



Stray Bits – November 2023

GOODBYE 2023



Welcome to the last Stray Bits in 2023 and many thanks to all contributors. We will all be planning for Christmas – either with our families – or certainly with them in mind. I expect nearly everyone will be sharing Christmas with someone else during the Christmas and New Year period.

I know there are many lunches and parties arranged at this time of year – but we must always remember those who are not so fortunate.

Stray Bits is normally a 2-page newsletter carrying short summaries of group activities and news. This month, the Contributors have been generous with their copy, and I have included them in full on an extra page.. Save up your tales of Christmas and after – and send them to me for the next Stray Bits – which will not be until February. So, plenty of time!!

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas! Val Cooke. Ed.

NOTICE of the HARROGATE u3a ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held at the **Wesley Centre, Harrogate on Friday, 1st. December 2023.** The doors will open from 10am and the meeting will start at approximately 10.30am after coffee and members' registration.

New Group proposal by Val Michie 'In Conversation'

I'd like to set up a new group, called 'In Conversation', the aim of which would be for members to gather informally one evening a month over a glass of something, to talk about anything of interest, learn from each other, understand different perspectives, and maybe even change our individual take on things. If this appeals to you, please let me know. I'd also welcome suggestions as to the where and when, and how much you'd be willing - if necessary - to pay for some space to gather. I've already sounded out the management at Hale's Bar, who would waive hire fees for their small room if we could guarantee 20 attendees, but I'm happy to explore other options.

The mantra of the u3a is to "draw upon members' knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other for pleasure; learning is its own reward." So, what d'you think? Hope to hear from you soon! Val Michie.

Harrogate U3A Singing For Pleasure Group has warmly welcomed our new Conductor, **Carmel Wake**, The first Concert under her leadership will form part of the Christmas Tree Festival at **St John's Church Knaresborough**. Will be singing carols and Christmas music from **2 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday 02 December**. The Christmas Tree Festival goes on until 23 December. Come and listen whilst viewing the wonderful collection of Christmas trees! **Eric Vernon, Group Leader.**

Botanical

The popular Botanical Art Group is now restarting again. The first meeting will be on Thursday 23rd November and held every two weeks. Anyone interested in joining the Group, please contact **Dee Deacon Elliott** for further information. There are now only 4 places left to fill.

Going Gently. Planning Ahead for Old Age and Afterwards



One thing that all of us will have to face eventually is our own mortality. Whether death comes suddenly or is signalled from afar, it will be easier for us and for those we leave behind if we can plan for its arrival. Although the u3a doesn't cater exclusively for older people, it has an ageing demographic, with many of its members in their 70s, 80s or even 90s. Yet preparing for the end is a subject that is largely conspicuous by its absence among Groups run by u3as across the country.

Drawing on the experiences of those conducting a similar course in Wetherby u3a, here in Harrogate we decided to establish a Group whose purpose would be to help members examine the issues involved in growing older. This short course comprises six two-hour sessions held (except for the final one) in our local library. Both presenters have experience in bereavement counselling, having volunteered with the local hospice for the past 10 years or so. Given the nature of the subject matter, the decision was taken to restrict membership to a maximum of 10. We have recently completed our second Going Gently course, with the intention of

running future courses to meet continuing demand.

For further details, please contact: **Richard Cyster**: or **Jenny Thompson**:

Painting at Pannal.

We are ending the year with our Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Library. Along with our colleagues at **Painting for Pleasure** and **Painting and Drawing** we have assembled over 60 paintings. The library can only hang 30 so we will change the display midway towards Christmas. The library staff were pleased to see the wall decorated and it gives publicity for our U3A.



Some paintings are cherished by the artist while others are **FOR SALE**, so may be the answer to your Christmas present quandary. Or perhaps you should just refresh your space.

– take down your **Monarch of the Glen** and your **Blue Chinese Girl** - so retro.

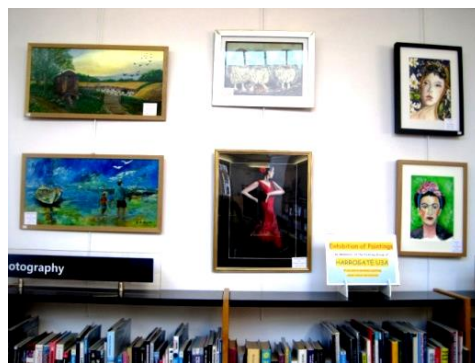
Cover those light patches on

the wallpaper with a **bright contemporary jewel from a Harrogate U3A artist!**

OR just browse with a coffee and enjoy the beautiful building.

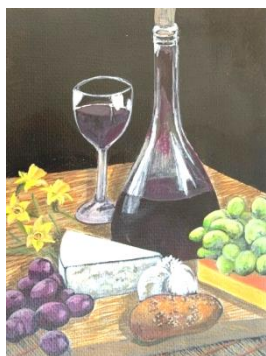
It is on the top floor so TAKE THE LIFT!

