

# *New Mills and District*



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

December  
2017



Happy  
Christmas  
to all our  
readers!

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Read the Newsletter in colour on the  
website: [www.newmillsu3a.org.uk](http://www.newmillsu3a.org.uk)

# Thank you for so much help

OUR well-attended AGM was held in November in New Mills Town Hall, during which elections for the 2017/18 committee were held. Details of the officers and committee for the coming year are on the back page of this newsletter.

Thank you to members who have retired from various roles: Sue Rivers, who has served on the committee for four years, Lesley Thompson for arranging some interesting speakers, and David Blundell, who has acted as our Webmaster since the inception of the website and also assisted Hazel Perry (our Accessibility Officer).

Thanks also to those members who have made a significant contribution to our U3A over the years but who have moved away (or sadly died) during the year, and to everyone else who has helped in any way, particularly the group leaders whose commitment and hard work is fundamental to our continued success.

We have a membership of 581 with 53 groups listed on our website, covering a wide variety of topics and enabling the sharing of skills and knowledge.

Our finances are healthy and the financial report presented to the AGM by our Treasurer was unanimously adopted by members present.

From the  
**CHAIR**

by LESLEY MASON



We have continued to maintain links with other U3As in the North West Greater Manchester Network (through the Pennine Link) and also through the Derbyshire Network. In particular, the Pennine Link enables us to exchange ideas and discuss matters of common interest with regard to the development and running of our individual organisations.

Finally, my personal thanks to everyone for being such enthusiastic members. We now look forward to another successful year.

### **Vacancies**

We still have vacancies for committee members; in particular for the position of Deputy Chair (to learn about the running of our U3A with a view to taking over the chair when my period of office ends).

We also have a vacancy for the role of Groups Co-ordinator (ably carried out by Barbara Morris for a number of years).

So please think about whether you would be willing to help to run your U3A, and please ask me or any committee member if you would like information about what these roles entail.



Steam locomotive 6990 Witherslack Hall which the group saw on a trip to the East Lancashire Railway, last seen by Patrick Anderson in the 1950s when he was a lad train spotting in Reading!

# All aboard for 2018

THIS year the Transport Group have had some excellent trips out.

We have visited the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port, including a canal boat trip on the Shropshire Union Canal, Bury Transport Museum and East Lancashire Railway and the Lune Aqueduct at Lancaster, including a canal boat ride across the aqueduct on the Lancaster Canal.

We have been shown around by numerous knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers

## TRANSPORT

who have always enhanced our visits.

Next year we are hoping to go on a Manchester Ship Canal cruise to Liverpool and to visit the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the Llangollen Railway.

You are welcome to join us on all or any trip, just get in touch and I will put you on the mailing list.

*Patrick Anderson*

**THE scheme to offer friendly telephone contact to members, who for various reasons can no longer attend interest groups or meetings, was available from March 2016. However because of few requests and few volunteers the scheme will now close.**

**Thank you to Pamela Barnes who is a volunteer for one of our members.**

**If anyone would like information on services available such as CAB, Trusted Trader or Handyman Network, for example, then you are welcome to telephone me on 01663 745177.**

*Ethne Bailey*

# From the Bard to Baghdad

## SPEAKERS

WE have some very interesting speakers lined up for the forthcoming Monthly Meetings.

**Professor Helen Wilcox** from the Bangor University School of Literature is coming to speak to us about her work on January 16. Following the 400th anniversary last year of Shakespeare's death, she will discuss 'Not of an age, but for all time: why, and in what ways, does Shakespeare's work live on after 400 years?' We all have our favourite work and many people can quote a passage, probably remembered from school. Shakespeare is a part of our heritage as arguably the greatest playwright in the English language, so it should be fascinating to hear her understanding.

**Paul Pegg** is returning to us on February 20 to give an update on work at the orphanage in Nepal. I am sure all those who were at the meeting last January for his previous visit will welcome his return. He is so passionate about the work his team does that it is



**Professor Wilcox: Shakespeare expert**

impossible not to be swept along with his enthusiasm. He will be accompanied by another member of the team, **Professor Rohan Rajan**, Professor of Orthopaedics at Derby University and the National University of Malaysia. He is a full-time Orthopaedic Consultant at the Royal Derby Hospital who has strong links with charitable work in Nepal and he will offer another perspective.

