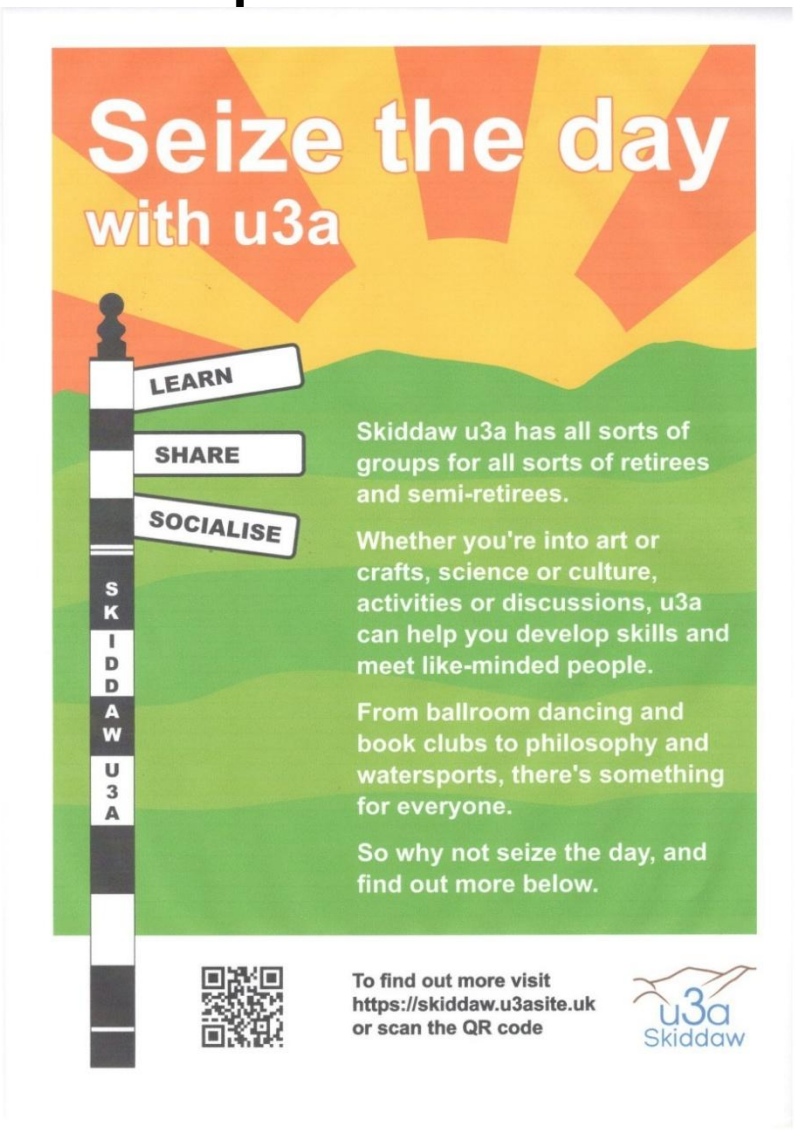


SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

Nov 2026

https://skiddaw.u3asite.uk/

Winner of Poster competition



Congratulations to Marianne Reeve for her vibrant poster which has been put on many local Noticeboards but if you know of any other public venues where you think it would be useful to have one, please contact the Committee Chair or Secretary. chair@skidawu3a.co.uk orsecretary@skiddawu3a.co.uk

Welcome to the Autumn edition of **Spotlight.** As the leaves fall and the clocks go back and we start to mention the word 'Christmas', you might expect this last edition of the year to be quietly reflective in tone. But not a bit of it. Barbara Newton is keen for you to know all about the new Climate Cafe group and she'd also like to hear your views on why the Open Morning was not so well attended this year. Please do tell her what you think we can all do to reach out to a wider audience. Then Jean Hutchinson and Sue Ashley have each contributed an appetising account of their groups' activities: one member of the Circle Dancing Group has been moved to write poetry about her enjoyment of the dancing - and just look at the fascinating subjects in store for Popular Science! And don't stop there. We need your input on 2 other things. Paul Titley is opening the list for the Christmas Lunch event and Keith Lunson really REALLY wants you to consider helping with the Committee



Castlerigg Stone Circle

The one clock that didn't need an autumnal adjustment.

