



# SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

May 2024

<https://skiddaw.u3asite.uk/>

Hello Spring-lovers!



Those of us who have just got back from the u3a trip to beautiful Durham Cathedral thank the outgoing Social Secretary Sue Grant for all her hard work (and for arranging sunny weather!) and fervently hope that a new Social Secretary will soon be found. See John Hunston's article in the following pages, please.

**Spotlight** is packed with all sorts of other goodies as usual: there are three highly varied and attractive Monthly Meeting talks to come in the early summer; the winning poetry entries are published; and we are calling on all photographers to send us their favourite shots from the 1960's . . .

You were there, weren't you?

# MONTHLY MEETINGS

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.

**15th May 2024**

**"History of Jazz"**

**Crosthwaite Parish Rooms**



**Roger Browne** has spent his time as an actor, singer, speaker, musician, director, composer and writer. As a jazz pianist, he has accompanied many top International and UK based jazz artists including George Chisholm, Humphrey Lyttleton, George Melly, Marion Montgomery, Stefan Grappelli and Louis Armstrong all-stars. Roger talks about his amazing life of music, featuring stories, songs, and interpretations of music by Gershwin, Kern, Porter etc., in his own inimitable piano style.

**19th June 2024**

**"The Inn & Out at the Top"**

**Threlkeld Village Hall**



**Neil Hanson** is a successful author with 70 published books to his name. As well as his own, much-acclaimed work, he's also a "ghost writer". His clients include household names - an American showbiz legend, England's most famous cricketer, a famous actor, one of Britain's most decorated soldiers and an England football manager - but also many less celebrated men and women who have led extraordinary lives or achieved remarkable things. A hugely engaging storyteller and award-winning speaker, Neil has entertained audiences at every type of occasion throughout the UK and right across the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

**17th July Meeting:**

**"Pursuing Percy"**

**Threlkeld Village Hall**



In 1986 art teacher **Chris Wadsworth** saw her first Percy Kelly painting when house hunting in Cumbria. She bought the house in Cockermouth, opened it as a gallery in July 1987 and began her search for Percy Kelly. She tells about her search and getting the contents of Pear Tree Cottage back to his native Cumbria after his death in 1993 aged 75. Castlegate House Gallery was very successful showing 8/9 solo shows of top artists each year, including L S Lowry RA, Sheila Fell RA, Picasso, Percy Kelly of course and many more. She sold it in 2012 after 25 years to spend more time writing, curating exhibitions and lecturing.

# GROUP NEWS

The Annual Group Convenors' meeting and lunch was held in the Skiddaw Hotel on 14.3.2024. There was an excellent turnout of convenors and members of the executive committee.

The meeting serves a dual purpose of saying "thank you" to our group convenors for all their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm. It also provides a forum for meeting together and discussion. Judging by the buzz of animated chat, convenors value the opportunity to catch up with other people and exchange ideas.

The groups coordinator Claire Darling led a lively discussion thinking about succession planning in groups to try and ensure continuity. Thinking ahead is important, as is trying to spread the work load. There is no reason why different tasks cannot be shared out within the group, thus making convenor burnout less likely. Similarly, a group can have more than one convenor, allowing group members to gain confidence in running a group themselves.

This was then followed by two very helpful presentations demystifying the use of Beacon by group convenors. Mark Bradley, Web Manager, explained the use of basic Beacon functions and Barbara Newton, Skiddaw Treasurer, reassured people about the use of the Ledger facility in handling money.

All in all, a most enjoyable morning and once again many thanks to all our group convenors.

## **Ideas for New Groups**

Ballroom Dancing	Geopolitics discussion group
Bowls	Map Reading Skills - time limited group
Bridge -Improvers or Beginners	Photography
Chess - as above	Probing the News - discussion group
Disco dancing	Pickleball
Drawing / Sketching / Portrait drawing	Supper Club
English country dancing	Walking Football

Do any of these appeal? Say to you - I must do that? If so contact me, Claire Darling [groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk) and I will put people in touch with each other if they so wish. Even better if you want to organise a group, on your own or with other people, let me know and I will do my best to offer support and assistance. The continued health and vitality of our u3a depends on people stepping up and running groups, so please do consider having a go.