Singer **Rebecca Done** will be with us on March 20 performing a 40s and 50s show consisting of great songs from a nostalgic era. So clear your throats and get prepared for a singsong.

**Keith Blood** will be joining us on April 17 to talk about The Bamford Dams. The greater part of the talk concerns the building of the Howden and Derwent dams, about the men, materials and machinery involved. The story

continues with the lost villages of Derwent and Ashover and the building of Ladybower. Many of us have walked around the area, driven through it and wondered about the history, so this will help in bringing our walks to life.

**Philip Caine** is an author and speaker. His talk on May 15 is entitled 'Barrow To Baghdad And Back'.

Born in Barrow in Furness, his working life began in the hotel business. Ten years later he took a position working on offshore oil rigs which began his career operating oil and gas projects across three continents. His work at times was hazardous due to the locations, his most hazardous in Baghdad and northern Iraq where he supported 30,000 troops. He has written several books which are all adventure



**Philip Caine: Oil wells to author**

thrillers inspired by his years in the Middle East.

*Mavis Worthington*

## Spanish Civil War examined

**THE new History Group will meet for the first time on Tuesday, January 9, next year and thereafter on the second Tuesday of each month.**

**Meeting time is 10.30am and the venue is in Strines.**

**For this first meeting the discussion will be about the Spanish Civil War.**

**Members are asked to read whatever is of interest to them on this topic and come along to the meeting to exchange information,**

## HISTORY

ideas, views etc. All contributions by members will be welcome. If History is one of your interests please come along – a warm welcome is extended to all members.

For further information please contact the Groups Coordinator: [groupscordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk](mailto:groupscordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk)



**General Franco**

*Barbara Morris*

# Our Treasurer could do with a hand

*Dear Group Leaders,*

You are all stars. You are the lifeblood of our U3A and I admire you all for what you do for our members whose needs are wide and varied. Our U3A would not be the same without you, so long may you continue to do the good works that you do.

I have two pleas.

The **first** is that ALL Group Leaders submit their returns on a piece of paper that is at least A5 size. The pro-forma returns in the Group Leaders' section of the website (New Mills U3A – just Google it) are A5.

I know that some leaders struggle with technology, so if you can't access the form please send me a hand-written list of meeting dates and numbers attending along with your cheque or cash, with a Return that is at least A5 size.

If you want a bundle of forms ready-printed please let me know and I can give you some. If you have a printer you can probably copy and print them yourself. I can email you copies if you have an email address and ask me.

The **second** plea is to ask that you submit monies on a regular basis and this is especially important where you have to hire rooms for your group. The following Room Providers submit monthly invoices:

- Spring Bank Arts
- Whaley Bridge Uniting Church

- New Mills Town Council (includes the Library Lecture room)
- New Mills Volunteer Centre
- St George's Parish Hall
- Footsteps, Whaley Bridge
- New Mills Youth Club
- Hayfield Village Hall

If your group hires any of these rooms, it would help if you submitted your returns monthly so that I can check your bookings with what they are saying that we owe them.

I had a recent discrepancy with one hirer who submitted an invoice for twice what it should have been, but I could not prove otherwise until some weeks later when I received the Group Leader's return.

Keep up the good work that you do, but please remember that the Treasurer has to handle the monetary side of things too.

*Best wishes,  
Margaret, Treasurer*

("Mad Meg" for obvious reasons!)

## THEATRE MATINEE

**THE next production booked is ART on March 28 at the Lowry Theatre.**

**It stars Nigel Havers, Dennis Lawson and Stephen Tompkinson which should make it a very enjoyable outing.**

*Lyn Gurney*

The group enjoying a rest on a fallen branch in Padley Wood. It's rare that photographer Jean Windsor is in the photo (bottom row, second on the left). She is usually behind the lens!



# Another year in the great outdoors

WE have visited a variety of wonderful places this year and were lucky to find and identify most, if not all, of the flora and fauna we encountered.

What better way is there to spend an enjoyable day in good company while taking in the great outdoors and learning something new along the way?

The first group outing of 2017 was to Etherow Country Park. Then in March we had two, Chorlton Water Park being the first, followed by a trip to Pennington Flash

## BIRDS AND BOTANY

where a beautiful Mute Swan obligingly turned his (or her) best side to my camera. We spotted some very early Bluebells on April's outing to Reddish Vale Country Park as well as Alexanders (also known as Horse Parsley) and Willow Catkins plus the ubiquitous Herb Robert. Our first sighting this year of Dog Violets and Fritillary were a pleasant encounter.

