

# SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

Feb 2024

[www.skiddawu3a.co.uk](http://www.skiddawu3a.co.uk)

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Hello, everyone, and welcome to the first 2024 edition of **Spotlight**. The worst of Winter is over (we sincerely hope) and Spring is just over the horizon. There are so many lovely things to look forward to: talks, a trip, a new competition, a convenors' Meeting and of course the AGM.

Please note the dates for your Diary: on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb, David Felton will be taking us on a beautiful walk from one end of Britain to the other; don't miss Ian Gee's fascinating account on the 20<sup>th</sup> March of the launch of 'Waterbird' on Windermere in 1911 – and its relaunch decades later; Roger Gook will transport us to South America and leave us "silent upon a peak in Darien" on the 17<sup>th</sup> April. There's a new poetry competition – deadline the 13<sup>th</sup> March. Have a look at the ad inside for the rules; Claire Darling will lead the Convenors' Meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March – so please talk to your convenors if you want to have your ideas discussed; the AGM is scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> April. Please come to that. Your u3a needs you!

Finally, thanks to Sue Grant for organising what sounds like the corker of a trip to Durham on the 30<sup>th</sup> April to visit the University's Botanical Gardens and the wonderful Durham Cathedral.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this great line-up of events.

# MONTHLY MEETINGS

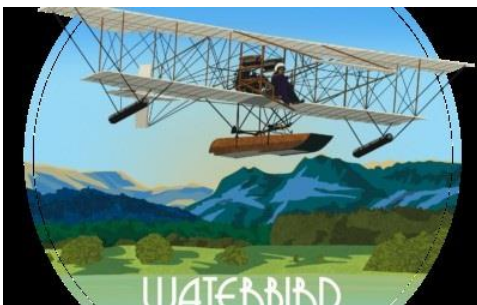
All meetings are in Crosthwaite Parish Room. Doors are open at 10 am when refreshments will be served and there is an opportunity to socialise. The meeting begins at 10.30 am and ends at 12 noon, unless otherwise stated. Entry will be charged at £1 for members and £1.50 for visitors.

## 21st February 2024 Land's End to John O'Groats

On 15 May 2017 **David Felton** left his front door and set off from Land's End on a 1,269 walk north to John o' Groats. He reached journey's end 82 days later. In this talk, David outlines the highs and lows of his long walk; he details his route through the country – including through Cumbria – using 100+ beautiful photos; he reveals why Britain really is a green and pleasant land; and he discusses why the walk was the adventure of a lifetime.



## 20th March 2024 Windermere Waterbird Project -Ian Gee



Early in the morning on 25th November 1911, an Avro Curtiss type float plane took off from a hangar at Hill of Oaks on Windermere, to make history. "Waterbird", commissioned by Edward Wakefield from Kendal, was the first hydroplane to make a successful flight in Britain. This talk tells the story of two aeroplanes. The first Waterbird, which flew more than 60 flights on Windermere, set in motion the production of seaplanes used in World War 1. The story of the second Waterbird, the replica, is equally fascinating, telling the story of many challenges resulting in a 13 year programme from dream to reality.

## 17th April 2024 Skiddaw u3a AGM commencing at 10:00 doors open at 09:30. followed by Darren Jungle -



What links Derwentwater, John Keats, Scottish Independence, prototype Range Rovers, an eccentric British Colonel, drug cartels and vampire bats. It's the Darién Jungle, straddling the border between Panama and Columbia in Central America - one of the rainiest and most dangerous places on earth - 100 roadless miles of dense, mountainous jungle and swamp filled with armed guerillas, drug traffickers and some of the world's most venomous creatures.

It's also where **Roger Gook** made one of his most interesting journeys. He will talk about the remarkable history of this area – literally the centre of the world – and describe some of the expeditions that foundered there. There are also a few successes - including his own in 1981.

# GROUP NEWS

A very happy new year to all our members and an especially big thank to our Group Convenors who are the life blood of u3a. We are planning a more tangible thank you to them in March, the details of which are below.

Unfortunately, 2 groups have recently closed or reduced their meetings due to difficulties in recruiting a new convenor when the incumbent convenor retired. Both groups were valued by their members, who were grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment of their convenors.

