

SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

May 2023

www.skiddawu3a.co.uk

It's not often that any organisation can report enthusiastic attendance at an AGM but **Spotlight** is very happy to announce that there was a packed house on the 19th April at the Crosthwaite Parish Room to vote in our new Committee members! Many thanks to Kim Davies, Claire Darling and Roger Gook for stepping forward as well as heartfelt thanks to the people stepping down for all their hard work, particularly to Leela Marsh who has made a major contribution to the development of Skiddaw u3a. See all the news inside on what the Committee and various Groups have been up to in the last few hectic months.

We were treated to a fascinating talk by Fran Sandham after the AGM and there are three more brilliant speakers to come at the next three Monthly Meetings. First up in May, Tom Snaith (remember 'The Beatles in Carlisle'?) tells us how a Maryport boy created the blueprint for ocean going liners and ended up by heading the finest shipping company in the world. Bob Pullen delves into the 'Secrets of the Human Brain' in June and, in July, Brian Topping sounds a warning note for all of us who are planning to travel this summer about a Custom Officer's life at Heathrow!

There's just room to draw your attention to the ads inside for the August Summer School in Carlisle. Please note also that Chris Knowles takes over from John Howell in dealing with hearing problems and that Tony Marsh is acting as temporary Media Liaison Officer.

Watch this space for plans to celebrate our forthcoming tenth – yes, tenth Anniversary.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

We are delighted to offer a varied selection of topics in our monthly meeting talks. For the next three months the meeting venue will be held outside of Keswick, in nearby villages. Doors are open at 10 am when refreshments will be served and there is an opportunity to socialise. The meeting begins at 10.30 am and ends at 12 noon, unless otherwise stated. Currently entry is charged at £1 for members and £ 1.50 for visitors.

Portinscale Village Hall
Wednesday May 17th
“The Thomas Ismay Story”



Tom Snaitth is a retired history teacher, originally from Workington but has lived in Carlisle for 40 years. Tom delighted us – and took many of us down memory lane – with his talk on “The Beatles in Carlisle” in March 2022. Tom is passionately interested in local history, and this is reflected in his presentation style. Here is a taster:

The Thomas Ismay story reveals a boy born to a lower middle-class family in the remote town of Maryport who matured into one of the greatest businessmen of Victorian England, creating the blueprint for ocean going liners and heading the finest shipping company in the world.

Threlkeld Village Hall

Wednesday June 21st
“Secrets of the Brain”

NB Later start time of 10.45 am



Bob Pullen is a retired university lecturer who has spent many years giving lectures on the brain to medical, pharmacy and biology students. He has undertaken brain research in England and America. During this time, he has learned many interesting facts about the human brain. He promises not to mention any horrible brain diseases! In part 1 we learn about the structure of the brain; how nerves work and how different parts of the brain do different things. Part 2 is interactive – do not miss this opportunity to test how left or right-handed you are, to see things that are not really there and to find out how men’s and women’s brains are different.

Threlkeld Village Hall

Wednesday, July 19th,

“Tales of a Customs Officer”

NB Later start time of 10.45 am



Brian Topping left Scotland in the early 1970s as a fresh-faced teenager to take up a job as a Customs Officer at Heathrow Airport. His career as a civil servant spans almost 40 years and I having worked in a number of departments (primarily HM Customs and Excise) including retiring from the Cabinet Office. his work has been widely varied and he has been involved in delivering key government projects. These “Tales” are about his formative working years as a Customs Officer during the 70s and 80s, catching smugglers and investigating drugs and revenue seizures at Heathrow Airport.

The “Tales” will guide you through the skills required of a Customs Officer; types of concealments; and a glimpse into the more dangerous and challenging aspects of the work - all told in an informative, but entertaining way.

GROUP NEWS

Last June I was invited to join the Executive Committee of Skiddaw u3a by Maggie Potts, as Group Coordinator. My first job was to take over the organisation for the Open Morning in September, most of which had already been done for me. The next job was the Annual Convenors’ Meeting in March, which discussed a couple of new policies covering Safeguarding and Equality and, more importantly, was an opportunity for Convenors to get together and for me to thank them all for their efforts on behalf of the organisation. Rising venue costs were also discussed and the possibility of using the Pencil Factory which has recently been made available. A number of us had taken advantage of the opportunity to visit and while we were impressed with the spaces available, the general feeling was that, with one or two exceptions, the rooms were too large for our purposes. Costs are rising but our groups remain incredibly good value, as I’m sure you appreciate. Finally, data protection was discussed as we need to make sure your personal data is kept safe.

But now I’m moving on and very much looking forward to my new role as Chair. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Tony Marsh for his excellent work in steering the committee through a very difficult three years especially during the pandemic, and Leela Marsh for her considerable efforts on the committee over the last ten years. We shall miss them both hugely.

And finally, a big thank you to our Group Convenors who give so much time and put so much effort into running their groups.