**Claire Darling, Group Coordinator**

## Featured Group



### Detective Fiction

What makes a good murder mystery book? Over the period of the last 18 months or so we have been discussing that and lots of other questions every month.

A great mystery should invite the reader to try to solve the crime. It should start with just enough information to build intrigue from the first line. At the heart there is a main character determined to solve the crime and the culprit is unknown until they are caught at the end. Clues allow the stories to engage readers on a deeper level than other types of fiction, as the reader becomes an amateur sleuth, following the trail of clues to try to discover the identity of the culprit. However, the reader should be thrown off track by red herrings. Always at the end there is the big reveal.

Gill Frances's very entertaining and informative group sessions have looked at lots of crime writers from Agatha Christie, Conan Doyle to M. W. Craven. Different time periods from Ancient Rome to Tudor to present. They have sparked a lot of discussion. This group is finishing soon, but Gill will be hosting a new group from September. Watch this space.

**Chris Lewis**

## Your New committee 2024-5

Chair	John Hunston
Vice Chair	Kim Davies
Secretary	Ann Alves
Treasurer	Barbara Newton
Membership Secretary	Alyson Lehninger
Speaker Secretary	Roger Gook
Groups Coordinator	Claire Darling
Web Master/Beacon	Mark Bradley
Publicity Officer	Anna Nolan
Social Secretary	Vacant
Honorary President	Ted McArdle

## News from the committee

I'm writing this at The Bungalow in Martindale. This is the red-roofed building at the foot of Gowk Hill, surrounded on three sides by a veranda with spectacular views to the surrounding hills. It was built by the Earl of Lonsdale for a visit by Kaiser Bill in 1912, with wood-panelled rooms, no electricity and water from a stream. It is as far from the modern world as possible and a great place to de-stress!

You will be glad to hear that the post of Business Secretary was filled at the AGM by Ann Alves, who came forward at the 11th hour to save the day! Our outgoing Business Secretary, Jim Pawson, has done a sterling job for the last three years and will be greatly missed on the Executive Committee: thank you Jim.

The post of Social Secretary is, however, still vacant. Sue Grant has also served three years and in that time has successfully organised annual away days to gardens and the Christmas lunch each year. She has stepped down completely, now that the trip to Durham has taken place, but thank you too, Sue, for your excellent organisational skills. Again, if anyone wants to fill her shoes, don't hesitate to come forward. Skiddaw u3a would be much the poorer without these events.

Ted McArdle replaced Maggie Potts as Honorary President in recognition of his contribution to the work of Skiddaw u3a over the years; this will now be an annual appointment to recognise a member's service.

I'll be sending this to the Editor as soon as I get a signal on tomorrow's walk and, by the time you read it, The Bungalow will be a distant but very pleasurable memory.

**John Hunston, Chair**

### **The Poetry Competition**

Thanks so much to the writers amongst you who tried your hand at the 50 word (maximum) poetry challenge. The four leading contenders are published here. First is our very own Maggie Potts.

Well done, Maggie, for this mind-blowing duo-lingual tribute to the 10 year old Italian class. Maggie says that what she's trying to achieve in this limerick is a representation of her progress in learning the language through a transition from 'pigeon Italian' in the first line to much more fluent Italian in the last line.

#### **Dieci anni fa o Omaggio alle Classe Italiano by Maggie Potts**

There once was a brava Skiddawnista

Who wanted to broaden la sua vista

Con testi e tempo

Perfect her accento

E diventera cosi una brava linguista.

*And this is a translation for those of us whose Italian doesn't reach the heights:*

#### **'A tribute to the ten year old Italian Class'**

*There once was a good member of Skiddaw u3a who wanted to broaden her horizons. Through tests and tenses, she improves her accent and thus will become a good linguist.*

Equal second prizes\* go to Stephanie Robinson for her delightful take on being a grandparent in 'Birthday' and to Julie Finlay for her witty account of how the gift of a tin of peaches turned into gold in 'Canniversary'.