Different groups require different levels of organisation. Whilst it can be hard work organising and leading a group, it is also rewarding and there is plenty of help on hand. You don't need to be a computer whiz kid. The most important thing is to be enthusiastic. Anyone in a group can help by taking on a particular task such as booking a room, collecting money, arranging a visit etc. The convenor doesn't have to do everything. Perhaps you could offer to lead an occasional session so you can find out what running a group involves and develop confidence in doing so. Hopefully this may help members volunteer to take on the convenor role in their group when the incumbent convenor wishes to step down. Something to think about when your group next meets perhaps.

If your group shares tasks and responsibilities or you have some ideas about how to do this, do let me know so we can share them with other groups. You can contact me via our website.

Best wishes

**Claire Darling, Groups Co-ordinator**

## **Group Convenors Meeting Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30 am Greta Suite, Skiddaw Hotel**

The meeting will start at 10.30am for coffee with a Buffet Lunch at 12.30pm. The lunch is a thank you to our hard working and enthusiastic group convenors. If any convenor is unable to attend, they can delegate a member of their group to ensure the group's representation.

Full details and invitations will be available shortly but do put the date in your diary. Any queries just contact Claire Darling, Groups' Coordinator, via the website by opening "Documentation" then "Trustees and Officers".

## Featured Group



### **Cycling Groups celebration:**

48 members of the Skiddaw u3a cycling groups celebrated the end of another very successful year of cycling by having their annual mulled wine and mince pie get-together after they had cycled around the Newlands Valley just before Christmas.

The three groups, Social, Easy Wheelers and Power Bikes have collectively cycled thousands of miles over the past year. Around 25/30 (sometimes more) turn up in nearly all weathers every Tuesday to cycle. On the day of the cycle rides, members are split into smaller groups of around 8/9 and are set off at intervals so as not to clog the roads and irritate motorists.

During the year the groups have covered most of the county, from the Solway Plains to the South Lakes and from the West coast and into the Eden Valley. Some of the favourites include the route over Subberthwaite common (stunning views), round the back of Blencathra and Skiddaw (battling the westerly winds), the Carlise Parks (almost guaranteed to get lost) and ice creams at Silloth (say no more)! There are many favourite coffee stops too - huge fruit scones at the Kirkstile Inn and bacon butties at Whitehaven Golf Club just to mention a couple! Just as well many of the group now have e-bikes to assist them climbing the ascents!

The group is so successful simply because of the dedicated volunteers giving their time to create and organise the routes and cyclists.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Prose Competition: Winners and winning entries

**The *spotlight* is on Skiddaw u3a's creative writers.**

In the last edition of *Spotlight*, we announced a (very very) short story competition. Since we were approaching the tenth anniversary of Skiddaw u3a, we decided to take 'the tenth anniversary' as a theme, leaving it open to our readers to choose what sort of anniversary they wanted to write about.

May we say a big thank you to all members who submitted their stories. The challenge, of course, was to produce a narrative in only 50 words which conveyed the truth about a situation in a way that was intriguing, unusual, tragic or comic.

John Hunston and I had a most enjoyable time reading all the entries and arguing about which three of these entertaining pieces of 'flash fiction' should be awarded the top three places and win the triumphant accolade of being published in Skiddaw's very own magazine!

In the end, we came to the conclusion that far more than three of them deserve to be more widely read, so we're going to publish a selection of the entries over the coming year to demonstrate the quality, variety and ambition of Skiddaw u3a's creative writers.

The three winners this time are *Enid McArdle*, *Andy Brewster* and *Stephanie Robinson*.

*Enid* has written an absolute classic of the genre: a well-constructed tale about a hitherto undiscovered murder, told in a deceptively simple manner which makes each word count.

*Andy's* quirky take on the awfulness of Keswick's winter weather deserves applause for its clever choice of detail, its nod to 'Game of Thrones' imagery and its delightful drop into anticlimax in the last sentence.

*Stephanie's* intriguing glance at a ruined life brings a different tone altogether: through the loss of music and the mention of an injured hand she invites us to become story tellers ourselves and to speculate on what could have happened to produce such an awful result.



Here are the stories:

### **The Anniversary by Enid McArdle**

Ten years to the day . . . since he disappeared.  
Nothing remained. Only a faded photograph in a dusty album.  
Laura smiled to herself and admired the spring bluebells growing profusely in that shady corner of the garden. A knock on the door shattered her thoughts.

