

Skiddaw U3A News 24th September 2019

Successful Open Morning

Well over two hundred people attended the annual Open Morning at the Methodist Church Hall on 18th September, and thirty-one new members brought Skiddaw U3A membership numbers to over five hundred.

Over fifty convenors were present to talk about their groups, with many new recruits signing up to take part in a new activity. Popular groups included Local History, Pub Games, Gardening, Bird Watching, both cycling groups and all the languages and walking groups,

Members were entertained by Skiddaw U3A's music groups throughout the morning and many people took the opportunity to sit and chat with friends old and new whilst enjoying the free refreshments.

Birdwatchers head to Leighton Moss

The Bird Watching group recently enjoyed a beautiful day at Leighton Moss where, despite the lagoon having been drained, they had sightings of redshank, little egrets, and a kingfisher. From the Eric Morecambe Hide the group had excellent views of a curlew sandpiper along with dunlin and teal. There were also shelduck, black-tailed godwits, snipe, curlew and a great white egret. A cetti's warbler was heard at close range but not seen. Between the car park and the hides the group observed reed buntings, greenfinches and long-tailed tits. At the Causeway Hide large numbers of shovellers were resting close to the hide, and a marsh harrier flew overhead as did a group of gadwalls. Walking to and from the Lower Hide the group saw robins, blue, coal and marsh tits. There was a great crested grebe fishing in front of the hide and a great white egret flew by. Not a particularly amazing day but very pleasant nevertheless.

Roamers: Ambleside to Grasmere

On a wet morning, several intrepid Roamers hopped off the bus just before Ambleside and followed the coffin route to Rydal. After crossing the foaming River Rothay, they greatly welcomed the shelter of Rydal Cave. They then headed for Loughrigg Terrace, perched above Grasmere – now barely discernible in the mist. Having crossed the Red Bank road, the group took the attractive, if soggy, ridge steadily rising to Silver How in a series of rocky ups and downs. Having ascended Huntingstile Crag and Dow Bank, the thoroughly soaked party, now additionally blasted by a keen wind, abandoned the ridge in favour of a path, or was it a stream, heading towards Grasmere across the lower slopes of Silver How. The bus in Grasmere was a most welcome sight!

Archaeology Group look at Lake District rock carvings

The U3A Archaeology Group recently spent a day visiting some prehistoric rock carvings.

The majority of Britain's rock art sites are in Scotland and the north of England. Although no-one really knows the purpose of the rock carvings, they may have been to mark meeting places or tribal boundaries; as sight lines; or to serve a ceremonial purpose. In the Lake District the cup marked rocks are usually at the head or tail of a lake on a rock promontory jutting from the valley floor.

The sites visited on this occasion were of cup marks located on glacial slabs, the carvings being in the form of circular hollows, sometimes as many as 40 cups on one rock. They date from the Neolithic and Bronze age from about 4000 to 1500 BC. The group visited four sites: the Memorial Park and Allan Bank at Grasmere, Grange in Borrowdale and Loweswater. At the latter the cup marks are found on an outcrop which has a wonderful 360 degree panorama of the surrounding fells. With Crummock as a backdrop, this could have been a site of some significance. Whilst in Borrowdale the group also noted the Manesty Saline Spring, used as a source of salt by the monks of Furness Abbey.

Forthcoming events and activities

The next coffee morning at Mrs F's on Main Street will be on Wednesday 2nd October, all welcome. The next monthly meeting will be on Wednesday 16th October, at Crosthwaite Parish Rooms, where Doug Thompson will give a talk on 'The Artist as Pioneer – the European Tradition in Australian Art'. There will be an extra event in November, on Thursday 7th, when chocolatier Andrew Thwaite will give an insight into his profession. This is a ticket-only event, and tickets will be on sale at the October monthly meeting. For more information on Skiddaw U3A go to www.skiddawu3a.co.uk