### **Birthday by Stephanie Robinson**

So graceful.	Granddaughter, blood-bonded, adored
A new generation	Our hope for the future re-valued:
Long-limbed and lithe.	Respectful and peaceful again.
Each day brings new revelations	No longer the child that I tended
To bright eyes and a heart so blithe	But today a young lady of ten.

### **Canniversary by Julie Finlay**

Apparently, he knew that ten was tin  
So handed me some peaches with a grin.  
But then he showed his love of poetry  
By saying that the best is yet to be.  
And so, I thought it best that, all things told,  
Certainly, I should stick around for gold.

Andrew Suddaby's lively 'What?' not only rounds off a truly varied and imaginative set of poems, but will surely be greeted with sympathetic attention by all of us who wear hearing aids:

### **What? By Andrew Suddaby**

Ten years past I got my aid.  
Before that – she often said,  
“DAD – did you hear me say,  
What do you want for tea today?”  
“Course I did. I told you – nowt.  
Get your own ears sorted out.”  
Hearing aids by both now worn.  
Shouting less and problem gorn!

*\*Of course, there aren't actually any prizes. We're much too mean.*

## National news

u3a Festival 24: 18 - 20 July, York

The festival programme is now available and can be found via the u3a national website: this is the link: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>

There is a very wide range of subjects and activities and a good place to pick up new ideas for groups both old and new. It's worth a look. You can download the festival programme from the web page.

**u3a online: is the world-first virtual University of the Third Age delivering online learning via the Internet.** All that's needed to study online is access to a computer, tablet or other device with an Internet connection - and some basic computing skills. u3a Online is an individual, independent and autonomous u3a and provides useful resources for older people, especially those who are geographically, physically or socially isolated. This is the link: <https://www.u3aonline.org.au/>

## Getting the u3a British version going

Those of you who don't receive Third Age Matters may be interested in the article by Eric Midwinter in the Spring 2024 edition. Eric was one of the founders of the British version of u3a and remembering the problems of trying to establish it in 1982. He writes "We also had 'experts' telling us that old people couldn't learn because their brains were diminishing and asking what was the point of educating old people who were not going to be seeking employment. I once gave a talk to an antagonistic audience of professional adult tutors who jeered me: I was told it was 'dangerous' to allow lay people to teach one another."

### *Help available for Members*

**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.

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

### **Appeal for Drivers**

Tom Rennie, who organises help with transport to monthly meetings, wonders who would be willing to help if needed. If you are interested, please contact Tom via email: [accessibility@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:accessibility@skiddawu3a.co.uk)"

## *More 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](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)

## **Noticeboard**

**Calling all Gardeners:** The Sensory Garden at Fitz Park and Keswick in Bloom depend on volunteers to keep them looking beautiful. Both have won prizes and plaudits from the RHS but that does not mean that you need to be an expert gardener to help. All you need is a willingness to spend an hour a week working in the open air in a beautiful setting with the bonus of getting lots of appreciative comments from passers-by. If you are interested, you can contact Maggie Potts (Sensory garden) on [maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com) or telephone 017687 73582, or Vron Spencer (Keswick in Bloom)

## **Calling all photograph lovers!**

Do you enjoy looking back over old photos? If you do, perhaps you'd like to send us one of your very favourite photos from the 1960's. We're putting together a small visual scrapbook from the days when the Beatles said, 'Love Me Do' and Mary Quant gave us geometric style.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

Scan, or take a photo of the photo on your phone, and send it as a JPEG file to: [maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com)

A few photos will be displayed in the next edition of Spotlight, but we hope to display more on the Skiddaw u3a website.



## *Last Words*

As promised, here is one more of the very short stories submitted for the very short story competition. This one comes from Chris Lewis and needs no further introduction:

### **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

In 2123, u3a geologists discover a cave at the foot of Skiddaw. Inside there is a human skeleton and an old, empty glass bottle!

Scratched on the wall of the cave is written:

“Enjoyed the Skiddaw u3a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary party.”

**The Magic Washing Machine:** again not quite our usual last words but a rewarding and amusing Ted talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZoKfap4g4w>

### *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 July 20<sup>th</sup> 2024**

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