



SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

Aug 2025

www.skiddawu3a.co.uk

Welcome to the new season of Skiddaw u3a activities. We hope that, while you're still enjoying the summer, you'll also be looking forward to the treats in store for '25-'26.

First and foremost is the Open Morning advertised below. This is a wonderful chance to catch up with everyone and find out what's on offer. By the way, the new Groups Guide will be coming out in September so you'll be able to browse through that before coming to the Open Morning and making your final choices.

Inside this edition of **Spotlight** you'll find contributions about specific groups, reports from the Committee and information about the next Monthly Meetings. There's also an article you won't want to miss from Paul Titley on the success of the Beamish trip. We all enjoyed that so much and are grateful to Paul for his excellent organisation.

If **you** have suggestions for trips, please let us know.

Date for your Diary

Skiddaw u3a Open Morning

Friday, 17th October 10-11.30am

Methodist Church Hall Southey Street Keswick

*An opportunity to explore and join the wide range of groups
and
activities offered by Skiddaw u3a.*

Please note that is on a Friday and not the usual Wednesday!

MONTHLY MEETINGS

We look forward to two very interesting and entertaining monthly meetings in **September** and **November**. The meeting venue is **Crosthwaite Parish Rooms**.

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.

Entry is charged at £1 for members and £1.50 for visitors.

Wednesday 17th September

Postal Paths in Cumbria
and Beyond



Alan Cleaver is a journalist and author living in Whitehaven, Cumbria. He spends his spare time walking the footpaths of Britain, particularly those that have a good story or legend associated with them. He has previously written on corpse roads, lonnings, trods and other ancient paths. His new book is called Postal Paths and looks at the routes walked by the rural postmen and women. These could be anything up to 30 miles long, through some of the UK's most stunning countryside. They were delivering to the most remote farms and cottages. In the late 1960s, Royal Mail phased out these walking routes and post is now delivered by van. But the paths remain as public footpaths and as a reminder of the long, hard walks the posties completed daily to deliver post and help keep our communities united.

Wednesday 19th November

Maps of Cumbria



David Felton moved to Cumbria in 2010 and lives near Keswick. He has been a lover of Lakeland landscapes since boyhood holidays to Wasdale and Eskdale in the 1980s and has been involved with various conservation projects, from dry-stone walling to tree planting. He is producer and co-presenter of Countryside, the podcast dedicated to the landscapes, people and heritage of Cumbria and the Lake District. The name Camri first appears on maps in AD 1050. Since then, the Lake District and historic counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire have been mapped countless times. In this illustrated talk, David Felton, publisher of Cumbria – 1,000 Years of Maps by William Shannon, discusses the most important charts, surveys and maps from ten centuries of Cumbrian cartography. Cumbria - 1000 years of Map

Our Trip to Beamish in June

Despite the rain, a large group of Skiddaw u3a members cheerfully boarded a comfortable coach for their outing to the renowned Beamish Museum in County Durham. This unique open-air museum vividly portrays life in North East England during the 1820s, 1900s, 1940s, and 1950s. Set across 350 acres of lush, wooded valley, Beamish features a mix of original, relocated, and replica buildings, along with an impressive collection of artefacts, vehicles, machinery, and livestock.

Visitors were captivated by costumed interpreters who brought to life the region's industrial heritage and bygone ways of living. As the sun emerged, the group explored the 1913 town. Highlights included a department store (selling asbestos fire blankets), a bank (where a £1 deposit limited access to the wealthy) and a chemist's advertising cocaine drops. They also visited a carriage house, a dentist's surgery (where chloroform carried a 1 in 100 fatality risk) and many other period establishments.

Equally engaging were the 1900s colliery and pit village, which depicted the coal mining industry that once defined the region. A nearby mining museum displayed poignant reminders of the industry's dangers, including a sign proclaiming "Coal is our Future"—a sentiment now historic.

To rest weary feet, visitors hopped aboard vintage trams and buses for a scenic ride around the expansive site. The day offered a rich, immersive journey into the past, leaving 40 Skiddaw u3a members both enlightened and entertained – and all for almost 50% discount of the regular Beamish price.

Paul Titley, Social Secretary

**Excellent trip. Well done, Paul! (Eds.)*



Featured groups:

Music Appreciation Group

At a recent meeting of the Music Appreciation Group, convened by Sylvia Pilling, members listened to nine short pieces of music - three by each of the composers Mozart, Debussy and Ravel. Some of the pieces were very well known but others much less so.