The highlight of May's outing to Stanage Edge and Padley Gorge was the sighting of a Ring Ouzel plus the group finding 'treasure' in a tree trunk in Padley Wood.

We saw large quantities of electric blue Damsel Flies on our mid-June outing to Poynton Coppice, although they were rather camera shy. The red variety were far more obliging.

In early July we visited Hartington Meadows where we were all baffled by

*Continued on page 8*

*Continued from page 7*

some large seedheads. After much deliberation, I somehow managed to open my wild flower book at just the right page and found them to be Goat's Beard, a variety of the Salsify family. Pretty Scabious was growing in abundance among the other wild flowers in the meadow.

On our late July outing to RSPB Old Moor, a 250-acre wetlands nature reserve near Barnsley, we spotted a wonderful variety of wild plants, some familiar and some new to us.



**ABOVE:** Finding the 'money tree' in Padley Wood  
**RIGHT:** The swan posing at Pennington Flash

## BIRDS AND BOTANY

In August we visited the NT Longshaw Estate near Hathersage, lovely at any time of year, but it was nice to see the purple Heather in flower.

In September our last trip of the year was to Tittesworth Reservoir near Leek.

I am looking forward to next year's outings and would like to thank our wonderful group leaders, Fred Pickering and Dave Pierce who organise such an interesting variety of trips for us.

*Jean Windsor*



*ARE there any golfers out there who may be interested in being part of a U3A golf group? The intention would be to meet once every three or four weeks between April and October for a*

*golf day. This could include a round of golf, followed by a meal, at a course within the local area. If interested please email your details to: [ed.hay20@gmail.com](mailto:ed.hay20@gmail.com)*

*Eddie Gaffney*

# How to risk further injury while in a wheelchair!



## INGREDIENTS:

ONE rickety wheelchair.  
ONE older person, not very slim, with a recent hip replacement and a very recently broken leg encased in plaster.

THREE very willing and enthusiastic grandchildren determined not to let GMA (me) feel neglected.

AN ambitious programme of outings was planned and basic skills, such as how to negotiate hills, kerbs and lifts would have to be learnt on the job.

It was after I had been almost tipped into the path of passing cars that the tipping back approach was mastered.

However a department store lift we found to be a little too small if you have a plaster cast stuck out in front, no matter how hard you try to ram GMA in.

What took the biscuit was a trip to Chatsworth. It was decided that a

wheelchair outing around the gardens would cheer GMA up.

Much huffing and puffing delivered all of us to the top of the Cascade. When we were ready to descend to the gardens below I discovered what it feels like to be terrified and helpless.

Despite the combined weights of my grandchildren, the brakes couldn't slow the chair down enough to keep control. Thank goodness the ground eventually levelled out and the chair came to a halt .

A restorative cup of tea revived us all and we returned home exhausted, but in one piece.

*Pam Hartley*

IF any individual or group would like a free portable projection screen please contact me.

ddb@tesco.net  
01663 744863

*Derek Brumhead*

# Trip back in time for tea

## OUTINGS

OUR October outing fell between two bright sunny days and was the most miserable wet day. I must have lost my knack for choosing good weather.

However this did not detract from our enjoyment of a visit to the Piece Hall at Halifax, thankfully most of it was undercover.

This fascinating building was built as a cloth hall for handloom weavers to store and sell the woollen cloth they had produced. It opened in January, 1779, and recently re-opened after a multi-million pound transformation project. The great square is surrounded by colonnaded galleries, originally home to 315 rooms used to store 'pieces' of cloth for trading.

An exhibition tells the story of the building's early years in Georgian times through to the onset of the Industrial Revolution.

Today the traders' rooms house a number of interesting small shops, restaurants and cafes. The central square hosts music events and markets.

There are more shops to come and we were told a Christmas market would be held in the

square. Maybe next year we will make a visit at that time.

Still on the theme of the early Yorkshire woollen industry, after lunch we travelled to East Riddlesden Hall near Keighley, a National Trust property.