John Hunston

Featured Groups

MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP

At our March meeting, John Harling took the group on a fascinating musical journey "From Hell to Paradise". The music played covered three centuries, was very varied in style and performed by different combinations - chamber orchestra, large modern orchestra with lots of percussion, a large brass ensemble plus organ, dance band and singer, clarinet and guitar, choir and organ, chorus and orchestra.

The Hell was represented by Don Juan's Descent into Hell from Gluck's ballet, the Devil's Gallop (Dick Barton signature tune) by Charles Williams, Devil's Trill by Tartini, March from Damnation of Faust by Berlioz, Danse Macabre by Saint-Saens, and Fugue from Schwanda the Bagpiper by Weinberger.

The Paradise section included Ascending to Heaven by Judith Weir, Walk to the Paradise Garden by Delius, In Heaven When We're Dancing Cheek to Cheek by Irving Berlin, Cinema Paradiso love theme, by Ennio Morricone, Stranger in Paradise by Borodin and concluded with In Paradisum from Faure's Requiem.

We meet monthly and members take it in turn to present a themed programme. The variety of what's on offer is illustrated in the topics for our next meetings. In April, Sue Barker is presenting the French Connection in opera whilst in May we will be having a complete contrast when David Low presents Folk Music and Brass Bands. The theme in June is "The Sea" when members will bring a favourite piece.

If you would like more information about the Music Appreciation Group, contact:

Sylvia Pilling
017687 73814

Pub Games

"I enjoy games and playing them. I don't see why you need to stop playing them just because you are older!"

"It's a great way to exercise your brain – and have a glass of your favourite tippie too!" (You can hear our brains striving to do complex calculations during dominoes 3s and 5s!)

"The pub games nights are good social evenings involving well-known games such as dominoes and Uno but also with the opportunity to learn new ones."

"It's a good excuse to go to the pub – a good laugh and, occasionally, I even win!"

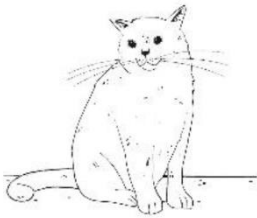
"I don't want to go out at night but I make myself go to pub games and always enjoy it".

"It beats playing solitaire!"

"It gives my children/spouse/pet/other an evening away from me!"

Quotes from satisfied customers. If you want to grow your brain and have a good time as well, join us on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 8pm at the Farmers in Portinscale. For more details contact the convenor:

Maggie Potts
via Skiddaw u3a website or tel 017687 73582.



Popular Science

In March, the group heard Peter Normington describe 'How the Internet Works'. Using a picture of a cat as an illustration, Peter explained how the picture was cut up into little pieces and sent off in many different directions. If I tried this with my neighbour's cat – which I am tending while they are away – I could end up with the tail in Glasgow, whiskers in Dover and paws in Swansea and my neighbours would not be happy! However,

the internet protocol ensures that all the pieces come back together in the right order and at the requested destination. The neighbour's cat, meanwhile, has been trying the same procedure with the local mouse population and whilst he has mastered the dissection part, he is not successful at putting the pieces together again!

The April meeting heard Rob Alves describe the process of drug development. This takes a potential new compound through its animal testing and subsequent introduction into a few healthy volunteers; to ensure the efficacy and safety of the drug, this is followed by mass testing on humans with the relevant condition. Finally, approval is sought to market the drug and a manufacturing process must be set up. With the enormous expense of clinical trials – it costs over £1billion to bring a new drug to market - and failure a likely outcome at any of these stages, the entire process proceeds slowly normally taking 10 to 15 years. Rob described how its production of a Covid vaccine within a year and without compromising safety or efficacy relied on a lot of preliminary work on similar drugs, substantial government funding and worldwide co-operation to speed up the approval process. What a pity this spirit of co-operation does not extend to other areas such as climate change.

If you would like to know more about how things work, come to the Popular Science meetings on the second Monday of the month at 11.30 am in Portinscale Village Hall.

Sue Ashley, Convenor

Your New Committee

Chair	John Hunston
Vice Chair	Kim Davies
Business Secretary	Jim Pawson
Membership Secretary	Alyson Lehninger
Treasurer	Barbara Newton
Group Coordinator	Claire Darling
Speakers Secretary	Roger Gook
Social Secretary	Sue Grant
Website & Beacon	Mark Bradley
Media Liaison	Vacant*
Hon. President	Maggie Potts

Non Trustee Support:

Spotlight and Guide: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis, Ted McArdle and Maggie Potts

AV and Equipment: Ted McArdle

*Tony Marsh has agreed to act temporarily in the Media Liaison role.

News from the Committee

Following our recent AGM, I have now finished my three-year tenure as Chair of Skiddaw u3a and I would like to say what a privilege it has been to hold the role, even though the first year was one of significant challenge caused by the Covid pandemic. I hope that members felt that we managed to maintain a reasonable position between keeping people safe and the organisation active.

It has certainly been the case that our membership numbers have increased steadily and this is in stark contrast to many other u3as around the country.

