New Mills and District U3A

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

February 2019

Kinder in winter

Image: Photoeverywhere.co.uk

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Year of change nationally and consolidation at home

From the **CHAIR**

by LESLEY MASON

LAST year brought major changes at U3A national level including office moves, changes on the national committee and the appointment of new officials following several retirements.

At the National AGM held last August approval was given for the Third Age Trust (our umbrella organisation) to amend the Objects Clause of the National constitution to better reflect the present activities of the organisation and this had an impact on us, as your committee had already agreed to incorporate any such amendments into our own constitution.

At our AGM held in November, 2018, in New Mills Town Hall members endorsed the committee's decision; as soon as our constitution has been amended, a copy of the updated version will be published on our website.

Successful

In contrast, our AGM reflected on a period of consolidation and steady growth.

All three officers (Chair, Treasurer and Business Secretary) were re-elected for a further two year term, as were four of the committee members whose two year terms had come to an end.

Full details of your officers and committee for 2018/19 are found on the back page of this newsletter.

Our U3A remains successful and popular with a membership of 593 drawn from a wide catchment area. This is partly due to our excellent website and the wide variety of our groups which are intrinsic to our organisation. There are currently 54 groups listed on our website.

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

We continue to enjoy a wide range of interesting speakers at our monthly meetings, with our coffee mornings continuing to attract old and new members. Our September meeting is now an open meeting, advertised as part of the New Mills Festival, providing us with an opportunity to publicise our activities to the local community.

We continue to maintain links with colleagues in neighbouring U3As through the Pennine Link (which provides a useful forum for the exchange of ideas and

Image: Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

BIRDS AND BOTANY

THE Birds and Botany Group's next trip is on Wednesday, February 27, to Martin Mere Wetland Centre.

The centre, near Ormskirk, is a large wetland reserve where many thousands of migrant wild ducks, geese, waders and swans over-winter. Especially spectacular are displays of feather and flight provided by huge migrant flocks of pink-footed geese, wigeon and whooper swans (above). On our previous visit we logged 45 bird species including barn and tawny owls.

We will stay to see the whooper swans returning to roost on the lake where they are fed by staff, ensuring a really close view of all the waterfowl.

Afterwards there will be the opportunity to visit a local pub for a meal before the journey home. This is optional.

There is an entrance fee for the reserve. A 10% discount is available for online bookings but please don't book until the morning of the visit as last year's trip had to be cancelled because of snow. Meet 10am at New Mills Co-op car park to car share.

Next month's trip will be to Sale Waterpark.

Fred Pickering

discussion of matters of common interest) while still maintaining links with the Derbyshire Network (covering the south of the region).

Thanks are due to all who have helped to ensure the continued success of our U3A – in particular to our retiring Groups' Co-ordinator, Barbara Morris, and to the Group Leaders (especially those who hold meetings in their own homes).

Thanks also to those members who have made a significant contribution to our U3A over the years but have now moved away or (sadly) died during the past year.

We still have vacancies for committee members and, in particular, for the role of Deputy Chair; please think about whether you would be willing to help run your U3A, building on what those before us have created, so that it continues to thrive in the year ahead.

A belated Happy New Year to you all.

Life on the farm

IN January the speaker at the Monthly Meeting was Sally Hodgson with The Life Story of a Lamb Chop. Sally talked about sheep rearing on her hill farm off Monks Road but also about how they manage their meadows for wild flowers and wildlife, especially ground nesting birds. They use no chemicals on the farm. Sally offers free visits to groups of people, especially children and vulnerable adults. .

Speakers planned for the coming months are as follows:

February … Our own member, Barbara Matthews, who organises our day trips and holidays, will present pictures and a narrative of the holiday to Pembrokeshire taken in June 2018.

SPEAKERS

March … Talk on Francis House by Julie Williams. Julie will inform us of the history of Francis House, the care provided and volunteering opportunities. The presentation will include a short DVD and projected photographs.

April … Masters of Mirth: Mike Storr will take an affectionate look at how music hall began and some of his favourite music hall laughter makers, including Stanley Holloway and Bernard Miles to name a couple.

May … Mark Henderson is a collector and teller of Peak District folktales. He also talks about the provenance and evolution of some of the tales.

June … Life in a Female Prison. Eddie Tarry presents a daily life inside a female prison, and is based at Styal Prison. I am sure that this presentation will stimulate a lot of questions.

Mavis Worthington

Members of our German Group enjoyed a Christmas meal at the Royal in Hayfield. The group meets weekly in Hayfield on Monday mornings.

The Genealogy Group gather before their tour of Bramall Hall

Wrong side of the hatch!

GENEALOGY

THE Genealogy Group has paid a visit to Bramall Hall in Stockport.

A local family home dating back in parts to the fourteenth century, its mainly Tudor exterior encloses many different styles and dates of construction, decoration and furnishings.

