



2023/2024 Committee

Welcoming a new member

Trips, Holidays & More

Hearing from the Outings Coordinators

Activity Groups

Reporting back on another busy year

Dates *for your* Diary

A full programme to enjoy in 2024

new s l e t t e r

January 2024

Issue 5

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Hearing from the Chair

Hello Everyone

It was very good to see you all at the AGM in November when we agreed a couple of changes to our Committee. Pam Baker has stepped down but will continue to be one of our 'meeters & greeters' at general meetings whenever she can. Plus we welcomed Carol Wright elected as a Committee Member.



Carol has of course been our Speaker Organiser for the last two years but now she has moved on, we are looking to find a replacement. So if you would like to help us in this role please let us know. Carol has arranged all the speakers for 2024 but we will need someone to keep an overview.

We still have one vacancy on the Committee and if you feel you would like to join us just come along to a meeting and find out what is involved.

Looking ahead 2024 is also our 20th anniversary and we are at the moment thinking about ways to celebrate so if you have any suggestions please contact us. It can either be as individual groups or as a whole. I was lucky enough to be involved in the tenth anniversary so would like to think that the twentieth will be just a successful.

We have increased our membership quite a lot this year and it is now nudging 500. So if you don't know me personally I hope to meet up with you at the groups you attend, or at the general meeting (the third Tuesday of the month) or coffee morning (last Tuesday of the month). Come and introduce yourself.

Our u3a could not function without all the group leaders, committee members, refreshment organisers, speaker arrangers and members, so a big thank you to you all.

I hope you have a happy, peaceful and successful 2024.

Sue Rivers

Reporting Back from the 20th AGM

Despite ongoing problems with the boiler at the Town Hall we were kept warm at this year's AGM with plenty of mobile heaters.

Chair Sue Rivers offered a brief resume of the previous year clearly showing that this u3a remains as popular and dynamic as ever. Membership is approaching 500 with 18 new recruits joining just in the last month.

Numerous local and national events were organised for the u3a fortieth anniversary and Sue reminded us that next year we have something to celebrate also. Our very own twentieth birthday! Ann Apps request has prompted several of you to get in touch with some good suggestions of how we could mark this auspicious occasions. And please keep them coming because the Committee will be considering all proposals early in the new year.

Treasurer Margaret Weaver then brought us up to date with her annual statement. She advised that a comparison showed the financial situation was similar to last year. Covid had undoubtedly had an impact but membership was now steadily increasing.

The Committee had voted not to increase subscriptions and a resolution to raise the Third Age Trust fee from £4 to £7 had been rejected. However, the Treasurer warned we would continue to see the effects of the cost of living crisis on items such as room hire charges. Raising the activity groups contributions from £1 to £2 had helped particularly because more were opting to meet at external venues.

We have benefitted from Riveria Travel donations, receiving £2500 over the last two years, and Margaret asked if you are planning a cruise with the firm to consider selecting New Mills u3a as your chosen charity.

Sue welcomed Carol Wright on to the Committee and thanked Pam Baker, stepping down at the end of her term of office, for her much appreciated input. Eight members are continuing and see right for a brief summary of who's who.

In the way of all good forums we ended with coffee, tea, biscuits and the chance to mingle and chat.

And a big thank you to the refreshment team.

Catherine Ager



Committee Members Who's Who

Chair **Sue Rivers**, is a friendly face at meetings and coffee mornings. She guides the Committee through business always with the best interest of members foremost. And is an active participant of several activity groups.



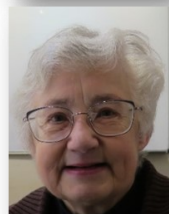
Treasurer **Margaret Weaver** not only balances our financial spreadsheets but is a reliable monitor of our incomings and outgoings. She makes sure the group lives within its means and at the same time keen to retain membership fees to a minimum.



As Deputy Chair **Ann Apps** steps in to cover for the Chair when needed. With two other members she keeps the website lively, updated and informative. And offers useful knowledge on the machinations of the u3a organisation.



