



# SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

May 2026

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

We have an information-packed edition of Spotlight for you this time: in addition to the advertisements for three great Monthly Meetings coming up soon there are contributions from various Committee members on new developments at the Committee level of Skiddaw u3a. We are delighted to hear from both outgoing and incoming Committee members and we join with John Hunston in thanking outgoing members for all their hard work. The Editors of Spotlight would like to add thanks of their own to John himself - both for all the work that he has undertaken in the last three years and for his generous and detailed reports here on the organisational side of our terrific u3a branch.



May we add a special note of welcome to Sylvia Pilling as our new Honorary President. We know that she will fulfil the role admirably and we hope that she will enjoy it very much.

And before you turn the page - please take a look at the new competition described on pages 9 and 10. We need people with artistic/ photographic/ writing skills to DESIGN A NEW POSTER for Skiddaw u3a. Every year new people come to Keswick and they need to know we exist. CAN YOU HELP?

# 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.

**20th May 2026  
Japan**



**Venue: Crosthwaite Parish Room**

**Elizabeth Archer** was based in Japan 1983 - 1993 as a teacher. She was able to return for 5 weeks in 2024 so got an update on life there - but not much had changed

**17th June 2026  
Clocks**



**Venue: Threlkeld Village Hall**

Cumbria Clocks are known for repairing and maintaining clocks but they also work on time balls, mechanical devices such as the famed Swan at Barnard Castle and zodiacal clocks. **Callum Scobie-Youngs** will also talk about how the Dacre company operates on a great variety of clocks and other mechanical devices from all over the world.

Palace clocks are another area of Cumbria Clocks' involvement. All those of the royal household at Buckingham Palace, for example, are maintained or mended by them, as are the clocks at Windsor Palace.

**15th July 2026  
Global Energy**



**Venue: Threlkeld Village Hall**

In increasingly uncertain times, our supply of energy affects us all. **Jonathan Redfearn** will look at current supply and demand, what is the control and predicted trends, and about the exploration for oil and gas, geothermal, wind and carbon capture.

Global energy supply is moving away from fossil fuels to greener alternatives – what does this mean for us? Jonathan is Professor of Petroleum Geoscience at the University of Manchester and is deeply involved in this transition.

# GROUP NEWS

## **Invited Group:**

### **The Keswick Small Book Club**

We are the Keswick Small Book Club. We like to read small i.e. short books, and we keep our numbers small (9 -enough for lively discussion, even with absences, not so many that voices aren't heard). We choose books from the Library's book group collection. Sometimes we get surprised by something amazingly good: just two examples are "A Month in the Country", by J.L. Carr, a gentle and humane story about an artist who survived the trenches; and 100 years later, "The Optician of Lampedusa", by Emma-Jane Kirby, the true story of an ordinary group of friends on a boating trip coping, after saving dozens of drowning migrants, with the trauma of guilt at not saving the hundreds of others who drowned. Even with books we decide are not so good, what we always get is an hour or so each month of lively, amiable, discussion. We meet in the Youth Hostel cafe, so there's no admin required, apart from Jayne's tireless work ordering, collecting and returning the books. At the moment we foresee no spaces to invite new members, but maybe it's not too difficult to set up something similar.

**Hugh Brayne, Group Convenor.**

If any member is interested in starting up another Book Group, then contact Barbara on [groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk)

## **A new group starting in May.**

### **'No Other Land'**

It will be convened by Jo Alberti and will be held twice a month in the Quaker Meeting House, Keswick (opposite Booths) from 10 am-11.30 am, starting Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 10 am.

Jo spent two periods of 3 months (2004-2005 & 2009) as a member of an organisation accompanying Israeli and Palestine peace workers and says:

"We will search for some understanding of the present conflict in Palestine and Israel through the voices of the people living in those lands"

In this group we will search the complex history of Palestine and Israel for insight into the present. We will focus as far as possible on the words of Palestinians and Israelis.

If you would like to join this new group then please contact Jo direct

email: [notherland@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:notherland@skiddawu3a.co.uk)

## **The 2026 AGM**

### **Chair's Report**

This is my final report to the AGM after three years in office, and I must say the time has flown by. When I became Chair, I was joined by Claire Darling as Groups Coordinator, Roger Gook as Speaker Secretary and Kim Davies as Vice Chair. Roger is staying on as Speaker Secretary, I'm very glad to say, as I'm sure you will agree he has produced an excellent and varied selection of speakers over the last three years, and I look forward to many more. Thank you, Roger, for both your past and future service.

