



SPOTLIGHT on Skiddaw

Aug 2021

www.skiddawu3a.co.uk

Dear Skiddaw u3a members, here is the August edition of Spotlight.

We have got news about the Open Morning in September, the extremely exciting Monthly Meetings already arranged, updates on purchases of equipment which will make outdoor meetings easier and, of course, the first faint stirrings of awareness that Christmas will arrive at the end of the first 'term'.

Mistletoe and Christmas pudding are a long way off, however. This edition also contains fascinating short articles which we know you will enjoy on a range of topics: Alyson Lehninger from the Family History Group gives us a moving picture of what travelling to Australia meant to some of her ancestors, Chris Lewis challenges our expectations that Maths might not be Fun and Patricia Howell looks back on some of the memorable Strolls of the first half of 2021.

Spotlight also contains news from the Committee on how to apply for funding for your Groups, what the Beacon system means for you and how we might all benefit from using a special u3a Facebook page.

There is also news from the National organisation. Do not miss the information on how to combat ageism: it is an 'ism' that tends to be forgotten. And then there's the Energy conference to be held in Penrith in the Spring of '22. Finally! Hurray!

Meanwhile, we hope you are all enjoying the summer break –perhaps managing to get away to see friends and family or perhaps staying put in the Lake District, one of the best staycation spots in the world! Whatever you are doing this summer we hope it is full of sunshine and happy meetings and we look forward to seeing you at the Open Morning.

Wednesday 15th September: Skiddaw u3a Open Morning

9.30 – 11.30am at Southey Street Methodist Hall

The relaunch of Skiddaw u3a!

Come and find out what is on offer and sign up for activity groups.

MONTHLY MEETINGS



Wednesday mornings at 10.30 a.m.

It is hoped that the September Open morning and the October monthly meeting can be held in person rather than online on the Zoom platform. More information will be given closer to the time.

20th October



Antarctica – The Impossible Journey

Geoff Somers is a Skiddaw u3a member and explorer; he intends to share his experience of polar exploration. Here is a taster:

“In July 1989 in the brutal months of the polar winter, Geoff Somers (UK) and his five companions (from USA, France, USSR, Japan & China) set out on skis to attempt a near 4000 mile (6000 km) traverse of the greatest axis of Antarctica. They used three teams of husky dogs to haul their supplies.

Across the vast expanse of ice and snow, they had to contend with extremes of cold down to minus 50°C, endure ferocious blizzards, and negotiate mountain passes, yawning crevices and perpetual isolation. Pitted against the most inhospitable environment on Earth would demand exceptional physical challenges for them and their dog teams. This unprecedented trek had to be completed in 220 days before the following winter would engulf them.”

GROUP NEWS

Despite all the ups and downs of Covid restrictions, we are starting the new term in September with 56 groups covering 43 different activities, thanks to the energy and determination of convenors and the enthusiasm of members.

Sadly, due to the restrictions 5 groups have been unable to continue. A special thank you to Heleen Franklen-Gill who has convened The Spirit of Man since 2014. Ballroom Dancing and Dining Out have understandably had to close but thank you to Valerie Redpath and David Lowe for their work in convening them. Let us hope that both activities can be restarted soon. Pilates also has stopped and we owe a debt of gratitude to Sharon Carter who managed to keep it going online until August 2020, I am sure all her members are very grateful for the work Sharon put into the classes. Spanish too has stopped and I must thank Alan Purvis for taking over and convening the group for the past 3 years. Perhaps there is a Spanish speaker or learner who would like to have a go at starting it up again? Sadly, after 8 years Muriel Strachan has decided that the English Literature Group has to close. This will be a great loss to Skiddaw u3a as it was one of the first groups to be formed. If anyone feels that they would like to re-start the group, please get in touch with me.