They were selected by Sue Grant who encouraged a spirited discussion about which ones members preferred and why. In the intervals between playing the music Sue also asked the group to consider which one of each composer's work we would take to the proverbial desert island, and lastly, which one piece would win our hearts if only one of the nine was allowed.

There was a great deal of laughter and some surprises, too, when members voted for their favourites. The evening was rounded off with the usual refreshments including Sylvia's now famous golden flapjack.



Landmark Novels of the 20th Century

On the second Tuesday (and Wednesdays) in the month a group of bibliophiles have met to discuss that month's book and what an eclectic mix it has been:

The Heart of Darkness (pub 1902) Joseph Conrad
A Room with a View 1908 E M Forster
The Great Gatsby 1926 F Scott Fitzgerald
To the Lighthouse 1927 Virginia Woolf
Brave New World 1932 Aldous Huxley
The Grapes of Wrath 1939 John Steinbeck
Nineteen Eighty-Four 1949 George Orwell
Fahrenheit 451 1953 Ray Bradbury
Wide Sargasso Sea 1966 Jean Rhys

Discussions have been wide ranging and thought provoking. The group has introduced me to books that I am ashamed to say I hadn't already read! There are more to come as the second half of the 20th century is explored. Watch this space!

Chris Lewis

Group Convenors report

At the Group Convenors meeting in March Gill Frances suggested that u3a members may be interested in participating in short one-off groups during the Christmas/New Year holiday break. Gill is now kindly offering to run two groups next year to test whether members are interested in the idea. For details, please see '*Convenors for a Day*' below:

If any other members feel inspired to run a short group at Christmas or at any other time, please let Gill or myself know.

Other group news is thin on the ground as everyone just gets on with what they do.

Anna Nolan is stepping down from being the convenor for the Roamers walking group. Many thanks to Anna for leading the Roamers walking group with such flair and dedication. If anyone is interested in possibly sharing the convenor role, please let me know or contact Anna for further information.

There is a possibility of a Qigong group (pronounced chee-gong) starting in the Autumn. Qigong is a traditional Chinese practise that combines coordinated body postures and movement, breathing techniques, and meditation, with the aim of cultivating and balancing the body's vital energy or Qi. I hope to be able to send out further details before long.

Best wishes.

Claire Darling, Groups Co-ordinator

Convenors for a Day!

Calling everyone who would like to arrange a one-off course/discussion group/activity to take place in that "dead" season of the year between Boxing Day and the start of the new Skiddaw u3a term in January.

Many people are too busy with visitors and visiting in the aftermath of Christmas to worry about having nothing to do, but there are some of us who might value the chance to socialise and to enjoy sharing a single session doing something interesting and different whilst waiting for established groups to restart in 2026. 2026! It seems odd to be thinking about winter at the height of summer heatwaves and threats of hosepipe bans, but here goes with some suggestions:

Is there anyone out there who could offer a "crafty" afternoon at the end of December or beginning of January?

Or a "learn to play a game" session

Or "Let's learn twelve phrases in Chinese"

Or "Let's get together and sing some well-known songs"

I will be offering a day on "How Conversation Works" and an afternoon on "Poetry for People Who Don't Read Poetry" (I hope that it is not giving away too much to say that the latter will closely resemble Poetry for People Who Do Read Poetry).

If you have some ideas and would like to discuss them, please contact Gill Frances at gfkswick@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 017687-73409.

Gill Frances

Chair's Report

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Alyson Lehninger. Alyson was a founder member of Skiddaw u3a and has been involved in many ways over the years, most recently as Membership Secretary before her election as our Honorary President last April. At her funeral, which was very well attended, she was reported as being thrilled at this latest honour, and it was lovely to feel we have been able to give Alyson some small satisfaction.

I turn now to happier news: the trip to Beamish was a great success, and well timed too, since shortly afterwards they won Museum of the Year. Thanks are due to Paul Titley for organising this, and we now look forward to the Christmas lunch on Tuesday 16th December.

Another date for your diaries is the Open Morning, on the third **Friday of October** this year, the **17th**. Last year we delayed it by a month to allow those away for a late holiday to attend, and this was felt to be a good move. This is a great opportunity to find out about groups you may not have considered.