This wouldn't have been possible without the enthusiasm of all members and group convenors but even more so the support and expertise of the Executive Committee. I am extremely grateful that there have been three new volunteers joining the Committee and they were approved by the eighty plus members who attended the AGM.

I am also very pleased that John Hunston is taking over the role of Chair and I am confident he will make an excellent job of it.

I hope that you will forgive me for specifically mentioning my wife Leela, who was one of a very few people who, along with Maggie Potts, decided over ten years ago that a u3a would be a good thing and managed to make it happen. Since those early beginnings Leela has worked tirelessly as Treasurer for six years and then Membership Secretary for the last three. It is with a mixture of sadness and relief that we both move on to other things.

As well as the Committee membership, the members attending the AGM also approved three resolutions put forward by the Committee. Firstly, members who join after the beginning of September, i.e. six months or more beyond the start of the membership year, will only be required to pay 50% of the normal membership fee, i.e. £6. Members joining after December 31st already receive the remaining three months or less for free.

Secondly, that Skiddaw u3a would charge Associate members the same fee that their home u3a charges their Associates; in many cases this may well mean no charge, although, as now, proof of membership of the home u3a will be required.

Thirdly, the membership has given the Committee the remit to increase the membership fee by £1, (from £12 to £13), *if necessary*, at the start of the next membership year in 2024. The reasoning for this is that such a change must be approved at an AGM which means that any necessary increase would be delayed until 2025 as the AGM occurs after the start of the membership year.

In summary, I think that Skiddaw u3a is in a strong position with an excellent Executive Committee and will continue to thrive well into the future. In the meantime, thank you for having me!

Tony Marsh

National and Regional News

Northwest Region Summer School, 15-28 August, University of Cumbria, Fusehill Street Campus, Carlisle, CA1 2HH

Bookings now open. Seven courses on offer: Archaeology and landscapes; Art Challenges, the changing seasons; Literature, 20th century novel; Female artists; Architecture from shelter to the Shard; 2000 years of British architecture; Knitting, cables and lace; Japanese encounter.

Costs: full board £355 plus parking and field trips. Applications must be completed by post or email. For more information email Alan Hough on alanhough1949@gmail.com or go to <https://u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events>

Help available for Members.

Using Zoom: The Third Age Trust website links to step-by-step seminars on how to set up a Zoom account on phones, tablets and desktops. This is the link to the relevant page: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/how-to-guidance>

“Buddies”: we have a system of “buddies” linking members with experience of Zoom and other virtual meeting tools with members who would like to learn how to use them. Are you interested in having a “buddy” to help you or would you be willing to help other members? If so, please contact Gill Frances via the Spotlight email address spotlight@skiddawu3a.co.uk

Hearing problems: We have a number of members with hearing difficulties. Whilst there are different forms of hearing loss, it can be helpful to explore what others have found useful. Member Chris Knowles has worn hearing aids for many years and is willing to share his experiences with members who find it difficult to hear at meetings, talks or Zoom events. Chris can be contacted via email: chris.knowles@maketechwork4u.co.uk
Thank you to John Howells for his help in the past.

Notice board:



KESWICK AREA FOOD SHARE (KAFS)

*Enough food for everyone,
we care, we share*

Located in the rooms next to Keswick Library, open on Wednesdays, 10 am to 1 pm.

It is open to everyone who lives in the CA12 postcode area.

For more details contact 07368289222/07876568596 or email keswickareafodshare@gmail.com

On Facebook@KeswickAreaFoodShare

Mining History Conference 2023 July 7th-10th Grasmere Village Hall:

Programme includes field trips ranging from Hodbarrow to Carrock and from Goldscope to Greenside. Lectures ranging from the Langdale Axe Factory to modern mining at Greenside, conservation in a National Park, geology and successful partnerships between the public sector and industrial archaeologists.

More details of trips, lectures and booking information can be found on the conference website: <http://www.namho.org/conference> or contact the organisers via e-mail: namho@catmhs.org.uk

Post Covid well-being study: St Andrews University

Volunteers are invited to take part in a study of the cognitive and psychological wellbeing of people age 60+ living in the U.K. during the later stages of the covid-19 pandemic. The research will be conducted by telephone. If you are interested in taking part and would like more information, please contact Maggie Potts by email maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com or telephone 017687 73582.

Last Words

For table tennis fans seeking inspiration, have a look at:

<https://www.tabletennisengland>

Heard on Radio 4: an audience contribution on nicknames at work.

Question: What is the best nickname for a work colleague you have heard?

Answer: Zeus

Question: Why Zeus?

Answer: Not because of his godlike qualities but because he made "Zero Effort Unless Supervised"!

EDITORIAL POLICY:

Contributions should be sent to the Editors via spotlight@skiddawu3a.co.uk. Groups invited to contribute to an issue of Spotlight should try to keep their contribution to approximately 200 words, if possible. Any entry can include photographs which should be submitted as jpeg or png.

Deadline for submissions to the next issue is July 20th 2023

Editorial Team: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis & Maggie Potts