With the re-opening and general recommencement of “normal” life, we can start thinking about new activities and groups. Please contact me if anyone has any ideas for starting up new groups. I can help by sending out details to the membership and helping to start up the group. New activities are always welcome. If there is a group you would like to join but you find it is full, why not start another one yourself? I am sure that other Convenors as well as me, will help you. Also, the national u3a’s website has a list of activities and resources which can be very helpful – <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects>

Finally, because of the restrictions, I have not yet had the opportunity to meet most of the convenors so I am looking forward to meeting both convenors and members at our Open Morning on 15th September. See you there!

Yvette Bradley
Groups’ Coordinator

Email contact: skiddawu3aconvenors@gmail.com

Geology Group Field Tests the New Tour Guide System

Between lockdowns last year, I led a socially distanced field trip to St Bees on a rather windy day with waves crashing on the shore. I came home with a very croaky voice and the next morning could only speak in a whisper. Soon afterwards I suggested to the Executive Committee that Skiddaw u3a buy a tour guide system to enable leaders of groups that meet outdoors to communicate easily with attendees whilst maintaining social distancing. It transpired that a member of the Committee had also investigated using such equipment to enable members attending indoor meetings to hear speakers using their hearing aids and wearing individual induction loops.

The Tour guide system was purchased by Skiddaw u3a in late May and had its first outing in June during a geology field trip to the woods above Beck Wythop. Group members found the equipment easy to use. I was able to speak to participants using my normal voice level even when the party was spread out along foot paths.

The new tour guide system uses a transmitter talk to up to 24 people and the participants can ask questions and make comments that the entire group can hear through their receivers. The equipment makes it much easier to maintain social distancing and means that leaders do not have to raise their voices when talking to large groups. My wife, Barbara, commented that when I returned home from the Beck Wythop trip my voice sounded normal - unlike, after previous outings, when I came home with a croaky voice.

The tour guide system is an excellent addition to Skiddaw u3a!

Chris Wilson, Geology Group Convenor

Chris Wilson using the tour guide system transmitter and headset during the Geology Group field trip to the woods above Beck Wythop.



Featured Groups

Strollers



This walking group has been meeting on Monday mornings fortnightly for about 9 years: of course, some of the original Group have had to retire but then new faces appear. The general idea is to walk for about 2 hours at a leisurely pace, avoiding hills and tricky paths, finishing at a local coffee shop or tearoom.

Some routes are local, starting and finishing in Keswick. Others involve using buses, (we love our bus passes) and sometimes we do car share, to try to reduce our carbon footprints. There is plenty of opportunity for socialising. We have become experts at judging the quality of local scones and coffee, and some of us are keen on trees and wildflowers and local history.

Patricia Howell

Maths For Fun

- An oxymoron or a useful tool for life?

Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), a professor of Mathematics at Oxford University and author of 'Alice in Wonderland' & 'Through the Looking Glass', quoted: "Once you master the machinery of Symbolic Logic, you have a mental occupation always at hand, of absorbing interest, and one that will be of real use to you in any subject you may take up. It will give you clearness of thought, the ability to see your way through a puzzle, the habit of arranging your ideas in an orderly and get-at-able form and more valuable than all, the power to detect fallacies, and to tear to pieces the flimsy illogical arguments, which you will so continually encounter in books, newspapers, speeches and even in sermons, and which so easily delude those who have never taken the trouble to master this fascinating Art."



© V &A museum

A puzzle: A woman boasted to another that she could sing a song with anyone's name in it. The second woman said that she would give her £1000 if she could sing a song with her son's name, Demarcus Jabari, in the song. The first woman got her money. What was the song?

(Answer towards the end of this publication)

Chris Lewis

Family History An Exciting Find for a Family Historian

Father's name - TAF P1005
John Price - Copper Turner?
Mason?

D67

1862. Nov 3rd - 7th
Daily Journal

Monday 3rd Sunday, offloaded from home to 4 o'clock. started in day, washed his things, etc. 2 o'clock in the morning. Tuesday 4th Started at the morning 4 o'clock. Wednesday 5th Took the train to work etc. The price of the day was fixed to the Depot at 6 o'clock. Her note to have her, therefore we made one our & went to bed at 10th.