Rich clothier James Murgatroyd bought the estate in the 1630s and is largely responsible for the present house. Although it has an impressive entrance dominated by a castellated two-storey porch with a rose window, the house interior is very homely and several members said they could live there. Murgatroyd's great grandson added what is known as the 'Starkie' wing, which didn't stand the test of time as well as the older building and is now a ruin.

As we toured the house the volunteers in the rooms gave us some interesting facts and one lady who was working a rag rug was inundated with questions about her hobby. Several of our ladies were very interested and thought we should start a U3A group.

As always the day ended with a visit to the café for tea and cake.

*Barbara Matthews  
Picture by Anne Mason*



**The fascinating Piece Hall which the group visited on a trip to Halifax**



Two shots of the exposed coal seam at Birch Vale.

# See a coal seam near you ...

## GEOLOGY

COAL is a rather weak rock and therefore easily weathered, so outcrops of coal seams are rare.

But near New Mills we have one permanently exposed in Arden Quarry, Birch Vale.

It is called the Yard Seam, taking its name from its average thickness. This is the lowest of the five coal seams that occur in the Goyt Valley, and which formerly supported a thriving industry.

The quarry, which is now a landfill site, formerly extracted sandstone for building but the lease with the Duchy of Lancaster (which for centuries had always retained mineral rights) did not include the coal. It

was left just lying around on the quarry floor, but no doubt a few bucketsful found their way to the hearths of grateful quarry workers!

The coal is clearly shown in the photos. Above it is the sandstone that was quarried, while the pale grey rock below the coal is the seat earth and silty clay of the swamp in which the trees grew, died and were then buried to become the coal seam.

If you would like to visit Arden Quarry to see the seam, please contact Pete Webb on [petewebbgeo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:petewebbgeo@yahoo.co.uk).

*Derek Brumhead  
and Pete Webb*

## T'AI CHI

**WE have just started a new piece of work, a more traditional form completely new to the class so making it an ideal time for new people to join. Although this is aimed at those who are pretty mobile and like a bit of a challenge, all are welcome. We meet every Thursday at noon in St Georges Parish Hall, Church Lane, New Mills.**

*Jo Royle*

## **New Mills and District U3A Officers and Committee 2017/18**

**Chair:** Lesley Mason  
(chair@newmillsu3a.org.uk)  
**Deputy Chair:** Vacant  
**Treasurer:** Margaret Weaver  
(treasurer@newmillsu3a.org.uk)  
**Business Secretary:** Christine Wass  
(secretary@newmillsu3a.org.uk)  
**Membership Secretary:** Wendy Cheshire  
(membership@newmillsu3a.org.uk)  
**Groups Co-Ordinator:** Vacant  
**Minutes Secretary:** Marian Parker  
**Speaker Arranger:** Mavis Worthington  
**Committee Members:** Derek Brumhead,  
Sue Colston, Susan Wyatt

### *NON-COMMITTEE ROLES*

**Almoner & Accessibility Officer:**  
Hazel Perry  
**Accessibility Contacts:** Hazel Perry  
and Ann Apps  
(access@newmillsu3a.org.uk)  
**Refreshment Organiser And Book  
Exchange:** Sue Rivers  
**Newsletter Editor:** Mike Perry  
(newsletter@newmillsu3a.org.uk)  
**Website Editors:** Hilary Harmer, Eileen  
Gilligan, Ann Apps  
(website@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

# Help start a new group?

TOGETHER with a group of friends I organise 'Singalongs' in the Lodge Nursing Home, Chapel-en-le-Frith.

The idea is not just to entertain but to involve the residents, to chat to them and get them moving if possible (we use percussion instruments too) and there is

**MANY thanks to those of you who have pitched in to this edition of your U3A Newsletter. Email articles and pictures for inclusion in the next edition (March, 2018) to: newsletter@newmillsu3a.org.uk**  
*Mike Perry*  
 (Please understand that contributions may be edited.)

no need to be 'able to sing'.

While not a U3A group, many of the participants are U3A members. I don't have the time at the moment, but we enjoy these sessions so much ourselves and the feedback from the staff at the home is so positive that I would start a U3A group like a shot if I could.

An idea for someone willing? I'd gladly share our experience thus far.

In the meantime, we struggle sometimes to find music (for our ever-willing pianist) for the old-time songs, and I wondered if any members have books or sheet music of old songs hidden away that they would be willing to donate or lend to us? I can be contacted on 01663 750665

*Jo Royle*