Every room has something of interest, from the vast expanse of the Great Hall, the quiet sanctity of the chapel, the grandeur of the public rooms and the cosiness of the family rooms.

Also the pokiness of the servants' quarters tucked away in the attics.

The lasting memories of the group included the amazing wall paintings in the Solar Room, dating back to the 1530s and of great national importance. The intricate Elizabethan plasterwork ceiling in the Withdrawing Room was also a memorable feature.

Several of us were very taken with the hatchway through from the busy kitchen to the comfortably furnished dining room, and wondered on which side of the hatchway our ancestors would have been. You can probably guess the answer!

Margaret De Motte

We're all ready to roll again in 2019 ...

OUTINGS

IT was that time again so 36 members travelled to Norfolk in search of some festive fun and we certainly found plenty.

Our destination was Great Yarmouth, staying at the Palm Court Hotel from where we would travel to Thursford to see the famous Christmas Show. Much to our surprise and delight the hotel had put on a 'tinsel and turkey' weekend. We were greeted with sherry and mince pies followed later by a splendid evening meal.

We were invited to join in a short game of bingo where two of the party won cash prizes. Then it was dance time with Tosh and Di providing the music. Plenty of opportunity for the usual suspects to shake it about and Mr and Mrs Cooper proved they had not lost their jiving skills.

On Saturday morning many of the party could be found Christmas shopping at the craft fair in the Minster Church, the rest waited at the hotel for a visit from Father Christmas.Two absent ladies left him a note asking if they could still have their presents as they had been very good all year.

Midday found us tucking into a Turkey lunch with all the trimmings plus Christmas pudding. Fortunately there was time for a brisk walk along the promenade or a lie down before we were off in the coach to the evening performance.

A magical scene greeted our arrival with the trees illuminated with coloured lights.

Walking into the auditorium we were met with a riot of Christmas decorations. But no matter how good the decorations were nothing could compare with the actual show, which is claimed to be the largest in Britain if not Europe.

Named as 'a spectacular' it certainly is that and more. How can I describe magical? You have to see it for yourself.

There was a cast of 130 professional

Any Gogglebоxers out there?

DO you watch television? Do you enjoy discussing programmes you've seen? Would you be interested in a Goggle Box Group?

The group could meet once or twice a month to plan their viewing then discuss the programmes later.

Or how about Literary Lunches? This is a proposed group for book lovers who also enjoy a pub lunch. No set book, no pressure to finish in time or read a book you hate. Just be prepared to recommend a good read and tell the group why you enjoyed it. Interested in one or both proposed groups? Ring our new Groups Co-ordinator, Carol Potter, on 01663 745727.

Let the show begin ... some of our U3A members in their seats for the Thursford Christmas spectacular

dancers and singers, many who work in the West End. Dancing ranged from high kicks to ballet and the singing from opera to carols. An orchestra of talented musicians accompanied them. The three-hour show is very fast moving with many changes and the costume department should be congratulated for their efforts.

The comedian compere had us crying with laughter and the beautiful singing voices also brought tears to our eyes. As the finale was coming to a close a flock of white doves flew over our heads across the auditorium, what an end to an unforgettable evening.

After a hearty breakfast the following day we were back on the road, homeward bound and waved off by several members of the hotel's friendly staff.

One of our group had noticed a commemoration plaque near the hotel saying that at the time of the war Sefton House stood on the site. Here 26 members of the Women's Auxiliary Service lost their lives by enemy air action on May 11, 1941, including Margaret Galbraith from New Mills, Derbyshire.

We will be back in Norfolk in June visiting Norwich, the Broads and other places of interest,

Then on March 12 - Leeds Armouries Museum or Leeds shopping.

April 10 - Lancaster Canal cruise with fish and chip lunch.

Happy New Year to all our members. Pat and I at Outings/Holidays look forward to seeing you travelling with us in 2019.

Barbara Matthews

Turning the page in the digital age

BOOKS

WHAT makes a good book group? Hopefully the most important thing is not how efficiently it is run - and I can say that as Book Group 2's leader!

Then you need members. Now I'm glad to say that this has never been a problem and we can achieve an A*. Our meetings are always great fun although this does not necessarily mean that the chosen book has been read by all but always by a majority and the discussions are mainly (fingers crossed) about the book.

Next, there are the books. Borrowing books has become the more difficult aspect for the group as Derbyshire, like many other councils, has not only shut down its dedicated book club facility but also made it difficult to obtain the required quantity of any chosen book.

Our group is fortunate in having a contact who works within the library and does her best in this respect. However, book choices have been narrowed.

There has been quite a shift in style in modern day literature and, even for the less serious readers, it can be fairly obvious that a book has been written with the intention of it becoming a film. Another trait, which is occurring more often now, is the intertwining of time periods in the book. This can be either an attractive or irritating feature depending on the reader's point of view. Or maybe it helps to keep those little grey cells active, as you certainly have to keep your wits about you.

