

Whitby Whaler March 2024



Message from the Chair

February seems to have soon passed, and there are signs of spring in the air, with a few early daffodils out. We can look back on two enjoyable and successful events in the month – the Winter Social and the Pantomime.

The Winter Social attracted over 80 people and a good time was had by all. The 40s theme was taken up by quite a few people with impressive 40s outfits, and prizes for the best Fancy Dress were awarded to Ann Coulter and Dave Baddeley – congratulations to them for their excellent costumes. The dance floor was full most of the evening, even up to 10.30pm.

After two performances at the end of January our 3rd Age Stagers concluded with a third performance of their pantomime, a version of Aladdin on 3rd February, which I attended. It was very enjoyable and very funny, and I was particularly impressed with how the cast coped with the logistical difficulties of getting on and off stage at the Rifle Club, and the costumes were marvellous! The performances were a sell out on all three days, and as a result there was a surplus of £443. So, congratulations to Jan Jennings, the leader of the group, to Clair Stones, who wrote and directed the play as well as playing a prominent part, and to all members of the cast for their efforts, with special thanks to Rose Noble for stepping in at very short notice as Aladdin after the previous Aladdin had broken her ankle.

Also during February the Committee held a new members meeting, with the aim of telling our new members all about our u3a, the way it is run and the various groups and activities available; we also heard from them about their experiences so far, together with some suggestions for new groups.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter we still have one vacancy on the Committee, and in particular we are looking for someone to take on the role of publicity officer, to spread the good word about our u3a around the town and surroundings, and help recruit more new members. If anyone is interested in joining the committee but would like more details please contact me at twbarrowcliffe@yahoo.co.uk, or on 01947 600963 – you would be welcome to sit in on a committee meeting without any commitment.

Message from Sandra Goodship – Business Secretary

The Third Age Trust Online Learning

Upcoming online learning events offered by the Third Age Trust include the following

- Aviation - Captain John Hutchinson shares experiences from his fifteen years as a time as a British Airways Concorde Captain
- Women In Faith - exploring the role of women in different world faiths

- From Pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks - exploring the history of pleasure gardens
- Live Cookery demonstrations featuring spring recipes
- The Climate Crisis - and some solutions

All events are free to u3a members and are delivered via Zoom. To find out more on these, see what else is available or to sign up visit the Third Age Trust website page here [u3a - Online Learning Events](#)

Coffee Mornings

You only get to enjoy a monthly tea or coffee at our coffee mornings thanks to our wonderful volunteers who make it!. If you want this to continue, then we need some more people to step forward to help out each month. Anne Jackson is now setting up a rota of those willing to assist - you don't have to commit to doing this every month, the more people who come forward the more the load gets spread. So if you want our coffee mornings to not become just 'mornings' without the coffee, then please put your name forward to Anne (01947 810590, annejay1234ra@gmail.com)

Rifle Club

Please note that our agreement for hire of the Rifle Club allows for a two week shut down over Easter. Therefore for those groups that meet there, there will be no classes from Tuesday 26th March to Thursday 4th April inclusive.

Music Appreciation Group

In the February session we enjoyed a programme devoted to music from the Czech Republic, with pieces by Dvořák, Smetana and Janáček. Please note that the next meeting will be on **the fourth Friday in March, the 22nd**, as the last Friday is Good Friday. There will be piano music, both solo and with other instruments, the composers are yet to be determined.

Trevor Barrowcliffe

u3a Singers

We are at the moment preparing for our annual Music Hall Song extravaganza which this year is on Saturday, 13th April.

Everyone is invited to attend the show at the Whitby Pavilion and tickets will soon be on sale. The audience will be invited to sing and also to enjoy wearing the dress of the Victorian and of the Edwardian era. It will be an evening of nostalgia for many. Make it a date for your diary.

National u3a Festival, July 2024

As mentioned in the last Newsletter the National U3A Festival will be held at York University from Thursday 18th July to Saturday 20th July. There will be a wide variety of activities - talks, sporting events, musical entertainment and workshops. Details of the schedule and costs are as follows:

- Day 1, Thursday 18th July (from lunchtime) - £25 including buffet supper
- Day 2, Friday 19th July - £10 for the full day
- Day 3, Saturday 20th July (morning) - £5 for a half day
- Full festival to include all 3 days and a buffet supper on Day 1 - £35

For those who would like to stay for the three days accommodation on the University campus is fully booked, so you would have to arrange accommodation elsewhere in York. Registration is not yet open but two of our music groups are interested in going for the day on Friday the 19th to perform, and a

coach will be arranged – there will be a list available at coffee mornings for anyone else who's interested in going to sign up.