Dating from circa 3000BC, this neolithic Stone Circle is thought to have fulfilled many social purposes, but it is also suggested that it is astronomically aligned and was used to mark the passing of the Summer and Winter Solstices permanently on time

u3a Christmas Lunch

Greta Suite, Skiddaw Hotel

Tuesday 15th December

12pm for 12.30pm



2 or 3 course lunch with mince pies and coffee

Attention all u3a Feasters

To reserve your place at this very popular event email Paul Titley the **Social Secretary** stating very clearly your choices.
Members only please**.**

The preferred method of payment for your lunch is directly into:

Skiddaw u3a Social Account
Sorting Code: 16-52-21
Account Number: 52400226
Please enter your MEMBERSHIP NUMBER as the payment reference

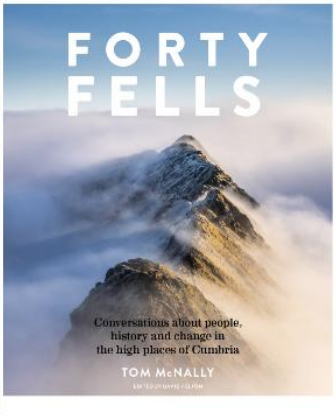
or
Cheques made payable to Skiddaw u3a Social Account can be sent to:
Paul Titley, 32 Penrith Road, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4HA
Booking closes Friday 4th December 2026.
2 choices £31
3 choices £37
Including tea, coffee & mince pies.

This is the link to the Menu:
https://www.lakedistricthotels.net/pdfs/festive26/skiddaw-festive-dinners.pdf
PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF YOUR CHOICES!
Everyone to be seated by 12.30pm

MONTHLY MEETINGS

All meetings are in Crosthwaite Parish Room and begin at 10.30 am with doors open from 10 am. Entry will be charged at £1 for members and £1.50 for visitors.

Wednesday 18th November



Forty Fells: Conversations from the High Places of Lakeland

International Photography Award winner **Tom McNally** and author **David Felton** embark on a journey to record the ancient and modern stories of Forty Fells in Cumbria. This promises to be a compelling and deeply moving celebration of Cumbria's mountains.

Tuesday 15th December
Wednesday 20th January
Wednesday 17th February

Skiddaw u3a Christmas Lunch 2026
Details to follow
Details to follow

The People's Emergency Briefing: addendum

The showing of the film on the 21st October was very well attended and many of you will have seen Kelvin's excellent report in the Reminder (23/10/26). The key take-home messages were to write to your MP and to persuade other local communities and groups to organise a showing in their local area. Globally, everyone will be affected by climate change. This film is not party political; it is about the environmental threats and consequences of global warming and the positive steps we can take to mitigate and minimise these.

You can find out more, listen to the expert briefings, find out where the film is being shown and/or how to book a showing of the film on

https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film

Addendum from the Energy and Climate Change Group: if you would like to know more about El Nino, the Met Office have produced a short and very clear film describing El Nino, La Nina and super El Nino and their effects. Its only 5 minutes long and worth a look. This is the link: https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/learn-about/weather/oceans/el-nino

New Group:

Climate Cafe

This new group will meet on the last Wednesday of the month in the Quaker Meeting House, Keswick between 10 am and 12 noon.

There will be a small charge to cover refreshments and hall hire.

It is becoming very evident that concern and awareness of climate issues is increasing. The group will meet to air anxieties, hopes and fears relating to all aspects of climate change. It will be a self-help group and members will be encouraged to contribute to discussions.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact the Convenor, Fiona Blackburn, via the groups page on the website.

Invited Groups:

In Praise of Circle Dancing: Traditional folk dances from all over the world done in a circle without partners.