Further details from: Brian Graham email



The Sunday Morning Coffee Group meets on the third Sunday of every month in the upstairs café of Hopkins at Horticap on Otley Road from 10.30 – 12pm. This is an excellent venue with plenty of parking, a lift, hot drinks, cakes, scones, and other delicious things to tempt us. It's all very informal! This friendly group, with a maximum of 20 attendees, is perfect for anyone who prefers smaller gatherings. There is a waiting list but if you are interested in joining us, then please contact **Jenny Thompson**

Painting and Drawing Group Summary. November 2023



The Painting and Drawing Group has had a very busy autumn term with 5 members of the group submitting work for the exhibition taking place at the Central Library in Harrogate for most of November and December (see some examples here). Some of us have done bold experimental paintings and drawings using pastels, acrylics, watercolour and watercolour pencils and everyone has enjoyed themselves being creative. Books on different techniques and inspiring artists have been available for perusal and have proved a talking point with many ideas exchanged and lots of lively conversation over our tea breaks.



Our term ends on Tuesday 28th November, when we break up for a well-earned rest over the Festive period. We return to Community House for another 11-week term on Tuesday 9th January 2024, when suggested topics will include Weather and Skies, Landscapes/Seascapes, Spring Flowers, and Youngsters. Themes will include composition, colour and mark making using a variety of media, with reference to the work of established artists. **Susan Huskins. Group Leader**

Harrogate Family History Group, has had another successful year but it is not quite over yet as we have our December meeting where we will hear from a guest speaker from the Wetherby U3a Family History group speaking about her "beautiful and talented grandmother."

The FHG meets once a month, on a Thursday afternoon, either face to face, where we usually have a speaker from within the group, or on zoom when we join forces with the Ripon FHG and usually have an outside speaker. This year we have had some fascinating and informative talks from Occupational Hazards - the working Lives of Our Ancestors to A Wensleydale Grandmother. Next year we have already arranged some speakers on a wide variety of family history topics, from searching for Scottish ancestors, to "Causes of death" and women going to war in World War 1.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact us on: u3a.hgtfamhistgroup@gmail.com

Reindeer Drive. This will be held on Friday 15th December at the Wesley centre. A jolly time to be had by all with mulled wine and mince pies to finish. Cost £3 at the door.

Please contact Heather Law via the **EVENTS** page on the website to give the Chief Reindeer and idea of numbers.



Art History. 'The Group have continued to enjoy Brian Souter's



absorbing lectures on 'Impressionism' given in the warm comfort of the Methodist Church Hall in Gracious Street, Knaresborough. Since our last report we've been taken through the lives and work of the painters Pissarro and Degas.



Brian's favourite painting by Camille Pissarro (1830- 1903) is 'Entrance to the Village of Voisins' (1872) because it reminds him of the village where he was born. Pissarro was a father figure to the Impressionists and encouraged Cezanne and other young painters. Along with Monet, Pissarro

sought refuge from the Franco Prussian war in England where he painted, amongst others, the train at Lordship Lane Station, Penge in 1871.

'The Group continues to Christmas and beyond with lectures on Sisley and Caillebotte (November), and Morisot and Cassatt in December, when, if we behave ourselves, we may get mince pies...'

The **Exercise & Fitness** and **Tai Chi** groups, once part of the U3A, are now independent. They are organised by Val Cooke. Led by qualified professional tutors who are fully insured as is necessary when exercises for older members are involved.

Exercise & Fitness is taken by Jo Finnegan, who is the regional expert in such exercise, and we are extremely fortunate to have her continued leadership. We meet regularly at the Jennyfield Styan Hall on Tuesday afternoons from 2-3pm when Jo puts us through our paces! Spring term will begin on **Tuesday 9th January**, and will be a great opportunity to get ourselves in trim for the New Year.

Tai Chi is led by Nick Rodriguez, who is a delightful tutor and puts us gently through the initial warming up exercises and then some Tai Chi forms. These are not fierce or aggressive but more meditative, stretching, and relaxing. The new term will start on **Wednesday 17th January at 3pm**.

Taster sessions costs £5 and if you wish to continue – then the termly cost is adjusted as necessary. For information contact **Val Cooke** on 01423 506837 or email: valerie@cooke989.plus.com



A recipe for Living

Take equal parts of kindness,

Unselfishness and thoughtfulness

Mix in an atmosphere of Love!

Add a spice of usefulness

Scatter a few grains of cheerfulness

Season with smiles

Stir with a happy laugh

And dispense to everyone.



Communications

Website address – <https://u3asites.org.uk/harrogate/home>

Group Leaders - please give updates to Website Editor, Ian Munday at:

Stray Bits for your immediate notices and information. **Copy by 15th February 2023** please to Val Cooke, Editor

Stray News. Harrogate U3A Magazine. Editor, Catherine Sauzier