

# *New Mills and District*



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

February  
2017



# Welcome heralds of Spring

(... we're walking  
with snowdrops,  
page 11)

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**W**ELCOME to our first newsletter of 2017. Hopefully by the time you read this, Spring will be on its way – the days are already getting longer and new life is beginning all around us.

Our 2016 AGM was held last November in New Mills Town Hall, during which the officers and committee were elected for 2016/2017. I was elected as your new chairwoman, following the retirement of Ann Apps after five years in the role.

Her effective management of our U3A during that period and her commitment to the task were unparalleled.

Furthermore, her extensive knowledge of the development of our U3A over the last 12 years and of the skills and interests of individual members has undoubtedly resulted in the fact that our organisation is presently thriving and successful.

Lesley Thompson (our Business Secretary for the last two years) and Christine Dawson (our Refreshments Organiser for several years) also retired.

Barbara Morris retired from the committee but is remaining as Groups' Co-ordinator for another year.

As a result, 'a wind of change' has blown through the committee and I see this as an opportunity to involve members in the running of our U3A to a greater degree than has been the case in past years. There is a list of the new officers and committee members on page 12 of this newsletter.

## **This is the position at the start of 2017**

Our U3A continues to be successful with a membership of 594 and 58 groups listed on our website (including several new groups started during last year). These

## **From the CHAIR**

by LESLEY MASON



**Lesley has taken over as our chairwoman**

groups cover a wide variety of topics from Art Appreciation and Art History to Walking (six different groups) and Yoga, enabling us all to share skills and knowledge and, in so doing, fulfil the U3A's aims of learning, recreation and companionship.

Our finances are healthy and the Treasurer's report presented to the AGM was in a new 'user-friendly' format which was approved and accepted by the members present.

Our Group Leaders' meeting in April 2016 was well attended, providing an opportunity for Group Leaders to raise concerns about

# It's your U3A ... let's go forward together

matters pertaining to individual groups and discuss these with other group leaders and committee members. I see this meeting as a vital way of 'connecting' with our members – we could not function properly without the involvement of our group leaders. There will be a Group Leaders' Meeting in April this year, details of which will be circulated shortly.

We continue to look at ways to become involved with the wider community. The Activities Groups Display meeting was moved last year from August to September and is now advertised in the New Mills Festival programme of events. This means that the September meeting is an 'Open' meeting and this has proved to be a successful way of marketing our U3A and its activities to members and non-members alike.

We also continue to maintain links with other U3As through the Derbyshire and East Midlands Networks and the Pennine Link.

## **Why it's vital we have an effective committee**

Our committee is drawn from our membership and we run the U3A for the benefit of all our members; but without an effective committee our U3A will fall into

decline and fold. I, for one, do not want this to happen.

We still have vacancies for committee members and in particular we have a vacancy for the role of Deputy Chair.

This is an 'understudy' role enabling that person to learn how we run our U3A with a view to taking over when the current Chair retires – usually after two or three years in the role.

If you would like information about what being a committee member entails, please ask me, or any other committee member.

## **Please have a think about whether you could help**

We also need members to become involved in other ways – within groups, helping with refreshments, contributing articles to the newsletter and in a myriad of other areas (which need not necessarily involve a huge, or regular, commitment).

Please think about whether you can help – on the committee or in any other capacity. We only need a few members to come forward to keep our U3A alive and thriving and ensure that together we can look forward to another successful year for our U3A.

It's your U3A – become more involved so we don't lose it!

**WEBSITE: [www.newmillsu3a.org.uk](http://www.newmillsu3a.org.uk)**

# My 'quake hotspot

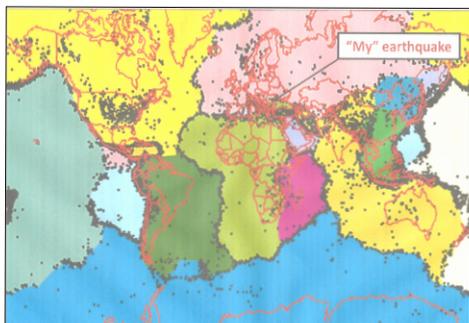
SINCE the summer field trip season we have been back in the classroom studying plate tectonics, looking at its root causes deep beneath the Earth's crust and looking also at the effects of plate tectonics at the Earth's surface.