A Poem for Spotlight

We are drawn into a circle
with others. We watch them; follow them;
learning simple steps, warily at first
but soon without effort, moving in time
with others, companionably.
With delight in melody and movement,
we dance into joy.

And what the group members say:

Stephanie: Our circle dance group is a fun & interesting activity that meets in Threlkeld village hall. It is a great physical activity which can be gentle or a touch more energetic, however you wish. We dance to a varied selection of simplified traditional music from around the world, which I love to hear. It is not necessary to be an expert or even a good dancer – the group is friendly and very supportive to those who may not find it easy to remember every dance sequence! Tuesday mornings are really a great activity in my week.

Hilary & Norice: It is good mentally & socially.

Anne: The music is a feel good factor.

Richard: More an exercise for the brain than the body.

Fiona: There is no such thing as mistakes only variations.

Jean Hutchinson, Convenor

The Popular Science Group

Now in its 12th year, this group meets once a month to hear talks on almost any branch of science or technology. The group is called 'Popular Science' because our aim is to entertain and not to befuddle members with scientific terms and equations. Over the years we have heard talks on 'Snowball Earth' (when the Earth was completely covered by ice), 'Put your foot in it – a humorous look at foot problems', 'Understanding the weather', 'Tsunamis' and 'The search for Covid treatments and vaccines'.

Last Christmas one of our members gave a very entertaining talk based on her trip to the Antarctic. We learnt that, 500 million years ago, Antarctica was part of a supercontinent and was situated at the equator before slowly drifting southwards. We heard a history of its exploration and were introduced to the wildlife. The talk was beautifully illustrated by photographs of icebergs and animal life, especially penguins and whales, that our speaker saw there.







In another fascinating talk, we heard about the remarkable Antikythera Mechanism. This was retrieved from the wreck of a Roman cargo ship off the island of Antikythera. At first the mechanism appeared to be a lump of wood and bronze but further examination showed a number of gears and cog wheels. Careful reconstruction revealed that the mechanism was an astronomical clock capable of predicting the position of the sun, moon and eclipses. Believed to have been constructed around 200BC, the mechanism is recognised as the first known analogue computer.

Talks scheduled for the coming year include 'The Impacts of Staff Fatigue in Healthcare', 'Statins' and 'A review of some Nobel prize winners in Science'. New members are always welcome. https://skiddaw.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/popular-science/

Sue Ashley, Convenor

Groups' Coordinator's report

The annual Skiddaw u3a Open Morning was held on 26th October 2026 in the Southey Street Methodist Church Hall.
All bar a couple of groups were represented on the day, by 29 Convenors. Jennie created an excellent display of Watercolour paintings from her group members and many other Convenors showcased their group using displays of maps, walking routes, pottery, enamelled pieces, books and pickleball paddles and balls etc.
The most recent new group, Climate Cafe signed up 9 new members on the day.
The refreshment team, Geoff, June. Paul and Deb were kept busy serving tea and coffee although it was generally thought footfall was much lighter than in previous years.
Why so? Where were all the 600+ Skiddaw u3a members? Do we need to re-think the Open Morning?

Barbara Newton
Groups Coordinator
groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk

The Chair's Report

It has been a busy and interesting few months over the summer for the u3a. We held our annual Groups' Open Morning last month. Although less well attended than previous ones, it was good, nevertheless, to see members signing up for groups and new members joining.

We also announced the winner of the Poster competition, Marianne Reeve, judged by our Honorary President Sylvia Pilling. Marianne received a nice bottle of wine as a prize. The Guide to Groups is now widely available.

Our Annual Convenors' Meeting has been brought forward to this month so we can cover the interesting subject of risk assessments to make sure we are health and safety compliant.

Our monthly meetings continue to offer a wide range of interesting topics and are well attended.

A couple of dates for the diary. Our Christmas Lunch will be held on Tuesday 15th December and it will be lovely to see as many of you as possible. Also, next year's annual outing will take place on Wednesday 7th July to Dumfries House. More details to follow.

Skiddaw u3a has recently signed up to the Keswick Community Partnership, which is a new network to improve access to services in the town and support the work of volunteer groups. It has a Directory of all the Skiddaw u3a groups and has a wealth of other information.