5th Nov at 8 breakfast at 9 dinner 1:15 tea at 6:30 went to bed 9:30 we were not allowed to go out all day.

6th Nov at 8, washed to 8 went out. at 10 returned at 1 dinner at 2, after the evening in singing.

7th Nov to call us up to 7 breakfast at 8 dinner to 1 and then to 2 with preaching at 7 in the evening. Morning 8 service with the gathering in the tree room after which they came to district by so they were looked up.

One of my plans for retirement was to research my family history and once I retired, I joined Skiddaw u3a's Family History group.

I knew that my family had an Australian connection as my maternal grandmother and later my mother used to correspond with a distant relative in Sydney but did not know anything else, so I was keen to discover more. Using the Ancestry website, I found out that four of my 3xgreat grandparents' eight children had emigrated to Australia in the 1860s and 1870s. One of them was my 3xgreat-uncle, John Deer, who at the age of 26 set out for a new life in Australia with his wife Mary (21) and infant daughter Eliza-Jane. John was a "copper furnace mason" in Glamorgan.

My interest in family history is not just about confirming names and dates, but rather learning more of the social history of the times my ancestors lived in and imagining what their lives were like. You can imagine how excited I was during the first lockdown, to find on Ancestry, a copy of a diary written by Mary Deer on the voyage to Australia!

John and his family left Birkenhead aboard the Morning Star on November 17th 1862 bound for Adelaide. There was a crew of 48 and 452 passengers on board.

Mary's diary includes descriptions of Christmas dinner 1862; deaths on board; burials at sea, 24 of them children; a near shipwreck; the ship doctor's remedies and indeed the doctor's unflattering comments about some of the Welsh passengers!

Marine life and icebergs are described and there is mention of Kangaroo Island and of the Morning Star being pulled over the bar by a steamer into Port Adelaide. Mary wrote about her own poor health and that of her baby. The most harrowing part of the diary was the description of the death of Eliza-Jane "*my poor child breathed her last*" and of her burial – the child's body was sewn into a blanket and thrown into the ocean through a cabin window.

After further research, I discovered that Mary gave birth to another daughter, Lily, only a couple of months after arriving in Australia in February 1863 – but she makes no mention of her pregnancy in the diary. What a heartbreakingly difficult time it must have been for her. Poor Mary had another child, a son who did not survive and she herself died in 1866 aged only 25. Lily was returned to Wales to be brought up by her maternal grandparents. John remarried in the early 1870s and went on to have several children – one of whom, Andrew Deer, was the father of the lady my mother used to write to!

Alyson Lehninger

News from the Committee

I am extremely pleased to confirm that your Skiddaw U3A committee is now complete and roles allocated. Ron Lee and Sue Grant will act as a joint Social Secretary team whilst Ann Martin will be our Minute Taker. Those of you who attended our recent Extraordinary General Meeting will also know that I am delighted, (and more than a little relieved), to be able to say that Jim Pawson has now taken over as our business secretary. I am sure you will be hearing from Jim every now and then, and if you have any social ideas for Ron and Sue, do let them know. I would like to stress that as well as fulfilling specific roles all the members of the Committee are vital for all our discussions and decision-making generally.

It is gratifying as we hear of groups undertaking increasing amounts of their activities and I fervently hope that this may continue to be the case. Many thanks to all of you who have made this possible.

If you have any issues that you would like to be raised with the Committee or me, please do not hesitate to get in touch via chair@skiddawu3a.co.uk or the links on the contact page on our website.

Tony Marsh
Chair to Skiddaw u3a

Beacon

This is a management system designed by u3as for u3as. It provides a web hosted database for managing members, Groups, and finances.

Beacon provides a comprehensive set of tools for handling membership: new members, renewals, subscriptions, address changes and communications.

Groups are the heart of the u3a and Beacon provides Group Convenors with membership management, calendars, group ledgers and easy email communication with Group members.

Financial management is based on a secure, simple transaction approach. Every transaction can be assigned to individuals, Groups and categories, and the system provides tools for reconciliation with bank accounts and regular reporting.