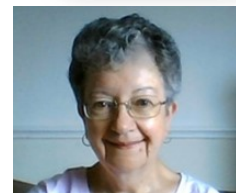
In **Pat Stanway** we have an ideal Business Secretary. Feeding back on all the local and national u3a news and developments, representing the group at external meetings, and keeping a check on required processes, documentation and administration. All with efficiency and enthusiasm.



Wendy Cheshire maintains the membership data as Membership Secretary and keeps the Committee informed on numbers. She is always happy to help members and answer queries — just email or catch her on the Information Desk at meetings.



Group Leaders new and old know that Coordinator **Jean Windsor** can be relied on to respond to questions on running an activity group. She keeps the membership regularly updated on current interest groups, venues and contact details.



Committee Members Carol Wright, Clem Taylor and Catherine Ager (above) each hold a vital role supporting the work of the Committee and having full involvement in decision making. Catherine is also Secretary to the Committee and Newsletter Editor.

Note we do have a vacancy if you can be tempted to join this happy team.

Activity Groups

~ another busy and stimulating year

Outings



Pat Cooper & Barbara Matthews

Another successful year starting in January with an annual get together where eighty travellers enjoyed a meat and potato or cheese and onion pie lunch.

There was also a retail therapy session at Boundary Mills, a visit to the city of Leeds, a canal cruise to Salford Quays with lunch, a ride on the Churnet Valley steam railway and a visit to Lichfield and the National Memorial Arboretum.

For history enthusiasts it was Wentworth Woodhouse and Hoghton Tower and for gardeners Plas Cadnant and RHS Bridgewater. There was also the opportunity to enjoy and support local talent with the play 'Two' at the Parish Hall and 'Joseph' at the Art Theatre. The year finished with Crafts in the Pen and Christmas shopping at Skipton.

Unfailingly, outings Coordinators Pat Cooper and Barbara Matthews organise a wonderfully varied programme each year. And, judging from their reports, 2023 proved no exception!

Check the website for full details of the trips, holidays and more coming up in 2024.

And if you any suggestions for a good day out they would love to hear from you or catch them at meetings.

Note unless otherwise stated we take bookings on a first come, first served basis and payment is due the month prior to the event. If you cannot make a meeting you can put a cheque in the post. Understandably, we do not enjoy chasing up outstanding payments, some required in advance, so we ask that you stick to the deadlines. If you have to cancel payment is still due unless your place can be filled. Please be considerate because we are doing our best.

Thank you members who chose Riveria Travel for their holiday and claimed back the 10% commission donated to charities. As a result we were able to deduct almost £700 from the cost of outings during the year. So please do think about this u3a if you book with Riveria.

Barbara Matthews



Forty five of us very much enjoyed the New Mills Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' at the Arts Theatre.

Written in 1968 with lyrics by Tim Rice and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber this fabulous show had stunning costumes, a live orchestra and amazing actors.

And of course all those familiar tunes.

Pat Cooper

Cycling

The Cycling Group, founded in 2007, meets once per month for leisurely rides of generally 25–30 miles in four to six hours including stops. Weather permitting, we continue outings throughout the year mainly on minor roads in Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Cheshire. The cyclists ride at an easy pace and happily wait for stragglers. A mixture of road, touring, hybrid, electric and mountain bikes are used.



Coffee and lunch stops and picnics in summer are an important part of the day at nice cafes or pubs. The group includes some members from other local u3as, with all members being encouraged to lead a ride of their choice if they wish. The picture above was taken on a very wet December 2023 ride from Thorncliffe showing the few intrepid cyclists who braved the weather. Who then joined many more of us for a rather warmer and drier Christmas Lunch.

Ann Apps

Group Coordinator: Ann Apps

Meet: Third Wednesday in the month

Next Rides: 17 January; 21 February;
20 March; 17 April; 15 May

(see website for full list of 2024 dates)

cycling@newmillsu3a.org.uk



Cryptic Crosswords

Unfortunately, the Cryptic Crosswords groups have been suspended because the Group Leader suffered a bad fall.

Current members from both groups are deciding if they want to organise themselves to continue.

So, some uncertainty but if you are interested in joining please contact Jean Windsor to establish the current situation.