Where the Earth's crust is in tension, deep rift valleys form, such as those in East Africa. Closer to home, the Midland Valley of Scotland is a rift valley, flanked by the Highlands to the north and the Southern Uplands to the south.

Where tectonic plates collide, compressional forces throw up massive mountain ranges such as the Alps and the Himalaya, and also give rise to volcanoes and earthquakes. The Winter Term concluded with a group lunch at New Mills Golf Club, organised by Chris Walters.

## Punched

While the rest of you were tucking into the festive fare, I spent a month over Christmas and New Year working on a gas well (conventional, not fracked) in Romania, on the flanks of the Eastern Carpathians.



## GEOLOGY

Being away from home was offset by the excitement (yes, I really mean that) of experiencing a force 5.4 earthquake. Earthquakes are common in eastern Romania which is within the complex collision zone between the African and Eurasian Plates.

I was lying awake at 1.30am on December 28 when it felt as though my bed had been punched twice from directly below. This was the P wave, which has a push-pull motion upward and downward. A second later the bed was wobbled from side to side with the wardrobe doors and window screens shaking and rattling. This was the S wave, which has a side to side motion.

The epicentre (point on the Earth's surface directly above the point of rupture - the fault that gives rise to the earthquake) was only 60km north of where I was staying, but the hypocentre (the point of rupture itself) was around 90 km below surface, so there was in fact no reported damage; it's the shallow earthquakes that do the most damage.

Damage or no, it was still a very impressive demonstration of the forces within the Earth's crust.

*Pete Webb*

**The map shows the tectonic plates at the present day. Each black dot represents the location of major earthquakes. Note how many there are at plate boundaries, where the plates interact, and how few there are within plates.**



The Neverest charity's work was especially valuable following the devastating earthquake of 2015 in Nepal (above)

Inset: Professor Rohan Rajan (left) of Neverest with former Mayor Paul Pegg

# Mission to Nepal

AT the January monthly meeting Paul Pegg, former Mayor of Derby, gave a really interesting talk on his visit to Nepal.

He had gone at the invitation of a medical team led by Prof. Rohan Rajan, an orthopaedic consultant from Derby who has been instrumental in setting up Neverest, a medical charity working in Nepal.

Paul told us about the lack of equipment and appalling conditions in the hospital he visited. We heard about the medical team giving up their holidays in order to work long hours in appalling squalor and all paying for the privilege of doing so.

Humour was provided by Paul's tale of him getting into 'greens' (far too small) to go into the operating theatre.

The group did have a day off and visited an orphanage. They came back in silence. That evening the group decided to pay for the running of the orphanage and sponsoring the children to the age of 21.

Since then a decision has been made to finance both the building of and equipment for a new hospital for Nepal.

The talk was very moving and afterwards several people asked how they could donate to the charity, now raising funds for equipping the new hospital.

There have been requests for information on donating to the Nepal hospital funding following the talk.

For anyone who wishes to donate, cheques should be made out to:

**Neverest Orthopaedics, c/o Paul Pegg, 12 Acton Road, Mackworth, Derby, DE22 4JF.**  
*Christine Wass*

# The play's the thing, why not give it a try?

ENTER stage left wearing an evil smirk...but we never leave our seats! Comfortably ensconced on someone's sofa, we encounter murderers, scoundrels, misfits, lotharios and all manner of people - both serious and comic.

We meet fortnightly almost throughout the year and read a wide range of playscripts. Some we might be acquainted with, some are new experiences. Because we read and do not act out, it is excellent exercise for our imaginations. We do not profess to be critical; sometimes we may voice our reactions at the end of a play but it is not in our brief to analyse or conduct literary disseminations. This is a "strictly for pleasure" activity.