Finally, I cannot let this opportunity pass by without making a plea for volunteers to join the committee. The good news is we have recruited an Inclusion and Accessibility Officer, Anna Nolan, and she will join the committee soon. We hopefully have an expression of interest for the role of Speaker Secretary and I hope to be able to impart good news soon. However, we still need to identify someone to take over as Committee Secretary. I have included the advert below. Please give it your consideration. Also, we need shadow committee members. If can spare some time then please contact me at chair@skidawu3a.co.uk.

Thank you

Keith Lunson, Chair



Your Committee Needs You!



Skiddaw u3a needs a Secretary from April 2027-without a volunteer we will CEASE TO EXIST!

Committee Vacancy: Secretary

We are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Secretary and help support our organisation. The role comes vacant in April 2027, but there is an option to shadow the role before then.

It's a great opportunity to meet people, get involved a little more in the life of Skiddaw u3a, and play a part in making sure our many groups and activities continue to flourish.

This is a key committee role, but don't be put off. It is not too onerous and it's mainly about keeping things organised, preparing agendas, taking notes at meetings, and keeping our contact details up to date with central u3a and the Charity Commission. You'll be working alongside a supportive team and there will always be help on hand.

A little more detail on the role is provided on the u3a website at https://www.u3a.org.uk/all-documents/role-description-secretary

If you would like to find out more, or simply have an informal chat about what's involved, please contact Ann Alves at secretary@skiddawu3a.co.uk .
Please consider stepping forward. Your contribution could make a real difference to Skiddaw u3a.



Skiddaw u3a Annual Guide to Groups

Paper copies of this year's Guide are available in the library, Castlegate Surgery, the Drop-in Centre. The Quaker Meeting House and local village halls. If you would like copies for any other venue, please contact Maggie Potts email maggie.potts.u3a@gmail.com

This year we asked groups to send us photographs of their activities. Three Convenors responded and the origins of the photographs were acknowledged in the Guide. Let's see if we can beat that in the 2027-8 edition. Including our own photos makes the Guide even more about us and, as editors, we feel that photos of our activities are much more informative than stock photos taken from the internet. More information next summer!

National News

National u3a News **https://www.u3a.org.uk/**

"There's a lot of good stuff on the National u3a website"

What about learning something new or challenging yourself to an online puzzle?

u3a Learning Activities cover a wide range of interests from writing and art to puzzles and games for all u3a members to get involved in. Some are one-off events and others run over an ongoing period of time. At the moment there is a challenging word game called Aileen's Puzzle on the site see if you have more success than the editors!

https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities

And don't forget the free online talks, workshops and courses: these include Mindfulness, Laughter Yoga, Cryptic Crosswords, David Hockney, Pirate Radio and a whole host of others. It's worth a look.

https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events#ONLINE-EVENTS

Noticeboard

Keswick Community Partnership

KCP is a newly formed network which exists to improve access to services in Keswick and support the work of local volunteer groups. This Keswick Community Directory aims to link local residents with regular activities and to provide a comprehensive list of local groups and support organisations. In the future, KCP hopes to link willing volunteers to groups looking for help and support. Entries on this site are created by each individual group themselves, so if you are aware of a not-for-profit local organisation that is not listed, please contact us. Contact details can be found on their website. https://keswickcommunitypartnership.org.uk/

Free Advice on Saving Energy and Money

Energy Savings Trust: has set up a free advice service "Take Charge", a project designed to help householders in the North West save money on their energy bills and make their homes warmer and more comfortable. It is funded by SP Electricity North West and delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice in the North West and the Energy Saving Trust. They provide free, impartial and personalised advice on reducing energy and water costs, maximising income, improving carbon efficiency, low carbon technologies and securing funding for energy savings improvements. It is available to everyone living in Cumbria. There is no eligibility criteria other than being based in the North West and no limit to the number of times you can access the service.
You can access support via freephone 0808 169 9924, get in touch via WhatsApp or request a free appointment via our website https://takechargetoday.co.uk/

Groundwork's Green Doctors: a national charity helping UK residents stay warm, stay well and save money on household bills. Works with the Energy Adviser at Citizens Advice Allerdale. For a free home visit or energy advice contact Mark on 07379 498561 email: mark.hazell@groundwork.org.uk

Warm Homes Local Grant, part of UK Government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, has given £11.8 million over the next 3 years to Cumberland Council to make fuel-poor homes more energy efficient, providing fully funded upgrades to improve energy efficiency and help cut household bills.