Two policemen stood outside . . .

### **Tea in Keswick by Andy Brewster**

Nine pass unsung into history's void but the King resolves to honour the next. He surveys the feasting throng: Warrior Queen, Grandson, Loyal Hound. Rising, he sweeps away the custard creams and roars, 'Please raise your mugs to ten consecutive minutes without rain.' The dog looks puzzled.

### **Silenced by Stephanie Robinson**

It was exactly ten years on but the loss still gnawed. The trumpet lay silent in its case, but the music was gone. Cleared out: the paper debris of another life. One single blast had roared, but it left a mangled hand. The right hand – that was the tragedy.

There will be three more in the next edition of **Spotlight**.

## **And now a short, short poem competition!**

Some of the entries to the short story competition were written in verse – which we thought was delightful and ever so clever. We decided not to include them in the judging because of their form. But to celebrate the ingenuity and imaginative grasp of these entrants – *and to allow others who hadn't thought of writing in verse to have a go* – we are running a SHORT POEM COMPETITION.

**Same rules:** 50 words only, including the title; the theme to be a 'tenth anniversary' (of any kind); the form to be any form of poetry you like (haikus, blank verse, rhyming couplets, nursery rhymes, limericks etc).

Please get your entries to Gill Frances by **Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> March**  
You can send it by email attachment (not in the body of the email, please) to [gfkewick@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gfkewick@yahoo.co.uk)

Or you can type it and give the hard copy to Maggie Potts tel 017687 73582

The winners will be announced at the AGM on April 17<sup>th</sup>.  
The winners' poems will be printed in the following edition of Spotlight.

The judges are John Hunston (Chair of the Skiddaw u3a Committee)  
and Gill Frances.

## News from the Committee

Happy new year to all our members! I hope you enjoyed the festive season and have managed to stay safe during the recent extreme weather. We've had it all, haven't we? The recent storms brought power cuts to some and difficult travelling conditions to us all. Let's hope for some less exciting weather although the fells did look very beautiful in the snow.

Once again, we are appealing for members to come forward to fill vacancies on the committee. Jim Pawson is standing down as Business Secretary having served three years, the maximum allowed. He will be very much missed, not least for his attention to detail, but also for his sense of humour!

Sue Grant is also stepping aside as Social Secretary and again she will be greatly missed for her efficient organisation of social events. The 10th anniversary meal last December followed by the talk by Peter McQueen was particularly well received.

I hope we can persuade a couple of members to step up to the plate; last year Claire Darling, Roger Gook, Anna Nolan and Kim Davies came forward to fill vital roles and without them the committee would not be able to function. We are therefore looking for at least two of you to do the same this year. An advert appears elsewhere in this issue and I look forward to hearing from you.

As always, the AGM needs members to attend to ensure that it is quorate, so please make note of the date - 17th April - to avoid clashes. As usual the normal monthly meeting will follow and we will try to keep the AGM as brief as possible.

Personally at this time of year I'm looking forward to Spring and was pleased to see some snowdrops out near Bassenthwaite the other day. 2024 will hopefully bring me my first grandchild so I'm looking forward to that too!

With best wishes.

**John Hunston**  
**Chair**

### **Don't forget! Membership Renewal!**

It is time to renew your Membership.

Your current membership expires on **29<sup>th</sup> February**. To make sure you can continue to enjoy all your u3a activities, you need to renew it in the next few weeks. Please note that the ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES REMAIN AT £12 per person.

Full details of how to pay can be found on the membership page of our website [www.skiddawu3a.co.uk](http://www.skiddawu3a.co.uk)

Our preferred method is by BACS as this minimises visits to the bank. You can also pay by cheque. Cheques payable to Skiddaw u3a should be posted to the: Membership Secretary: Alyson Lehninger, 53 Helvellyn Street, Keswick CA12 4EP. Also cash can be delivered to Alyson Lehninger in an envelope marked Skiddaw u3a.

Whichever method you use to pay, **please remember to quote your membership number and name.**

A Date for your Diary  
**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**10am prompt**

This is probably our shortest but certainly our most important meeting and we need you to be there. This is your chance to find out what the committee has been up to in the past year, to put forward your ideas and to elect the committee members for the following year.