We try to pick plays that require a cast of half a dozen or more characters to allow everyone to have a read. Here we are at the mercy of whoever chooses and signs out the set of scripts and the current stock in Stockport library (Derbyshire library is sadly deficient in play sets and makes steep charges for loans).

Male/female balance is never an overriding concern – our ladies are good at gruff voices and our men can speak in gentler registers! As for making sure everyone has a good read, we often swap players in the middle of scenes. All good stuff for keeping our brains active!

Playreading is one of the original groups set up when New Mills U3A came into

## PLAYREADING

being. I have belonged to it almost since its inception. The personnel have changed a bit over time and at present we are able to take on one or two new members. A strong draw of the group is its sociability. We continue to meet in each others' houses and have resisted the temptation to hire a room. Our refreshments are always a high spot of the morning – and a chance to update on members' news! For anyone interested, it is best to contact me on [p.kendall79@btinternet.com](mailto:p.kendall79@btinternet.com). Come along and see – no auditions necessary!

P.S. regional accents not a specialism – as you probably gathered from our pitiful attempts at Welsh lilt when we read from "Under Milk Wood" at last year's Open Morning!

*Phil Kendall*

## A chat can make all the difference

WOULD you welcome a friendly phone call from one of our U3A members? Are you unable to attend groups or meetings? Do you feel left out of previous meetings?

We have volunteers available who look forward to making contact with you. Just call me on 01663 745177.

*Ethne Bailey*



Eyam Church may well feature in plague stories from David Bell (top right). While author Stephen Booth (bottom right) has some Peak District tales to tell



HERE'S some information about speakers at forthcoming monthly meetings.

On **February 21** we have our own **Barbara Matthews** giving us a talk and hopefully showing many photographs of New Mills U3A's summer holiday. A much welcomed break from the doom and gloom of the wintry weather we have been experiencing.

Next month the author **Stephen Booth** will be with us. He is a well known thriller writer who gives fabulous descriptions of many part of the Peak District. Areas that he has walked and enjoyed himself. He will be bringing some books to sign for any enthusiasts. The most recent of his books (that I have read) is **The Murder Road** with many parts of the local area identifiable. It's a very exciting book. Stephen Booth has been to other events in New Mills but this is the first visit to a U3A

## Remember Summer?

meeting. I'm sure he will be made most welcome.

Our April visitor will be **David Bell**. He has spoken at quite a number of local U3As. He says his delivery is very tongue-in-cheek and calls himself The Plague Doctor. His subject is, of course, **The Plague and Eyam**. He also goes to schools to talk on the subject, but promises that we will get his adult version of the subject.

As you can see we have a good variety of speakers. I hope many of you will all come along and enjoy listening and being prepared to ask interesting questions that might keep our speakers on their toes

*Lesley Thompson*



**HERE** are a few pictures from the New Mills and District U3A Christmas Party at New Mills Town Hall.

Members enjoyed a relaxed gathering on December 20, though the mince pie queue was quite long!

Maggie Evans gave us an excellent quiz on a Christmas related theme and other topics. We left looking forward to the next one!

*Christine Wass*



## Get ready for renewal!

YOUR membership is due for renewal at the end of March. The fee is still only £10 for a year of mental/physical stimulation, fun and companionship. Renewal notices will be posted to everyone at the beginning of March.

Please heed this very small list of wishes from your hard-pressed Treasurer, Margaret:

- Submit your Renewal Notice with your money. No Renewal Notice means it's possible that your renewal will not be properly recorded and cause us headaches later.

- If not able to collect your card at a meeting, you MUST enclose an SAE. Your card will not magically wend its way to your wallet without one and no, I can't "pop it" through your door as so many people ask. Not unless you offer Lemon Drizzle Cake. Please don't say you will collect it from my house – I won't be in!

We appreciate that hiccups will happen, and forms will go missing, and we won't shout at you, but if you can make the effort to ensure that doesn't happen to you, you will help a lot.

Thanks, a Happy New Year to you all.

*Margaret Weaver*

**Please come for coffee**

OUR U3A committee would like to



encourage members and prospective members to come along to the monthly coffee mornings to meet your friends, make new ones and enjoy tea, coffee and biscuits in a friendly and sociable environment.