Meanwhile Claire is stepping down as Groups Coordinator. Claire has done a great job, organising three Annual Convenors' Meetings and Open Mornings, recently switching venue for the ACM to the new Rugby Club, which was much appreciated. She has also dealt with all the issues that have arisen over the years to make sure our members have as many groups to join as possible. Thank you, Claire, for your commitment to Skiddaw u3a.

Kim has not had a great deal to do as Vice Chair and is required to step down under our Constitution at the AGM, but as I've said before, it's always good to know he's there in the event of my absence. Thank you Kim. There's a vacancy to be filled now, so if anybody would like to step forward to become Vice Chair, please let us know.

Moving on to other committee members, Barbara Newton deserves all our thanks for her six years of service as Treasurer. This role is, of course, crucial to the smooth running of the organisation, and Barbara has carried it off with great authority. However, she is not leaving the committee, even after so long; after a close reading of the Constitution, the committee has decided that there is no bar to her taking up the position of Groups Coordinator, as is her wish. I'm extremely grateful to her for her dedication and length of service, and on a more personal level her good sense and reliable good humour.

Mark Bradley continues to provide an expertise in all things tech, from website to Beacon, and has had a national role in the implementation of u3a's new website design system. He has found a replacement for his Beacon administrator role in Ella Scott - no arm twisting required, I understand! - so she will be acting as Assistant Administrator until the 2027 AGM when she will take over from Mark. Mark also has kept us right in relation to GDPR issues, which is something of a relief.

Anna Nolan has continued with her excellent track record of articles in the Keswick Reminder and other publications. She has now served three years, and is retiring from the committee, so thank you Anna. Anna very generously offered to continue to act as a conduit for articles, if this was needed, but I am happy to say that Kelvin Rushworth has volunteered to take on the role of Publicity Officer, but as a non-committee member.

Ann Alves replaced Jim Pawson as Business Secretary two years ago and has provided an excellent service in producing minutes of meetings and gaining considerable knowledge of our Constitution and other documentation. She has, for example, been key in prompting us to start introducing essential risk assessments in our groups. Thank you, Ann, and I hope you enjoy your final year as Business Secretary.

Jim Pawson joined us last year as Membership Secretary, having had a year's break after his service as Business Secretary. However, Jim had been helping Alyson Lehninger during her illness, and his assistance over this time allowed the smooth running of the membership function during that period and into his own period in office. I'm very grateful to Jim for his stepping in and up in this way.

Last year, Paul Titley joined us as Social Secretary and organised an excellent trip to Beamish in June and the Christmas lunch in December at the Skiddaw Hotel. This year he is taking some of you to Bowes Museum and Barnard Castle, which I am sure will be equally successful.

I mentioned Alyson Lehninger in relation to Jim Pawson's role, and I'd like to pay tribute to Alyson and her contribution to Skiddaw u3a over many years. Most of you will know that Alyson died in May last year and are also probably aware that she fulfilled many roles with great enthusiasm in Skiddaw u3a. She was a pleasure to know and, of course, her last role was that of Honorary President, a title she fully deserved. I am very glad she was able to accept it before she passed away.

Which brings us to our recommendation for the coming year's Honorary President, Sylvia Pilling. Sylvia has been a stalwart of Skiddaw u3a since its inception 12 years ago. She currently runs the Music Appreciation group and, following a spell as Membership Secretary, has continued to accept membership fees paid by cheque at her home. She is an active member of many groups and, for example, has led literary walks around town for the local history group, contributing one to the forthcoming 'Romantic Rocky Road' publication. I can think of no-one better to act as our Honorary President.

I'd like to thank our Spotlight magazine editors, Maggie Potts, Gill Frances and Chris Lewis, and the helpers at our monthly meetings. We are always looking for people to help with setting out chairs and preparing teas and coffees, so please get in touch with Roger Gook if that is something you feel you could do. Spotlight is a really useful way to publicise what we are about and has a wide circulation, and its editors work away tirelessly in the background.

Finally, we are looking for new committee members. Last year, Keith Lunson and Mike Cave joined to shadow the Chair and Treasurer roles, and I am very grateful to them for agreeing to take these on from our AGM. As mentioned above, we are looking for a new Vice Chair, and want to create a new position, covering accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. The first task would be to create a list of useful contacts to help our members in, for example:

- accessing services, for example recycling different items;
- keeping safe, for example online, outdoors and In Case of Emergency numbers;
- dementia services, such as Playlist for Life

If you think you could help with this, please get in touch.