Beacon was used to process the membership renewals earlier this year. Our Groups have been set up on Beacon and a small number of Convenors have started using it for their Groups. It was considered best to get some practical experience in using the system before rolling it out to all Convenors. Also the restrictions imposed by Covid 19 prevented any face to face meetings so making it difficult to provide tutoring. It is hoped that at a future Convenors' meeting that Beacon can be demonstrated and made available to all Group leaders who want to make use of it.

Mark Bradley
Beacon Administrator for Skiddaw u3a



Skiddaw u3a Facebook

[Skiddaw u3a Facebook](#)

We have a Skiddaw u3a Facebook page which is not being used to its full potential. We would like to explore the possibilities of developing it further as it is an easy way of group members keeping in touch with each other, share photographs and information, advertise our events, ask advice and many other things.

If you have a look on our Facebook page, you will see a lot of photographs and information which Debbie Morgan posted a few years ago. This will give you an idea of the possibilities. Also have a look at the national u3A Keeping in Touch Facebook page too.

To get our Facebook page up and running, we need to make it a closed site (i.e. open to u3a members only), to link it with the Events page on our website so it is automatically updated and, most important of all, we need an Administrator and some moderators.

If you are a Facebook user and would like to help us develop Skiddaw u3a Facebook, please email spotlight@skiddawu3a.co.uk

Events & Information

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

"The "Social Life" of u3a

Has been somewhat restricted.

While Covid raged our groups shut down

In case we got convicted.

But life goes on with new starts made.

And new committee members

So "Social Secs" are Ron and Sue.

Who'll fan the dying embers.

So, here's your date for

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

TUESDAY 7TH DECEMBER

In the Skiddaw, details soon

It's the date you must remember

Group Support Fund (GSF)

For the last 5 years many of Skiddaw u3a's groups have benefitted from the Group Support Fund (GSF). Skiddaw u3a is a registered charity and the GSF is financed through Gift Aid. If you are a UK taxpayer, you can Gift Aid your membership subscription by ticking the Gift Aid box on the membership application form. HMRC pay Skiddaw u3a 25% of Gift Aided membership fees. It is an important source of revenue and support for group activities: to date we have received £4500 in Gift aid from HMRC. This money is ring-fenced solely to support groups and, so far, we have spent £3691.67 via the GSF.

So, who has benefitted? Well, the very first item bought was an iPod for the Circle Dancing group which enabled the convenor to download music for the dancers to perform to. One of the most recent purchases was for Litter Pickers. Other items bought have been maps for both the Geology and Roamers, walkie talkie systems for both the cycling groups and a large size board and tiles for the Scrabble group. The Italian, Spanish, French, and German groups have benefitted from books and subscriptions to help them learn their respective languages and the Family History has a subscription to FindMyPast to enable their group members research their family history.

The Group Support Fund is available to all our groups and if Convenors feel they would like help to purchase items for the good of the whole Group, then they just need to print off an application form from the Skiddaw u3a website, complete it and email it to me for discussion at the next Executive Committee Meeting. You can find more information about the Fund and how it works on our website under the Documents tab – Policy number 10 and Section 4 of the Procedures.

So far, no application has been refused!

Hopefully come September groups will again be able to meet face to face so if you are a member of a group and think your group can benefit from an application to the GSF then mention it to your Convenor. Start thinking now as to what you might need to get your group up and running again.

**Barbara Newton
Treasurer**

National and Regional News

REGIONAL NEWS: Cumbria u3a Network: Preliminary Notice

THIRD ENERGY CONFERENCE:

to be held at Rheged, Penrith on FRIDAY, 22ND April 2022

This long-postponed conference is, we hope, finally happening next Spring. The programme is now almost complete, and we can promise an exciting range of speakers for the conference from local

farmers to members of the UK Committee on Climate Change. The full programme will be available in the Autumn with booking starting in December.

Network Affiliation Agreement: there are 6 u3a organisations in the North Cumbria Network; Carlisle, Cockermouth, Penrith, Skiddaw, West Lakes and West Cumbria. Each of the 6 have adopted the network affiliation agreement, the key benefit of which is that jointly organised training or educational activities will be insured under the Third Age Trust's public liability insurance.