Interested in joining a Sunday Lunch Club?

Then please contact Carol on 07800 60525 or at carolinabbyb@aol.com to find out more.

Country Dancing



The happy Country Dancers taking a break at a December meeting. Usually we get together on the first and third Tuesday of the month in Whaley Bridge but, unfortunately, our Group Leader will be missing for a short while and it has been decided to suspend activities until February. Hopefully, at the end of this month we will have an announcement of the recommencement date. And our best wishes go to Sally Auld of course!

Ruth Gay

Gardening

With a new Group Leader we came together in August for a brain storming session and agreed we would continue to meet on the third Monday of the month but at a new time of 2:00pm-4:00pm. Activities proposed were visits to members' gardens, trips to nearby commercial outlets, park walks, plant swaps, themed quizzes, slide shows, demonstrations, talks

But our first task was the Group Display in September and our stand was so colourful and successful thanks to members' contribution of plants, magazines and garden related things. Not least the talking point which was the stunning blooms from Steve and Jane Doyle's garden (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight' by the way).

Although the Group traditionally runs from March to September, it was decided because we had only just reconvened we would carry on during the winter months.

In October Denise and Paul Gillingham treated us to a wonderful presentation of the massive project they are undertaking in their new garden. Then in November Secretary of the New Mills Allotment and Garden Society, Steve Evans, gave a fascinating talk on their two sites Ollersett and Hague Bar. Finally, Sara Webster from Bridgemont Decorative ran a fabulous Christmas Wreath Workshop for eighteen of us in December.

All the finished pieces were so impressive and really individual.

For this year we hope to arrange a variety of events. Including a guided tour of the David Ross nursery in Kettleshulme, a plant swapping session and a visit to the Ollersett Allotment on the open day. Also the owner of the Plant Shop in New Mills has agreed to bring in some plants and offer advice on planting and care.

If you would like to join us, or you are happy to share your gardening skills at one of our meetings, please contact me.

Catherine Ager



Group Coordinator: Catherine Ager

Meet: Third Monday in the month

Time: 2:00pm~4:00pm

Venue: As confirmed

newsletter@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Liz Wilson tells us the Birds and Botany Group had a brilliant day when members went to Old Moor, Barnsley recently.

She says bird watching can be a bit like waiting for a bus. Nothing comes for ages then three follow in quick succession.

Sure enough this is just what happened!



"Kingfisher" said Dave and a blue flash streaked in front of the hide from right to left. The bird settled on the fourth of six fence posts half submerged in the gravel pool. It flew to the fifth and then the sixth post before returning to the third post where it turned 360 degrees to show its salmon breast and its iridescent blue back. It darted down to the water once or twice before it settled on the second post and then it was off all in the space of about ten seconds!

Ten white spoonbills treated us to some formation flying splitting into a four and a six before joining up again (a bit like the Red Arrows!). They landed nearby on a spit of land like a pack of dazzling snowy white angels.

A grey shaggy heron waited motionlessly on the edge of a pool. I said "I'm going to wait for it to catch a fish". "See you on the way back" joked Dave!

Then the bird drew its head back and stabbed into the water. "It's caught one I said ...it's a big one". And it was. We guessed it was a pike about twelve inches long.

The heron stalked on to the land and a little way up the beach before releasing it and stabbing it some more.

The pike was injured and writhed about;

then the heron took it back to the water and swished it about almost as if washing it before taking it back on land. The bird thrust its sharp beak just behind the pike's gills...and stabbed again. The pike was dead.

The bird cleaned it again and then deftly turned it upside down and swallowed it whole in a single gulp. We had witnessed a murder!

The next evening I went to the theatre in Stratford on Avon to see Macbeth and just like the buses and the birds, the murders followed in quick succession.



Liz Wilson

Group Leaders: Fred Pickering Dave Pierce

Meetings: Once a month on various days

groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Hope you are enjoying catching up with all the Activity Group's events. You will find much more on the website or for those receiving the Newsletter in the post, just contact the appropriate Group Leader listed on the enclosed flyer. And if you would like to start one of your own interest groups just contact Groups' Coordinator Jean Windsor.