As a further incentive you're likely to be served with cheerful smiles by a number of our committee members who are also available if you have questions, ideas or issues about our U3A which you'd like to discuss.

We're always keen to hear your thoughts about how we're doing and how we might improve.

In addition there is the ever-popular Book Swap to look forward to.

The dates and times of the coffee mornings are on the website but

generally they are on the final Tuesday of each month from 10.30 to noon at the U.R.C. Church (Providence) on Mellor Road, New Mills. We wield a mean teapot!

Hope to see you there.

## Prospective members

**A reminder that a non-member is allowed to attend a meeting, either group or monthly, once, as a taster. But if they wish to attend further meetings, then they must join our U3A. This applies to all groups, including the Outings Group.**

# Fascinating ... and frustrating

## BADMINTON

BADMINTON has been a large part of my life and given me so much pleasure over the years that I always take every opportunity to encourage others to play it.

As a badminton player I originally started coaching to promote the enjoyment which I had obtained from the game at senior level.

A great deal of satisfaction as a coach over the last 30-plus years has been in seeing individuals develop from being a complete beginner to becoming a competitive player of the sport and sometimes continue on to country and international class.

The game is fascinating, although often frustrating too, and provides



**Your serve ... it's worth giving  
badminton a try**

enjoyable exercise which helps to produce healthy well-coordinated minds and bodies, a competitive spirit and good sportsmanship. It is also a great social asset.

Anyone interested in joining our group can contact me on 01663 743435.

*Doug Currie*

# Cooking in French

## LE CLUB FRANCAIS

MULTITASKING came to the fore when, after hearing in French (several times!), how to make a Gratin Dauphinois, the members of the group gave their own excellent version - again in French - of the recipe. In doing this they were prompted by the mimed actions required.

*Christine Wass*



**That's the way to do it ... Gratin Dauphinois is a delicious traditional French dish based on potatoes and cream**

# Places to go, people to see

## OUTINGS

NEXT month there's a trip arranged by the Outings Group to Rode Hall in Cheshire.

Rode Hall's gardens are the setting for what is said to be one of the most spectacular displays of snowdrops in the north west. Rode's Snowdrop Walks are deservedly popular with over 70 different varieties of snowdrops to be seen.

In April there's a trip to historic Lancaster Castle.

The U3A holidaymakers this year are heading to Perth in Scotland.

From May 21 they will be based for six days at the Salutation Hotel which is reputed to be one of the oldest hotels in Scotland - welcoming guests since 1699.

Day one includes a trip to view the Kelpies at Falkirk. Day two: Pitlochry and Blair Castle. Day three: Dundee and St. Andrews. Day four: Steamboat trip on Loch Katrine and a drive to the Trossachs. Day five: Scone Palace and free afternoon in Perth. Day six: Return



Falkirk in Scotland is home to The Kelpies (above), at 30 metres high they form the largest equine sculpture in the world. A kelpie is a shape-changing aquatic spirit of Scottish legend. They are said to haunt rivers and streams, usually in the shape of a horse.

home. Anyone interested should contact the Outings group for more details.

In August there's a trip to London to visit Buckingham Palace among other places. Again contact Outings for details if you are interested.

*Barbara Matthews*

**MEETINGS** of the Travel Group are held in the New Mills Library Lecture Room on Thursdays starting at 2pm. The room is open from 1.45 pm.

On March 16 Barbara Matthews will present 'Croatia Part Two'.

On April 20 Mac and Jennifer McLaughlin present 'Sichuan and Yunnan: south-west China' and then on May 18 I will be talking about 'Libya'.

*Derek Brumhead*

# NEW MILLS AND DISTRICT U3A COMMITTEE 2017

**CHAIR** Lesley Mason [chair@newmillsu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

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**MINUTES SECRETARY** Marian Parker

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS** Derek Brumhead, Sue Colston, Sue Rivers  
and Mavis Worthington.

## NON-COMMITTEE ROLES

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