New Group – Backgammon

Helen Martin has offered to lead a backgammon group, if anyone is interested can you please contact the secretary, Sandra Goodship, on secretarywhitbywhaleru3a@gmail.com or 07840509992. If you haven't played before it's an easy game to learn.

Arts and Crafts Group

Come along to our class at the Coliseum (Hopkinson Suite) on Fridays from 10am to 12 noon. If you don't have a project, just come for a natter, we are a very friendly group and it's a lovely venue. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided for a mere 20p. *Paula Frankland*

u3a Theatre Visits Group

WAR HORSE Sunderland Empire November 2024 Details coming soon. 50 seats available Please sign up if you are interested.

LORD OF THE DANCE York Barbican Saturday 24th August 2.30pm Payment now due £80 Cheque (Whitby Whaler u3a) or cash. Five places left.

Reminder: Our first show for 2024 **THE DRIFTERS GIRL** Thursday 28th March Sunderland Empire 50 seats Fully booked. You have your ticket already. Leaving Whitby from 8.55am Thank you for your support, Rose Corner 07790896062



Gardening Group

Our next meeting is at The Coliseum Whitby on Mon. 4th March, 2.00pm, with Sioned Price & Roy Pearson telling us about their career changing “**Journey - Opening of Apple Orchard Nurseries, Skelton.**”

We will also be taking payments for the June trip to Temple Newsam House & Gardens, Tuesday 4th June 2024. The cost is £35.00, which includes coach, entrance and house tour, morning coffee and buffet lunch. Please bring an envelope with your name, pick-up point, and cheque (Whitby Whaler U3A) or cash to the next meeting.

Joyce Stangoe

East Whitby Primary Academy, Stainsacre Lane, Whitby

Can we ask Whitby Whaler members to collect and save all washed plastic milk bottle tops (any colour)? Can you please bring them to the coffee mornings to donate to the above school who have an ongoing project to collect and recycle? Many thanks. Joyce Stangoe

Concert Outing

The next concert outing is to the Sage Gateshead on Friday 5th April; just to remind you of the programme: *Carl Nielsen: Helios Overture*, *Sergei Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2*, *Jean Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*.

All 25 tickets that were ordered have now been sold, but it may be possible to order some more; if anyone else is interested in going please contact me (contact details in Message from Chairman). The concert starts at 7.30pm and the coach will leave Whitby at 4.45pm. Cost of the ticket is £35, and the coach fare is £20. Coach fares can be paid at the coffee morning in March, when I hope to have the tickets for distribution. *Trevor Barrowcliffe*

The Whaler Band

Attendance at Whaler Band sessions has remained good through the depths of winter, with members shrugging off the continuous wind and rain to enjoy the benefits of singing and playing together. Research has shown that, for those of us of, “a certain age...”, social interaction can be very beneficial. Playing music and singing has also been shown to be beneficial for brain health as it utilises pathways in the brain which would otherwise remain unused. Research has also shown that our main musical influences are gained in the age range from 10 to 30 years, so, if you expect to be marooned on a desert island with only 8 vinyl records, choose ones from that particular era.

We have started on our 2024 European Tour with our first performance at the Town & Country Care Home, entertaining, “elderly people”, which seemed to go down very well. Our next gig will be in mid-March, at Sleights, entertaining the local Revival Group. Guessing that the 10 to 30 age range of the audience will be mainly 1950’s and 60’s, we will draft our programme to suit.

History Group

St. John Ambulance Hall Thursdays (weekly). 2 – 4 pm

Our group sessions for February began with an excellent presentation on Shackleton’s



Imperial Trans-Antarctic expedition (1914) by Joanne Aston.

Her talk covered not only the fate of the *Endurance* and her crew but also the less-familiar events involving the *Aurora*. Indeed, these latter events were new considerations for many of the very sizeable audience that had gathered for the talk.

After half term we were treated to an amusing presentation on the local history of several Cleveland villages by Marjorie Kirke, and Ruth Harwood delivered an insightful progression through the political history developments that gave rise to the current structures of western Europe. Key figures such as Metternich and Bismarck were discussed together with the backgrounds to the two world wars that tore the continent apart.

An interesting part of the talk was an account of the fighting in the ‘Colmar Pocket’ – a final part of the war after the ‘Battle of

the Bulge' in which Audie Murphy became the most decorated American combat soldier of World War II (in January 1945), when at the age of 19 he single-handedly held off a company of German soldiers for an hour. Murphy went on to become a noted film actor.

