about gardening to delight the senses. Talks on growing fruit in small gardens, plants that earn their keep and special plants for small gardens were much appreciated.

We also enjoyed illustrated talks on Royal Gardens, Harrogate parks and gardens and the work of Horticap.



Our **June** outing was to **RHS Bridgewater** – a relatively new garden which was much appreciated by the group and well worth a visit.

We have been pleased to welcome some new members but there is room for more! Our programme for next year is on the website so if you are interested please come along. We meet at Bilton Community Centre on the second Friday afternoon in the month from September to May.

*Anne Brown (Group Leader)*





## History of Art Group



In March '*Impressionism - Setting the Scene*' was our last lecture from **Brian Souter**, and the last in the 2022/23 series.

Impressionism "was the most important thing that happened in European art since the Renaissance – from it virtually all subsequent developments in painting stemmed" (*Bernard Denvir*). "Impressionists liberated (artists) from the shackles of the past" (*Barbara Whelpton*).

*... and their activities spanned the 1860s to the 1890s.*

The first lecture in the 2023/24 series on '*Impressionism*' will be on '*Monet: Seeds of Modern Art*', on 13 September, the lecturer for the series once more the excellent Brian Souter. But please do **NOT** join nor re-join the Group **until after the 1st August!!** Thank you.

On 12<sup>th</sup> April, 38 of us joined Brian Souter's very successful coach trip to the **Derby Museum & Art Gallery** principally to view the special exhibition of paintings by **Joseph Wright of Derby** and see more of his art in The Print Room drawers, We also had the unexpected pleasure of a brilliant exhibition of Hogarth prints and art. The adjoining museum galleries were also well worth seeing, including magnificent china ware, a superbly displayed military history of Derbyshire regiments, world ethnic artefacts, and amazing cases of butterflies, beetles and moths.



Rocks with Waterfall



Self Portrait



Miravan