NATIONAL NEWS: Positive Aging: *u3a launches anti-ageism toolkit.*

u3a members across the country are joining forces with the 'Centre for Ageing Better' on the first ever annual u3a day to call for an end to negative and damaging views of later life, shifting the focus to positive, more realistic depictions instead.

To support u3a members to challenge ageism, u3a and the 'Centre for Ageing Better' have produced a toolkit which includes information and resources on how to challenge ageism including a 'Top Tips' guide.

You can find out more information on the national u3a website

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news>

40th Anniversary of the u3a movement 2022

In 2022, u3a will celebrate its 40th anniversary and several national events are planned throughout the year. Because there are so many Craft groups, there will be a competition to create an Anniversary quilt as a lasting souvenir of the occasion.

This quilt is envisaged as a *Moment in History* for future generations of u3as, showing engagement by many members, raising local and national profiles, and demonstrating the skills and talents of u3a members to the public. It will encourage recruitment and overall awareness and is intended to form part of the u3a Archive in a permanent repository.

From the blocks submitted by u3a members, 40 will be chosen for the Anniversary quilt.

If you would like to take part entry instructions and the rules can be found on the u3a website:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/40th-anniversary>

Advice from the Third Age Trust which has been receiving information from members about scams and security alerts and would like us to remind all our members to check their bank accounts regularly and immediately report any suspicious debits that they do not recognise. Most banks can put a stop to any charges and give advice on how to get refunds where appropriate.

Another good practice is to search for reviews, scam reports and credit ratings before buying from a new company.

Which? give advice on scams and you can find it online: [Which? on scams](#)

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: John Howell has been researching how to improve hearing when participating in Zoom events and talks. John has summarised what he has learned. If you would like a copy, you can email john via the spotlight email: spotlight@skiddawu3a.co.uk

Notice Board

Volunteers needed.

Charity shops are fascinating - to have a look round, find a bargain and know that shops are raising funds for their charity by recycling, reusing and repurposing goods. However, all the shops in Keswick seem to be short of volunteers.

Volunteering, even for an hour or so a week, is a good way to make new friends and contribute to a worthwhile cause. If you are particularly interested in books, CDs, DVDs or vinyl records, your knowledge could really help in sorting and pricing these items. If you are a fan of ‘Antiques Roadshow’ you might be able to help with donated bric-a-brac items. Knowledge of fashion brands and styles could be useful in helping with clothing donations and window dressing.

Volunteers are also needed to help on the till, and to deal with gift aid recruitment and donations.

So, if you would like to spend some time helping a charity, get in touch with one of the charity shops in Keswick:

Barnardo’s	017687 71484
British Heart Foundation	017687 73701
Cancer Research	017687 71207
Hospice at Home	017687 75830
Oak Tree Animal Rescue	01228 560082
Oxfam	017687 74494

Of course, there are several other volunteering opportunities in the area and information about these may be included in other issues.

**NEW!! Watch out for:
'The Skiddaw u3a Annual Guide to Groups' - appearing on a screen or
table near you at the beginning of September.**

Last Word

Howzat!!! What a spectacular catch: even if you are not a cricket fan, you may be impressed by this astonishing catch. From BBC Sport - England versus India match

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/av/cricket/57785924>

(If this link doesn't work, then it is worth searching on YouTube for the coverage.)
and finally..... a joke to make you groan.

There was an English cat and a French cat who had always been great rivals and they used to set themselves challenges to see who was stronger, faster, or cleverer. The English cat's name was One-two-three, and the French cat was, of course, called Un-deux-trois. One day, they set themselves the challenge of swimming across the Seine in Paris. Which one won?

(Answer: One-two-three because the Un-deux-trois cat sank)

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 Oct 20th

Editorial Team: Gill Frances, Chris Lewis & Maggie Potts

Maths for Fun Puzzle
Solution

Happy Birthday to You