Audie Murphy

Our programme continues until Easter with the following presentations from people who regularly contribute strongly to our group, and your continued support is most welcome.

Feb. 29th Four Special Ladies

Marian Brockway

Mar. 7th The Chapmans of Whitby

Clair Stones

Mar. 14th A Quartet of Christians

Dave Bradley

Monthly Lecture Group St. John Ambulance Hall Tuesdays (3rd monthly), 10 – 12 noon.

Our lecture series continued in February with a talk by Michael Kirke on:

‘Life aboard HMS Beagle 1825-30’

This was an account of life aboard the Beagle on the first of three survey voyages around the southern coast of South America. The presentation was made particularly interesting for its use of extracts from the diary of James Kirke, a 21 year-old pilot aboard. As a follow-up to some of the discussion after this talk you may be interested to know of ‘*The HMS Beagle Project*’ which has aims to educate on biodiversity and sustainability and to build a modern replica of HMS Beagle (<https://hmsbeagleproject.org.uk/about/>).



Bracket fungi on a tree stump.

Our next lecture will be given by Dr. David Minter (the chairman of the Whitby Naturalists’ Club) and will address issues around the current decline in biodiversity we are seeing worldwide, and indeed in Britain. Attention will be drawn to the many different forms of fungi that exist, and their roles in sustaining the relationships involved in the natural world.

Tuesday, March 19th



The importance of fungi in biodiversity

D. Minter

All welcome – do come and hear about the amazing diversity of fungal species and their important roles from a knowledgeable and entertaining speaker.

A bioluminescent mushroom.

Book Club

We had a well-attended meeting on 21st February to discuss 'The Island' by Ragnar Jónasson. The middle of a trilogy set in Iceland. The central character Hulda is a Detective Inspector with a sad, mysterious past, who is struggling against discrimination and a potentially corrupt boss. The story links two murders ten years apart set in remote locations involving the same group of friends.

Suspenseful and atmospheric, we all found it necessary to stay awake as we jumped from the original murder to the recent murder. A well woven story which would suit those who prefer not to have murders with all the gory details. A well-received story, the author and characters have tempted those to try the others in the trilogy. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 20th March when we will be discussing 'Ithaca' by Claire North set in Ancient Greece. The Book Club is very popular and at present we are at capacity. There is a waiting list, but it's still worth expressing an interest. We have a few ex-members who follow from afar and send in their comments via email or text message.

Eskdale Festival of the Arts 2024

The festival starts this year on 5th March and concludes on Saturday 16th March with the Gala Concert. The National Choir Day is being held on Saturday 20th April. All the classes, competitions and performances are held at the Whitby Pavilion. I'm sure that many u3a members will have family members participating in this wonderful festival for all ages. **Would you like to help at some of these events by becoming a steward?** Perhaps you would like to sell tickets and programmes or assist the adjudicators or announce the classes? If you would, contact me on 07399902167 and I will put you in touch with the Festival Chairperson Ros Barningham.

Thank you,

David Bradley

Philosophy Group

We meet at 2:30pm (to 4pm) on the 1st and 3rd (but *not* the 5th) Monday of each month. 2024 dates begin on 15th January. Our venue is Flowergate URC Church on Flowergate opposite Skinner Street. Entrance is the large glass door on the right-hand side of the stone (not brick) building. We will start the year exploring the thinking of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau on the Social Contract. I am looking forward to hearing your thoughtful and constructive contributions.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me on 07 974 145779

or graham.c.robinson@gmail.com

3rd Age Stagers

We really enjoyed performing our Panto "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp". It was great to hear that our 'sell out' audiences enjoyed it too, finding it very funny especially the hunt for the bra in the audience!

We are now rehearsing our next show "Pick 'n Mix" which is a variety show with plenty of new songs and sketches but also a good mix of our audience's favourites.

9th & 10th May at 7.30 plus 11th May at 2.30 at the Rifle Club tickets £3 available at the Coffee Morning in March and then from the bar of the Rifle Club.

Jan 07949264022



Cycling Club

Now that the days are getting longer, and the weather is steadily improving, it is time we started to think about getting our bikes out from hibernation.

Assuming the weather is suitable then I propose a short, social ride on Thursday 7th March. Meet outside Beevers at 1.30pm, (or the south end of the viaduct at 1.45pm or Hawsker railway station at 2pm - whichever is more convenient for you). The plan is to go to Robin Hoods Bay and back if everyone is up for it, otherwise just to the Coast Cafe at Hawsker Bottoms.