Can I draw your attention to the Be Aware and Share article in this edition of Spotlight? Hopefully you don't need these services, but you may know someone else who does. It's good to know that as we get older there are people willing to help us to keep engaged with our community.

We are now approaching what for many groups will be a summer break and a time to reflect on the year to date. I hope you have all enjoyed your involvement with u3a, and one or two of you may wish to consider joining the committee. We are still short of a couple of people to take over at next year's AGM, and these roles do need to be filled to allow us to continue to provide all the activities you enjoy so much. Please do get in touch if you are interested.

I hope you are able to make the most of whatever kind of summer we get and return refreshed in September.

John Hunston Chair

Obituary: Alyson Lehninger

Alyson was elected to the Skiddaw u3a Committee in April 2018. She became Speakers' Secretary and was incredibly efficient in organising talks and speakers. More than this, Alyson brought her warmth, openness and friendliness to the role so that speakers felt valued and members' questions were fielded in a positive and respectful way. We are so lucky to have benefitted from her skills and commitment.

Of course, Alyson also established and convened the German group and during lockdown she continued the group fortnightly on Zoom and contributed anagrams and quizzes "Kennst Du" to 'Laal Yan', the lockdown newsletter.

In 2023, she stepped down from the role of Speakers' Secretary because of ill health but she continued to play an important part in the work of the Committee when she took on the role of Membership Secretary.

We will miss her very much.

Skiddaw u3a Guide to Groups: 2025-26 Edition

The next edition of our Guide to groups is planned for publication in September. Copies will be emailed to members. The popular paper version will be available at in the library and other public places as well as the Open Morning on 15th October.

Be Aware and Share

Our u3a committee has agreed that information on services available to support older members, friends and family with health and mobility problems should be included as a regular feature of Spotlight. A varied programme of support sessions is provided for mainly older people (and their carers) at 2 locations in the Keswick CA12 area, including those living at home with dementia, post-operative conditions, post-strokes, Parkinsons etc.

Tuesday's Tonic at the Museum, meets 3 x monthly (1-3-00 p.m):

an afternoon of gentle, creative activities inspired by the fascinating collections and exhibitions at Keswick Museum.

Contact: Tracy 017687 73263 email: info@keswickmuseum.org.uk

or visit website: <https://keswickmuseum.org.uk/>

The Friday Club at the Drop-in Centre meets weekly, Fri (1-3-

30pm) with experienced volunteers providing a varying session of films, crafts, activities, trips, company and refreshments.

Contact : Vivien 07746 109339 e mail: Vivien_imber@outlook.com

Amy's Care have a mini-bus, electric trikes and mobility scooters available for local use. Contact: Frazer 07538 750868: or visit their website: <http://www.amys-care.co.uk/>

Please signpost anybody whom you believe may benefit. *Be aware and share!*

National and Regional News

u3a Radio Podcasts: Everything from Jane Austen to Aviation, the Human Brain to Alfred Hitchcock tours and that's just 2025. Lists of 2024 pod casts and earlier are all available via Youtube. This is the link

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

Digital version of u3a matters magazine launched:

National u3a has announced that they have launched a digital version of the *u3a matters* magazine that you can read and download for free on their website. As a lot of members have expressed interest in having an online version to read, they have produced a taster version of the latest Summer issue. You'll find it on the [u3a matters page](#) of the website. National u3a welcomes feedback about the digital magazine: You can contact them via communications@u3a.org.uk.

Notice Board

Jonathan(Jono) Taylor at the Nuffield Department of Population Health, Oxford University is leading research exploring the health and wellbeing of older adults who spent part of their childhood in residential or foster care. The study has been approved by the University's Ethics Committee.

If you would like more information or have any questions, Jono would be happy to arrange a phone call or Zoom meeting at your convenience. He can be contacted on email: Jonathan.Taylor@NDPH.ox.ac.uk

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:

Worried about the hot summer?

**Managed to stock up before the
hosepipe ban**



And something to lighten the gloomy world news

Tapestry of Dreams

For sew long how I did yearn
To visit you in Bayeux

But with the conquest of the years
My hair is getting greyeux

For Time will wait for Norman
that's one in the eye for me

Yet hope hangs by a silver thread
I now hear you'll cross the sea

Oh, I'm on pins and needles
I've been waiting since my youth

No stitch up or false-spun yarn
it's the unembroidered truth.

Brian Bilston

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 October 20th, 2025

Editorial Team: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis & Maggie Potts