

Howard's Story:

Howard Simpson, u3a member since 1996

The first person I was able to speak to was Mr Howard Simpson. I already knew Howard as a formidable opponent on the badminton court. Howard explained that, initially, he met with the late Don Lord who was Head of Further Education at Ullswater Community College at the time. It had been agreed that, once a committee had been formed, the Monthly Meetings could be held at the school and from here on in, the Special Interest Groups could be formed, mainly from what people were most interested in. As word got round and more people joined PNLu3a, it was possible to keep costs to a minimum, thereby providing interesting and affordable activities for local people.



Howard, together with his late wife Anne, formed the Badminton Group. At that time Penrith Leisure Centre did not exist, so it was agreed to hire Lazonby Village Hall on a Friday afternoon, and this group is still going strong today, a testament to the dedication of those early members.



Howard also found time to be co-co-ordinator for the Spanish Group as well as belonging to the Walking Group. The Spanish Group was a self-help Group, with no tutor, but they did enjoy visits to the cinema or theatre, to watch Spanish productions or, a trip out to enjoy some Spanish food along the way.

Please find included a copy of a booklet, put together by the early Walking Group in 1999, which was run by Joan & Jim Lintott. The walks were centred around the Penrith area and varied in length from 6 to 14 miles. They were very detailed and had an accompanying map. On the last page, an interesting fact was added to the Mardale Funeral Walk, and this was an itemised list of charges from the Records of Kendal dated 16 January 1702, for the cost of the funeral and food for those attending. I was particularly intrigued by the payment of £2 to Peggy Hughes & Maggie Ffisher for 'winding' the deceased, which was, wrapping the body in the winding sheet ready for burial. The food was also very different to what we would expect today.

This was indeed an active group as many of the walks were around 8-12 miles long, some 14.5miles. Holiday trips were also arranged to places like Grasmere, where

accommodation was available at the Glenthorne Guest House from Mondays to Fridays, although some people came along for the day only, a truly flexible and inclusive group.

From Grasmere, the walkers could explore further afield into other regions of the Lake District. Generally, on these trips away, the group would walk during the day and relax and enjoy each others' company in the evening, sometimes playing board games, or cards.

In March 2000, five different people were invited to give a presentation and talk on each one of the walks, included in the booklet, at the Monthly Meetings. This provided not only slides of stunning scenery, but also a fascinating insight to the history of some of the walks and the surrounding area.

Thank you Howard, for agreeing to share your story.