

SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

May 2025

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



**SKIDDAW u3a visit to BEAMISH
FRIDAY, JUNE 6th**



Beamish is the world famous open air museum which brings the history of North East England to life at its 1820s Pockerley, 1900s Town, 1900s Pit Village, 1940s Farm, 1950s Town and 1950s Spain's Field Farm exhibit areas. Visitors to the museum meet costumed folk and discover fascinating stories of everyday life in the region through time.

PICKUP outside Quaker Meeting House (Opposite Booths) - 8.30am
Return by 6pm to the same spot.

Reays coach has drinks machine and toilet on board. Drive time is about 2 hours each way.

The cost is £29 per seat.

Please pay to **Skiddaw u3a Social Fund**
Sort code 16-52-21 Account no: 52400226

**PLEASE DO NOT PAY TO INTO THE ACCOUNT YOU USE FOR THE
ANNUAL SUBS**

Use your name as reference, if you are paying for someone else as well,
please let me know. (skiddawsocial@gmail.com)

Otherwise by cheque made out to the Skiddaw u3a Social fund and sent to
Paul Titley, u3a, at 32 Penrith Road, Keswick CA12 4HA

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.

21st May 2025

The Cockermouth Verdict

**Crosthwaite Parish
Rooms**



John Little was born in Whitehaven and his family go back centuries on the Solway Plain, so he has a fascination with the rich history and culture of the area. This has led him to write a number of historical novels set in the region and a history book on the large number of riots that have taken place in Whitehaven.

John will be talking about his new novel called 'The Cockermouth Verdict'. It's about a killing which took place in Cockermouth back in the 1830s and presents a few questions to think about.

18th June 2025

**The Assassination of
JFK**

Threlkeld Village Hall



Pete Mellor has studied the subject over three decades and has attended assassination conferences in Dallas in 2003 & 2013. He has also delivered a research lecture to 'JFK Lancer's November in Dallas' conference in 2000. In the previous decade he has been a member of the British research group 'Dealey Plaza U.K.' giving regular presentations at their seminars and writing articles for their journal 'The Dealey Plaza Echo'. He has also contributed text to published books on the topic. The presentation is fact based, from eye witness statements, sworn testimonies, photographs and film from the 22nd of November 1963 in Fort Worth & Dallas.

16th July

Threlkeld Village Hall

Speaker and subject tbc

GROUP NEWS

Skiddaw u3a Group Co-ordinator's Meeting and Lunch

The Annual Group Convenors Meeting and "thank you" Lunch was held on March 13th at the Skiddaw Hotel, Keswick.

All the Skiddaw u3a groups seem to be going well and the recently set-up new groups have proved to be popular.

Attendance was good with a wide-ranging discussion which included the following points:

- a. It was suggested that the Groups Venue List be updated. Claire will do this but will not include contact names and costs as these quickly go out of date.
- b. Convenors were reminded about the Group Support Fund which has given out more than £5000 in grants to groups over the last nine years to support group activities. Applications by group convenors can be made to the Treasurer or discussed with the Groups Coordinator.
- c. One convenor suggested that some members might enjoy a variety of short courses over the Christmas period. All meetings stop at this time which can lead to some members feeling rather isolated. Gill Frances and Claire Darling agreed to look at and develop this proposal.
- d. Another group convenor asked about how convenors can communicate effectively with other groups to publicise meetings that may be of wider interest. It was suggested that convenors can ask the Groups Coordinator to send emails to all Groups and/or individual members via beacon. Roger Gook suggested that his monthly email publicising the Wednesday monthly meetings could also include a "What's On" section. Anyone wanting to take up this offer can contact Roger via the Skiddaw website.
- e. The afternoon teas monthly meeting which had been organised by Aline Hopkins has ceased. If anyone is interested in re-starting these meetings or has an appetite for organising a regular informal get-together in a Keswick café, please contact Claire Darling. She will offer advice and support if required.

This lively discussion was followed by a demonstration by Mark Bradley and Anna Nolan of how to update and/or customise each group's information page on the Skiddaw u3a website. Convenors have to initially contact Mark who is happy as always to offer help and support to set this up for any group.