Eligible households are those with an energy efficiency rating of D to G and either a total annual household income below £36,000 or a resident receiving a means-tested benefit https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/news/2025/ps118-million-boost-help-cumbrian-homes-stay-warm-and-cut-energy-bills

The Warm Homes Discount scheme is a favourite target for scammers. Households do not receive the money, the supplier does, but many people are not aware of this and think they will receive it. This is the quote from the Government paper on the scheme This is the link https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Computer Scams

Computers, smartphones, tablets and the internet opened up many new tricks for scammers to exploit, but they're also really useful to us, so we need to learn how to be careful and learn how to use IT safely. Here are some key points:

1. Be suspicious if contacted out of the blue. If someone rings, texts or emails you, rather than you having contacted them, then do not trust they are who they say, unless you've a very good reason to believe them.

2. Be even more suspicious if it sounds too good to be true, or they make it sound urgent. Scammers know people are more easily tricked when they have to make a quick decision, e.g. to not miss some offer or to avoid some penalty. The classic scam of this type is a call warning that your bank account has been hacked and you urgently need to move your money to a 'safe' account, so don't fall for that one - the 'safe' account will be theirs and that's the last you'll see of it.

3. Don't give any personal information unless you really are sure you know who you're talking to, and that they really do need to know. Scammers are after money at the end of the day, but personal information is also valuable - they or other scammers can use it later, to look more convincing next time, that they are indeed from a reputable company you deal with.

4. Keep your device software and anti-virus up to date. And be careful if installing new apps - for phones and tablets, stick to apps that are in the official Apple or Android stores, which are checked for malware.

5. Be careful of clicking links in emails and texts, unless you're sure they are OK. They can be set up to look like they are to the website of a reputable company, but in fact link through to a scam website. If in doubt, don't click the link and instead use your browser to go to that company's website in the way you normally would.

There have been several phone scams doing the rounds that fit both the "out of the blue" and "urgent/concerning" categories of points 1 and 2 above. One tells you an expensive iPhone has been ordered on your Amazon account and if you didn't order it then press 1 to cancel. They want you to be worried that you must act quickly, so that if you do press 1 you're more likely to give away personal information in the process. Instead, just put the phone down. If they were telling the truth, then given the number of such calls I've had in the last few months, I would have a whole cupboard full of iPhones by now!

The website of the Which? Magazine Which? has helpful pages on 'Scams and on How to Spot a Scam', in their Consumer rights and Campaigns page and you can also sign up to receive weekly emails of Scam Alerts, warning of new scams that are appearing. Stay safe.

Peter Qiggin
Furness u3a

Keswick Victorian Fayre



This annual event returns on:
Sunday, **6th December 2025, 10:00 – 16:00**

The Keswick Victorian Fayre is brimming with Christmas wonder and a truly warm Cumbrian welcome. There will be entertainment all day long, with performers bringing magic to both the Main Stage in the Market Square and the festive Pack Horse Court.

keswickvictorianfayre

Help available to 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. skiddaw.u3asite.uk/accessibility 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: skiddaw.u3asite.uk/accessibility

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: Your Guide to Getting Started with Zoom Products

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 Genuine Enquiry!

The wind is blowing sideways

And it's raining end to end

So, is there still a hosepipe ban?

Just asking for a friend

***

They said that I'd never be any good at poetry,
because I'm dyslexic,
but so far, I've made two jugs and a vase.

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 Jan 20th, 2027

Editorial Team: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis & Maggie Potts