It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve as your Chair for the last three years, and I look forward to seeing Skiddaw u3a continue to flourish for many years to come.

**John Hunston Chair (retired)**

## **SAVE THE DATE TO YOUR DIARY**

Skiddaw u3a Annual **OPEN MORNING**

**Friday 16th October 2026**

Keswick Southey Street Methodist Church. 9.30-12.30

## Treasurer's Report

At the end of the previous financial year, i.e. on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026, our balance was £17,949.11. This figure includes £890.45 held for the Pottery Group.



### Income

Income from Membership amounts to £7,748.00. We received £1,175.56 in Gift Aid from 397 donations. Our income from Monthly Meetings amounts to £320.65 which is a decrease from the previous year. We have received a donation of £500.00; a legacy from the late George Luckman.

### Expenditure:

Our expenditure for the year ending February 2026 amounts to £7,858.11.

Our expenditure for Adverts, Admin and Venue Hire was less than the previous year. Payments for Speakers, Equipment & Testing, the Annual Convenors Meeting, Refreshments, Group Support Fund and Spotlight & the Guide have increased.

Our payments to the Third Age Trust, Beacon and u3a Matters were also higher because of increased membership numbers. 8 groups: Gardening, Cycling, Family History, Local History, Pickleball, Enamelling, Pottery and German have benefitted from receiving money from the Group Support Fund.

Pat Royall has independently examined the accounts for Year End 2026 and found them to be a true record.

### Summary:

After deducting the anticipated expenditure of £7471.53 (refer to "Expected Expenditure to Year End 2027" for more details) from the balance of £17,949.11 we will have £10,477.58 (less £890.45 of Pottery Money) remaining. Of this, Skiddaw u3a Policies state that we should keep a reserve amounting to 50% of our annual running costs, leaving us with **£5,851.48** to cover any unexpected expenditure.

And now it is time for me to stand down as Skiddaw u3a Treasurer as I have served the maximum of 6 years in the role. It is a role I have embraced and enjoyed over the years and am confident that Skiddaw u3a's finances are in a very healthy state as I hand over the role to Mike Cave.

**And to end on a high; I propose that our Membership Fees remain at £12 for the Membership year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> March 2027**

**Barbara Newton, Skiddaw u3a Treasurer (now retired)**

## **An Introduction to our new Chair and News from the Committee.**

The first thing I should probably do is introduce myself. My name is Keith Lunson, I live in Keswick with my wife, Sally, and have done so since 2014. I came to Keswick following a 25 year career in the Metropolitan Police and before that I worked for John Lewis for 5 years and spent a few years in the Army after university. We came to Keswick to run a Bed and Breakfast establishment, which we did for about 8 years. Now we have handed that over, we are free to pursue other activities.

Why the U3A? Because I have benefitted from it in the form of hiking and cycling and simply wish to help the organisation continue the great work it does into the future. I joined the committee last year as a "shadow" member to see where the best fit would be for me. There wasn't a great deal of interest in anybody becoming Chair, so it almost seems the post chose me.

The AGM has taken place and we have a number of new members and sadly have to say farewell to a number of others. Firstly, I would like to welcome Mike Cave, as Treasurer, who has taken over from Barbara Newton, who, in turn, has moved to being Groups coordinator; Kelvin Rushworth has taken over from Anna Nolan as Publicity Secretary and Ella Scott who is now the IT Beacon Support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Hunston for his three years as Chair. I know I have a hard act to follow and a steep learning curve ahead of me. Thanks also must go to Barbara Newton for her work as Treasurer for the last six years; to Claire Darling for her work as Group coordinator for the last three years; to Kim Davies for being Vice President for the last three years and to Anna Nolan for her three years as Publicity Secretary.

Finally, after the sad loss of our Honorary President Alyson Lehninger we welcome the appointment of Sylvia Pilling as our new Honorary President.

There are still roles to fill on the committee. Vice President, a new role of Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion and with a number of committee members standing down next year we would like some new shadow members to ensure smooth succession planning. Please get in touch if you are interested.

The AGM was followed with a talk by Ian Finlay on Cycling Across America.

In March our Group Convenors met to share notes, both formally and informally. Thanks to all who attended for making the time, and especially to Claire Darling for organising the event.