The first longer ride will be on Tuesday 12th March, (weather permitting) meeting at the Castle Park bus stop (High Stakesby Road junction above Lidl) at 9.30. Route via Newholm, Heulah, Hutton Mulgrave, Ugthorpe, Mickleby, Ellerby, Lythe and Sandsend. If you have any queries then please phone or text me on 07527195868.

The local u3a committee has stipulated that all activities charge £1 per person per session to cover costs. This includes cycling.

Alan

Walking Netball and New Age Kurling

In the game of life, finding avenues to make friends and build camaraderie can be as challenging as a nail-biting match. However, there's a secret weapon that not only promotes teamwork but also packs a punch for your well-being – sports!

Whitby Whaler u3a has recognised the magic formula of gaining strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination by introducing a variety of exercise, sports, and walking groups. Among these, the

Walking Netball and New Age Kurling groups stand out as unique opportunities for both social connection and physical fitness.

Walking Netball and New Age Kurling are not just about the game; they're about fostering a sense of purpose and community. These activities transcend the conventional gym routine, making exercise an enjoyable and social event. The benefits extend beyond the physical, tapping into the realm of mental health, with the release of those 'feel good' hormones that leave you both happy and satisfied.

Breaking sweat without breaking a spirit – that's the mantra of Walking Netball, the game designed for everyone, regardless of age, gender, or fitness level. Picture this: laughter echoing across the court, a diverse team moving as one, and the unmistakable sound of a netball swishing through the air often followed by 'Sorry' as the ball misses the intended teammate or target!

This sporty concoction is not just about scoring goals; it's a vibrant solution for those feeling isolated, providing a sense of community and connection. If the thought of running sends shivers down your spine, fear not – Walking Netball is the perfect alternative to staying active without the need for a sprint.

Never played netball before. No worries! The rules are simple, and the pace is set for as comfortable a walk as you need, making it easy for newcomers to pick up the game. So, lace up those trainers, grab a ball, and join for health and happiness!

If you're looking for a unique and inclusive way to stay active New Age Kurling might just be the perfect stone's throw away! In a revolutionary move, hospitals are increasingly embracing this innovative sport as a key component in rehabilitation programmes. What sets it apart? It's a game changer that doesn't discriminate based on physical fitness but works muscles that often go unnoticed. This modern twist on curling has become a beacon of inclusivity, welcoming participants of all ages, abilities and physical conditions. Say goodbye to ice and brooms; New Age Kurling brings the game indoors, allowing individuals to slide stones towards a target from the comfort of level ground where age and ability take a back seat.

The goal is simple – slide large round stones and aim to get them as close to the target as possible. Participants can push the stones by hand or use pushers, and it can be played both from a standing or sitting position, making it accessible to everyone, regardless of mobility challenges.



Step into Fun: Walking Netball – every Thursday 10.45-11.45am- Everyone Active Leisure Centre or Sliding towards wellness: New Age Kurling- every Wednesday 10-11am Rifle Club. If interested in joining Netball or Kurling contact Clair Stones 01947 604451/07899 780 647.



TOAST

There will be the regular monthly TOAST meeting on Saturday 2nd March at the Penny Hedge starting at 10am.

An evening meal at Trenchers enjoyed by 11 members of the Toast Group. Many thanks to Sue Wessel for organising a very successful and fun gathering.



Best wishes. Rose Corner

Creative Writing Club

An item written by one of the members:

The gate and the meadow

There used to be a lovely field at the end of our road. Me mam used to tell us all about it, how her and her brothers and all the kids from the road used to play there. It was surrounded on all sides by a tall hedge, filled with wildlife. All manner of birds, rabbits, hedgehogs and insects. An abundance of wildflowers grew in the meadow. It sounded like a magical place for the kids to play.

Where it joined the end of our road, it had a 5-bar gate, the sort you see at farms. The kids climbed over it and under it, sat on it exchanging news and gossip. Even holding hands with the latest beau.

In the summer they would build dens, play cricket and football, and hide and seek. Bonfires in the Autumn, snowmen in the Winter and flower chains from the beautiful flowers in the Spring.

There was always someone in the meadow to play with. If you looked out your window and down the road it seemed as if it glowed. There was something very special about that field, me mam said anyway.