She is more than happy to help!

Monthly Ramblers

There have been some positive changes with the walking group over recent months. Firstly, I have changed the name of the group from the Longer Walking group to the Monthly Ramblers. This was done to give greater clarity as to which group we are and what we do, that is hold walks once a month; usually the first Thursday.

We have welcomed several new members to the group which means we now have over twenty on our contacts list and a good turnout each month. We generally walk about 10 miles, usually in the local area or within the Peak District.

Wet weather gear needs to be carried (whatever the weather forecast) together with food and drink, and spare clothing in winter. Boots (as opposed to walking shoes) are recommended - paths can be wet at any time of the year. Walks will start locally in the winter when daylight hours are short, but may start further afield when the days are longer. Transport to the start of the walk will be on a car/petrol sharing basis. If you are not a driver that is not a problem.

Here is an outline of walks over the last few months:

Jan Smith



May : We ascended Kinder Scout via William Clough and continued on to Sandy Heys and along to Kinder Downfall where we had lunch. We continued along the edge of the Kinder plateau to Kinder Low and Edale Cross. We descended via Tunstead Clough and returned to start point at Bowden Bridge car park.

June : We enjoyed some warm bright sunshine and lovely far reaching views along with the delightful abundance of spring/early summer wild flowers. We stayed quite local, starting from Pym Chair car park, dropping down to Thursbitch and over to Lamaload Reservoir, Blue Boar and Summer Close. From there we climbed up to Charles Head, passing via Clough Farm and over to Windgather Rocks before returning to our start point.

July : We ventured a little further afield and met at Ashopton Bridge by Ladybower Reservoir. We ascended through the bracken to Derwent Edge passing via Wheel Stones to Back Tor and Lost Lad.

We were once again blessed with some fine weather and fabulous views. We descended via Millbrook Plantation and Briery Side to the east side of Ladybower Reservoir and followed the track alongside the reservoir back to the start point.



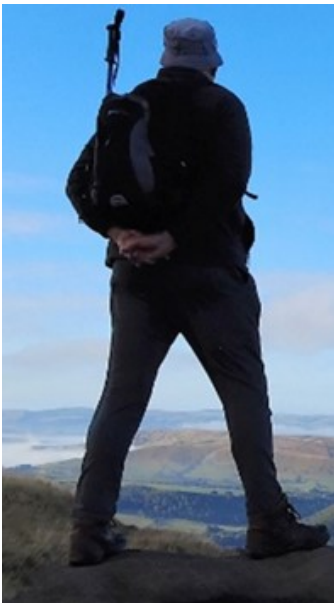
September : We started the walk from Tideswell, climbing up out of the village and over to Wheston. We then dropped down the Pennine Bridleway to Millers Dale. From there we headed along the old railway line of the Monsal Trail which is now a popular walking and cycling route. The trail passes through two of the original railway tunnels which thankfully has low level lighting along their lengths. We eventually left the trail and followed the river via Cressbrook and Litton Mills. We then continued north to Tideswell Dale before returning to the start point.



October : This was a lovely route which included beautiful Lathkill Dale, the River Bradford and the Limestone Way. The route from the car park above Youlgreave took us across the fields, dropping down to Lathkill Dale where we followed the river, passing by the fish weirs and many interesting reminders of its past industries of mills and mines. We eventually left the Dale behind and proceeded along to Conksbury and Alport. From Alport we headed along the tranquil River Bradford and climbed up to Harthill Moor. We then followed the Limestone Way for a distance before dropping back down to the river below Youlgreave . . . and then the final sting in the tail: the climb back up to the start point!



Shorter Walks & Pub Lunch



The popularity of the Shorter Walks group means it was fully subscribed, with a waiting list to join. The solution offered, is to organise two walks per month instead of one. The existing meetings on the second Tuesday of each month will remain, with an additional meeting on the fourth Friday. Start time will usually be 10:30am allowing about two hours' activity before enjoying a pub lunch. We look for walks which, while not completely level have a more limited hill climbing requirement. Sensible footwear and suitable outdoor clothing (possibly walking poles as well) are advised, as some footpaths can be muddy or uneven in all but the best weather – and many of us will turn out whatever the weather.