A buffet lunch with improved vegetarian options was enjoyed by everyone. All in all, a pleasant and productive meeting and lunch.

Claire Darling, Group Coordinator

Featured Groups

Cycling:

In December Skiddaw u3a cycling group members cycled a short route around the Newlands Valley before meeting up in Portinscale Village Hall for the annual festive mulled wine and mince pie social get-together. Members are just asked to make a donation and any excess is donated to a local charity. One of the cycling group members, Dave Thomas, has been busily involved in the Rugby Club's 'Big Build Project' so that was where it was decided the money should go.

Just prior to their last weekly cycle ride 27 group members met up at the Rugby Club and were delighted to hand over a cheque for £305.00 to the 'Big Build Fund'. Receiving the money and representing the Rugby Club were: Martin Relph Chairman, Victoria Seymour Operations and Events Manager and Carrick Wharmby Club Captain and BIG BUILD project Manager.



After the hand-over the 27 cyclists split into groups and headed to Basecamp for bacon butties and mugs of hot coffee. The route of 31 miles went via Threlkeld, Wallthwaite, Gill Head, Troutbeck, Berrier, Mungrisdale and back along the gated-road to Threlkeld and finally Keswick.

The cycling group regularly attracts up to 30 members every week and all credit to the three Convenors, David Newton, Mark Bradley and Steve Eatwell for organising the successful rides. Of course, very occasionally some rides don't go to plan: after hitting a pothole, one of our group had punctures in both front and back wheels. However, there are many helping hands, even in the rain, and we were soon back on the road again.

In May the group will be heading to Scotland for their annual cycling away trip. It will be based around the Dumfries area and involve 3 days of cycling of up to 38 miles each day which have been devised by John Huggan. So far 26 members have signed up for the away trip. The group are hoping for some lovely warm weather!

If anyone is interested in joining the cycle group, please use the contact button on the Skiddaw u3a website or email David Newton: cycleskiddawu3a@gmail.com



Barbara Newton

Strollers Perambulation

A damp Monday in Keswick and as eleven of us waited for the 78 Borrowdale bus at Booths, that didn't bode well for our walk. However, as we travelled to Grange the weather gods smiled on us and by the time we alighted the sun had come out and there wasn't a drop of rain!

Just over the bridge at Grange we turned left to go through Hollows Farm and then walked through footpaths, over undulating ground. At one point a rainbow followed us and when we stopped at Canon Rawnsley's bench to admire the stunning view, all we could hear was a song bird serenading us. It was a wonderful, shared moment. A reminder of how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful place.

We emerged onto Catbell's Terrace and quickly found the gate that took us along the duckboards and onto the Chinese bridge. Soon we were taking off our boots at the Lodore hotel and entering the lounge for refreshments.

Note to dog owners Lodore has a dog lounge!

Chris Lewis



Watersports at Derwentwater Marina is on Thursdays 9.30 to noon during school term times. Windsurfing, canoeing, kayaking, rowing and paddle boarding are available. All equipment, including wet suits and buoyancy aids, is provided by Derwentwater Marina. Final details about when tuition and/or sailing are available were not finalised before we went to press. The cost per session is £15 per session. The Marina does a very good deal for us.

If you would like to give it a go, either turn up at the Marina at 9.30 on a Thursday (during school term times only) or contact the Convenor, Debbie Morgan, via the Skiddaw u3a website.

Debbie Morgan



News from the committee

My meteorological musings for this edition centre on the long, settled spell of clear, if cool, weather we had over late March and early April. As I write this, however, the more usual Spring cycle of frontal depressions has returned! The lighter nights do help make everything more cheerful, though, together with singing birds and flowering plants.

The AGM has taken place with four new committee members elected: these are Jim Pawson as Membership Secretary; Paul Titley as Social Secretary; Keith Lunson and Mike Cave as committee members without a specific role as yet but anticipating jobs next year when a number of members retire - Chair, Treasurer, Groups Coordinator, Monthly Meetings Secretary and Vice Chair. We still need at least a couple of more members to step up and join the committee; please get in touch if you are interested.