As time went by and the town expanded, houses and roads were built around the field, but never on it. Some said it were haunted, but no one knew. Why, if anyone ever had, it had been lost in the mists of time. The kids didn't seem to mind. It was their field and they loved it. They grew up in it, always had. They were safe and anything was possible in their field with the old creaking 5 bar gate.

As the field was now surrounded it became busier with children playing. Climbing trees, playing tag. All the parents knew exactly where to find their offspring whenever they were missing.

Then one day- everything changed.

Someone fell out of a tree, of course this had happened many times before, but this time soon after it happened the screaming of an ambulance siren was heard and the distraught child and it's parents were bundled off to the hospital.

Something that happens every day, somewhere, something quite common you might think. But sadly this occurrence alerted the powers that be to the fact that this little amazing, wonderful field was there. And what happens when the powers that be get their hands on something they hitherto didn't know about.

Health and Safety got involved, officials with clipboards arrived and wrote copious notes and then one day a huge sign appeared on the much loved gate. NO ENTRY—UNSAFE. It said. All the kids were distraught as were their parents. What were they to do now? The kids had nowhere to play and spent all their time running around in their homes while their parents tore out their hair! Soon enough, boarding followed and the lovely view through and over the 5-bar gate vanished. Now all that could be seen was advertising stuck to the hoarding. Graffiti soon followed. The parents kept their eyes on the local newspaper and council websites waiting to find out what would become of their meadow.

They did eventually find a date that the Earth movers were due to start work. Every parent and child stood in front of the hoarding on that date, some lying directly in the way of the huge Earth ploughers. They stayed there all day and long into the night, only finally some leaving to take the smallest children to bed. Others staying as long as it took to make sure no one got into their meadow.

Eventually late one morning a 'man from the ministry' arrived with his briefcase and dark foreboding suit. But what he produced from that briefcase surprised everyone. Plans for a brand new children's playground that would serve not only our road but all the new houses surrounding the meadow. He made it sound just what we wanted, needed. So all the adults took the children away and let the workmen do their job.

And what a job they did.

They grubbed up every hedge and replaced it with fencing and gates to all the other houses. But where did the birds go? Where did the rabbits and hedgehogs go?

Then they grubbed up all the beautiful meadow and covered it in tarmac and concrete. But What of the wildflowers the girls had picked, and the trees and bushes everyone played in?

And before you knew, it was done.

Everyone was invited to the grand opening. The first and only thing that was familiar was the little 5 bar gate, it was back. Painted a council shade of green. Once through the gate nothing was familiar. But children are fickle things.

Once they saw the swings, the slides and roundabouts, they ran and played. Soon forgotten were the dens, the trees and the Daisy chains.

As weeks ran into months the local children grew to love the playground. It is all I ever knew. Mam took me as a bairn to play on the swings. She sat and watched as I played chatting to other mums. Friendships were formed and gradually the once magical meadow was consigned to collective memories. But not everyone had forgotten. We grew up with the concrete playground, not knowing anything else. Wire fencing keeping us in and stopping fertile young minds exploring further. Over time the little gate got knocked and buckled and flakes of paint fell to be distributed by the wind. Eventually looking as sad as the litter strewn playground.

No one knew or cared to remember how the rumours started, but one day we all felt that something wasn't quite right. Sometimes it felt like we were being watched, it was shrugged off as superstition, tall tales. Eventually the children grew up and they didn't bring their children to the playground. The magic had gone.

It slowly grew into disrepair, children stopped visiting. Some said it was haunted, some claim to have seen swings swinging as if ridden by invisible children. Slowly the concrete cracked, and small sprigs of green started to appear. As the years went by, birds started to visit bringing with them seeds. Seeds that soon took hold in any small space they found, and once a hold was taken, they grew strong, strong roots causing more cracks and more space for new seeds. And as things started to grow more insects and small animals started to return. Eventually bushes and small trees grew up against the fencing, blocking out the views of the houses. Grass covered the concrete and the meadow slowly but surely started to return.

And return it did, waiting for the first children to discover it. In amongst it the swings swung gently in the breeze awaiting their first riders.

Judith Clarke Feb 2024.

Dates for your Diary

TOAST coffee morning Saturday 2nd March Penny Hedge

u3a Coffee Morning 16th March 2024 10 to 11.30 Rifle Club

National u3a Festival Thursday 18th July to Saturday 20th July York University

AGM Saturday 12th October 2024

The next newsletter will be produced on 1st April 2024

Deadline for copy (which should be sent to: sheilasloan@btinternet.com) is 26th March 2024