The abilities of each member may vary considerably. So to accommodate this inevitable disparity, the walks will be designed with

cut-outs, shortcuts and alternatives.

It will be left to individuals to decide how much, or how little of the circuit they feel capable of achieving - the aim being to allow the slower members to catch up or even overtake the faster ones, thereby arriving at the destination more or less together, and thereafter enjoying a convivial lunch in a nearby pub.

Roger May

Group Leader: Roger May

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday & 4th Friday in the month

shorterwalks@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Hearing from Members

Thank you **Sarah Rowbotham** for sharing this astute poem by Connie Wanek (who says she has been writing since she could hold a pencil)

Free Pens

My mother knew the value of free pens.
She kept them in cups and drawers
and her motto (one of her mottos) was
Why would you ever spend a penny on a pen?
Long after they dried up, she kept their little bodies
because each reminded her of an event,
perhaps the Home Show, 1981, El Paso, or the time
she considered assisted living (the salesman
gave away expensive blue pens, so nice
she stole a second one for me)
during Dad's last years.
Besides, sometimes if you shake a dead pen
hard enough, it starts to write again.

The Pyramid Players present Tunes from Yesteryear! at the Plaza Theatre, Stockport

The Pyramid Players are a new forty piece full orchestra "dedicated to performing the best in tuneful light music". Their first concert will be performed at the Plaza Theatre in Stockport at 4:00 pm on 11 February.

Some of the items on the programme will be 'Calling All Workers' (theme tune to radio's 'Music While You Work'), 'Devil's Gallop' (theme tune to radio's 'Dick Barton'), 'Elizabethan Serenade' and the theme to TV's



Christmas at St Georges

Tree and Christmas Festival decorated
by Barbara Morris and Denise Hall

Anne Ignotus has let us know why she enjoys being a member of New Mills and District u3a. She tells us:

"I enjoy all the trips and attending monthly meetings. Nice meeting new friends and listening to discussions at the monthly meetings".

Let us know what it is you appreciate or perhaps send us suggestions for what you would like to see.

And thank you those Group Leaders who have sent in some fascinating reports for this issue. Please keep them coming.

Think it is going to be another interesting year! You can find full details of the 2024 monthly meetings on the website and listed in the Dates *for your* Diary. Or contact any Committee member to find out more.

<https://www.newmillsu3a.org.uk/>

Dates for your Diary

16 January

Roger Browne
The Great American Song-
book

20 February

Philip Caine
Author & Raconteur
Barrow to Baghdad
and Back Again

19 March

Fran Sandham
Dr Livingstone,
I Presume

16 April

Ellen Outram
Customs Unique and
Funny Traditions that
happen in the District Peak

21 May

Marilyn Shalks
History of Manchester
Theatres

18 June

Daniel Thirsk
Clinical Audiologist
The Loss and Awareness
etc of Hearing

16 July

Angela Darlington
The Medieval Hospital
in Castleton

20 August

Allan Shalks
My Very Unusual Life
followed by My Life in
Theatre, Television,
Films and Radio

17 September

Groups Display

15 October

Ellen Outram
The Traditions of Xmas

19 November

Annual General Meeting

17 December

Christmas Party
Quiz and Mince Pies

Coffee Mornings 10:30am~12noon

30 January	30 July
27 February	27 August
26 March	24 September
30 April	29 October
28 May	26 November
No Coffee Morning in December	

Providence United Reformed Church,
Mellor Road, New Mills
£1 per person for as much tea/coffee and
biscuits as you can manage
Everyone welcome, including new and
prospective members

Wednesday 24 January 2024

Annual Outings Lunch, Parish Hall, Church Lane
12:30 pm for 1:00 pm £6
Payment in cash when booking with membership
number. Please note because of the popularity of
this event we can only offer places to those
members who attend our outings. Menu as usual
meat/potato or cheese/onion pie. Choice of
sweet. Please bring plate, cutlery and wine glass.





Learn, Laugh, Live

The u3a for retired and semi-retired people to come together and learn together, not for qualifications but for its own reward: the sheer joy of discovery