Finally, there are still a few spaces on the coach for the day trip to Bowes on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Any members wishing to join this trip please contact Paul Titley

**Keith Lunson, Chair**

**Email: [chair@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:chair@skiddawu3a.co.uk)**

## Your New Committee:

Chair	Keith Lunson	
Treasurer	Mike Cave	
Secretary	Ann Alves	
Membership Secretary	Jim Pawson	
Social Secretary	Paul Titley	
Groups' Coordinator	Barbara Newton	
Beacon, Website etc.	Mark Bradley	
Speaker Secretary	Roger Gook	

Publicity

Kelvin Rushworth

Ex officio

### **A message from Barbara Newton our New Groups' Coordinator**

In 2018 I was elected to the Skiddaw u3a Committee and spent two years as groups coordinator before shuffling sideways to serve as Treasurer for six years. And now I am back to where I started - as groups coordinator!

I thoroughly enjoyed the role back in 2018 and am looking forward to the next three years before, I promise, I will bow out of the u3a with not a whimper!

I already know many of our convenors but for those I don't, I will be getting in touch in the next few weeks to introduce myself and offer support.

Best wishes

**Barbara Newton** email: [groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk)

## National u3a Workshops

The Third Age Trust has developed workshops in partnership with u3a members to provide support, information and advice for all u3a members. The workshops are delivered online using Zoom by Trust volunteers who bring their experience as Trustees, u3a Chairs and Committee members.

All u3a members are welcome to attend these workshops which are informal and informative and provide a great opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and share best practice with u3a members across the UK. If you are curious to learn and would like to join us at an upcoming workshop, please book your place using the links below.

u3as, networks and regions are also able to request specific workshops, if this is something you are interested in for your Region, network or u3a, please read the information at the end of this page to find out more. Additional information and support for your u3a can also be found on the [Advice and Guidance](#) webpage.

### Regional News

#### North West Region Summer School: 11th August-14th August

##### Manchester Metropolitan University. M15 6GX

An opportunity for u3a members to come together and learn and develop new skills. The 8 courses on offer including everyday Mathematics, photography, art, Geology, UK and USA politics, intermediate ukelele.

For application form and further details see

<https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026/>

Costs for attending the full school: Full Board Residential Delegate; £430

## \*\*\* New Competition\*\*\*

### Design a poster for Skiddaw u3a

Looking at public Notice Boards in places like the Library, Castlehead Medical Centre and various village halls, the editorial team was struck by the fact that we have no poster advertising Skiddaw u3a so we decided to try and do something about it. Advertising is essential, keeping the organization in the public eye, attracting new members and stimulating ideas for activities. We already have a number of ways of advertising: articles in the Reminder, small adverts in village magazines, our 2 publications, Spotlight, our quarterly magazine, and our popular Annual Guide.

Many people have not heard of Skiddaw u3a and a poster is a good way of stimulating interest. We could buy ready-made posters from national u3a – but we didn't think they reflected our organization very well. See what you think – here's the link: <https://u3a-shop.co.uk/product/a4-poster/>

So come on all you artists and designers, have a go. The poster should be A4 and include our logo (on the front page of Spotlight) and our email address. You need to include a few words about what u3a is and something perhaps about our activities and a photo or two. (Make sure you have permission from the owners of recognisable faces).

If you would like to have a go, please contact Maggie Potts

email: [maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com)

#### **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*

### *Codeword*

A codeword is a crossword-shaped grid where every letter of the alphabet is replaced by a number from 1 to 26. There are no clues. Instead, you start with a small set of pre-revealed letter–number pairs and use logical deduction to fill in the rest.

	10		16		21		26		18		25		23	
1	8	11	9	20	24	22	9		22	9	4	23	15	22
	15		20		25		4		24		24		14	
17	6	2	4	2	17	22	15	25	5		4	3	24	26
	4		8		2		3		25		14		9	
14	13	9	14	23	25		15	20	7	4	23	24	20	26
			16		15		7						21	
19	24	14	7	14	22	9		4	23	9	6	5	15	22
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

## Noticeboard

### The Lake District Calvert Trust need Volunteers.

Help is needed on changeover days and involves practical housekeeping support, such as making and stripping beds and assisting with laundry. This additional help would make a real difference and help ensure our rooms are ready and welcoming for our guests. Calvert Trust may be able to offer Skiddaw u3a meeting or activity space at our site in return.

Further information can be obtained from Rachel Williamson Operations Manager  
email: [rachelw@calvertlakes.org.uk](mailto:rachelw@calvertlakes.org.uk) Tel: 017687 71620

#### *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> 2026**

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