Alyson Lehninger, stepping down as Membership Secretary, was thanked for her long association with Skiddaw u3a and elected as Honorary President for the year ahead. Thank you, Alyson, for your many years of service to our organisation.





The AGM was followed by a talk from our very own Anna Nolan, detailing some of her longer walks using public transport. I'm not sure if a bus would wait 20 minutes for a late walker these days, but apparently there was such a time!



In March our Group Convenors met to share notes, both formally and informally, and hear how group convenors could maintain their group's page on the website from Mark Bradley, our IT officer, with additional comments from Anna Nolan. Thanks to all who attended for making the time, and especially to Claire Darling for organising the event.

**John Hunston
Chair**

Your New committee 2025-6

The photos of some of the committee is so that you can put a face to the name, especially for new committee members.

Chair	John Hunston	
Vice Chair	Kim Davies	
Business Secretary	Ann Alves	
Treasurer	Barbara Newton	
Membership Secretary	Jim Pawson	
Speakers' Secretary	Roger Gook	
Groups Coordinator	Claire Darling	
Web Master/Beacon	Mark Bradley	
Publicity Officer	Anna Nolan	
Social Secretary	Paul Titley	

Committee Member	Keith Lunson	
Committee Member	Mike Cave	
Honorary President	Alison Lehinger	

Introducing our New Social Secretary

Paul Titley formally took up this role at the AGM on 16th April but he got down to business straight away, organising the visit to Beamish Museum in June (see advert for details). Paul welcomes members' ideas for visits and events. Do please contact him via email skiddawsocial@gmail.com

And Paul introduces himself

"I moved to Keswick in 2004 with Dawn running a B&B on The Heads while I continued in pharmaceuticals further south. We both retired from our careers once we recovered from Storm Desmond. By this time, I had twice been Mayor of Keswick. I have continued to be involved with a variety of groups in the town including, the Film Club, Youth Club, Probus and occasionally piloting giant tricycles to take folk along the railway trail. I try to show up to as many u3a bike rides as I can (now as 'we can' since we have acquired 'Apollo', our electric assist tandem!)"

Best Wishes.

Paul Titley

Group Support Fund

Activity and interest groups are the lifeblood of Skiddaw u3a.

The Executive Committee is keen to support groups to thrive and can offer financial assistance through the Group Support Fund.

Group Convenors can apply for funding to make purchases which will help all members of a group benefit.

Over the years Skiddaw u3a has paid out a total of £5777.34 to groups. The most recent payment was to help the Pickleball group start up by purchasing 12 paddles and balls. This is now a very thriving group attracting up to 28 members to play weekly.

The Pottery group has received help to buy equipment and Local History and the Gardening group have received money to purchase subscriptions to FindMyPast and the RHS.

Convenors should make an application via Claire Darling, the Groups Co-ordinator or myself. If you, as a member of a group feel that your group could benefit from something then do please mention it to your convenor.

Barbara Newton
Treasurer

National and Regional News

U3a Radio Podcasts: a monthly series available on YouTube and other podcast platforms. New episodes in the 3rd week of each month. You can access the talks either through the Events page of the national u3a website www.u3a.org.uk or through the YouTube link:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsB2t41TNozHSJ4fvod_yjxrUJDzqbDD

If you would like to offer a talk or a workshop, get in touch with the national u3a via events@u3a.org.uk

Anti-ageism Toolkit

u3a and the Centre for Ageing Better have joined forces to produce advice to help members challenge ageism and promote positive ageing.

The toolkit, which includes information and resources on how to challenge ageism, including a 'Top Tips' guide, is available as a PDF download:

[Ageism Toolkit \(1.14 MB\)](#)

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 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"

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

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

Last Words

A selection of 'Dad' jokes:

What do you call a line of men waiting to get haircuts? A barberqueue.

I told my doctor I heard buzzing, but she said it's just a bug that's going around.

Silence is golden. Unless you have children, then silence is suspicious.

What do you call a snowman with a six-pack? An abdominal snowman!

How do you stop a bull from charging? Cancel its credit card.

Can February March? No, but April May!

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 2025

Editorial Team: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis & Maggie Potts