Skiddaw u3a is highly successful with 600 members and over 50 activity groups. Supporting this behind the scenes is the committee of Trustees elected from the membership. This year we have vacancies for Business Secretary and Social Secretary. If you would like to know more about the committee or what's involved, please contact the Chair or any committee member. Full details about the AGM will be sent to all members in March.

So, please don't leave it to others. New committee members are essential to keep the organisation buoyant, relevant and exciting. We need you to help us keep Skiddaw u3a flourishing.

Also, the winners of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary poetry competition will be announced.



## **Skiddaw u3a Spring Day Out**

Following last year's successful day at the Bridgewater Gardens, you are now invited to join the visit to the:

**Durham University Botanical Gardens  
Followed by free time in Durham City**

**Date: Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Alba Travel, 37 seater coach. Cost £13.50pp**  
**Entrance to gardens £4.25 pp. for group booking.**

**The visit will start at the Gardens where there is a café  
for drinks and snacks. Or bring your own picnic.**

**The walk from there into the Cathedral area of the city is about 30 mins. Free  
time in afternoon to visit other  
museums, Cathedral, Castle etc.**

**Times: probably leave Keswick 8.30 am. Depart Durham 4.00 pm**  
**All enquiries & bookings to Sue Grant [susangrant0109@btinternet.com](mailto:susangrant0109@btinternet.com)**



## **New Website for Skiddaw u3a**

Our old SiteBuilder website was replaced with a new SiteWorks one early in the new year. If you have not had a look at the new site then please do have a look at [skiddaw.u3asite.uk/](http://skiddaw.u3asite.uk/)

Please note that if you have the old site or pages on it in your favourites or bookmarks you need to replace them with links to the new site as the forwarding from the old site will only be in place until the end of March. If you want to know the whys and wherefores and the need for the changes then have a look at <https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk/>

If any group convenors have fresh information or pictures to update your group page, then please send them to me at [webmaster@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@skiddawu3a.co.uk)

**Mark Bradley**

## **National and Regional News**

**U3a Festival 18- 20 July 2024**

**University of York Exhibition Centre**

The u3a movement is holding its first ever Festival in this year where members will be running a wide variety of activities - talks, sporting events, musical entertainment and workshops which will make this u3a national festival something to remember. Bookings will open soon and in the meantime you can [book your accommodation now](#). Rooms on campus will be £61.80pp for bed and breakfast. They are all ensuite single rooms with tea and coffee making. There are no larger rooms available on site.

Full details can be found on the national u3a website:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024> If you would like to get involved or have a query about the festival please get in touch by emailing [festival@u3a.org.uk](mailto:festival@u3a.org.uk)

### **Noticeboard:**

6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 7.30pm Keswick Lecture Society, Queens Hall, Keswick School

MARTIN LOVE - One Woman's Quest to reach the Top of the World

An illustrated (including actual equipment used on the mountain), third party account of the trials, tribulations and successes associated with the training, preparation and eventual expedition leading to Martin's late wife's successful summiting of Mount Everest in 2009. The presentation includes various anecdotes, recollections and thoughts associated with the expedition.

## HELP AVAILABLE TO 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](mailto:spotlight@skiddawu3a.co.uk)

**Hearing problems:** We have several 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](mailto:chris.knowles@maketechwork4u.co.uk)

**Accessibility:** Would you like to attend Monthly Meetings but need and would welcome assistance? Please note though, this is not a taxi service for all. Mileage costs at the appropriate rate would be paid by the passenger to the driver.

Monthly Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month apart from August and December when a Monthly Meeting will not be held. The meetings are usually held in Keswick or nearby village halls.

If you would like to request assistance to attend Monthly Meetings, then please contact Tom Rennie by email. [accessibility@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:accessibility@skiddawu3a.co.uk) or phone 07761 796615

If you feel you could offer to become a volunteer driver, please contact Tom using the above contact details.

## **Last Words:**

### **Poster Found in a Church in France –(Translated)**

When you enter this church, it may be possible that you hear “the call of God”.  
However, it is unlikely that he will call you on your mobile.

Thank you for turning off your phones.

If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him.

If you want to see Him text Him while driving.

## **Ten Years On – the Changing Face of u3a!**



**2013**

**2023**

*EDITORIAL POLICY:*

Contributions should be sent to the Editors via [spotlight@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto: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 April 20th, 2024**

**Editorial Team: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis & Maggie Potts**