Lastly, there is the discussion about the book, which is, I suppose, the point of having a book group.

The best discussions occur when there has been a diversity of opinion. Our group gives the books marks out of ten and you can get both a two and a nine in the same discussion. I don't think we have ever given a ten. If everyone has either liked or disliked a book, the discussions can be very short. Hopefully, book groups will continue to thrive despite the challenges thrown down by continuing austerity measures.

In total we have three book clubs in a our U3A. The Groups Co-ordinator, Carol Potter, can put you in touch with the leaders of each group (groupsco-ordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Whether Book Group 2 is a good one is not the most important aspect. It is a group who come together to enjoy each others company and to read books.

Lyn Gurney

Members of the Spanish Group with their visitor from Malaga, Paloma (front row second left)

We will miss you John

EARLIER this year our group tutor John Aldridge was taken very ill and sadly died last month.

We will miss him, but John would be pleased that the group he started many years ago is still continuing with each one of the group leading a class in turn.

So far this has worked out very well, each of us taking some responsibility at each meeting. We have studied past, present, preterite and conjugated verbs, toured Spain, been shopping, refreshed the alphabet, played bingo to help with numbers and practised the time!

In the Summer we were fortunate to have a visit from Paloma, a Spanish lady who was visiting her family in the UK.

It was very good experience for us to chat to her, in Spanish of course, and learn about the area in Malaga in which Paloma and her family live and work.

However, we still require a qualified Spanish tutor so if there is anyone out there who would like to help our group please contact Carol Potter (groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk).

We meet at Footsteps, Whaley Bridge, from 10am till noon on the first and third Mondays of the month.

Sue Boothby

SPANISH

Changing constitution

At the AGM we asked members to approve a change in the Constitution, but we perhaps did not explain ourselves very well, so here is an attempt to clarify.

The Charities Commission has always regarded "social activities" as not being in the spirit of the objects of U3As and therefore we were required to account for them separately and not include their income or expenditure in with our other activities. During 2017 they decided that this was wrong – and had been so from the beginning. The first stage in rectifying this was to amend the "Objects Clause" of the Constitution of the Third Age Trust to encompass all activities and this was approved during 2018. The second stage was to do the same for local U3As, and it was this that we asked your approval of at the AGM.

The CC decided not to apply the new ruling until the first financial year following the passing of the TAT resolution.

We have not yet made such a change as we felt that our constitution already fitted the bill but we are hoping for guidance from the TAT on this very soon.

The change will mainly affect the total revenue and expenses that we report on to our members and the CC annually and for some U3As this might mean that the total puts them into a higher category requiring more detailed accounts and controls. New Mills U3A are some way off that.

We are still permitted to maintain a separate bank account for any groups that we wish to – currently Outings and Singing - though the title should be changed to 2 A/C or similar.

Otherwise members will notice no change at all.

I hope this clarifies the position.

Margaret Weaver, Treasurer

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

LAST December the Transport Group went to Rochdale to visit the Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum and to have a pre-Christmas lunch.

We travelled by train and tram to Rochdale where the museum is conveniently situated near tram and train stations. Bob, an ex fire-fighter, was our guide and he showed us exhibits and told us how fire services developed and the role that the Manchester area played in this.

We spent an excellent one and a half hours there.It is well worth a visit and will be even better when they move into larger ex-fire station buildings in the future. Any visit is enhanced if you can get one of the knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers to show you around. Further details at; gmfsmuseum.org.uk

Afterwards we had lunch at the Wellington on Drake Street.

A full programme of group visits for 2019 will soon be available.

Patrick Anderson

LAST year saw the group meet successfully a number of times in various locations including Hayfield, Higher Poynton, Marple, Strines and Whaley Bridge.

After the walks a good lunch was taken at a nearby pub which allowed the group members to rest a while, relax, and have a good chat.

The year ended with a very successful Christmas lunch at the Sportsman in Hayfield (pictured above).

SHORT WALK WITH PUB LUNCH

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month but the group is currently pretty "full" as it is difficult to organise lunch for a larger number of people.

However I'm happy to take names of those interested in joining if space becomes available.

Chris Weaver

Pictured right are the ladies of the Christmas cafe crew while, above, members get stuck in to the Christmas party quiz at New Mills town hall

New Mills and District U3A Officers and Committee 2018/19

Chair: Lesley Mason (chair@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Deputy Chair: Vacant

Treasurer: Margaret Weaver (treasurer@newmills u3a.org.uk)

Business Secretary: Christine Wass (secretary@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Membership Secretary: Wendy Cheshire (membership@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Groups' Co-ordinator: Carol Potter (groupsco-ordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Minutes Secretary: Susan Wyatt

Speaker Arranger: Mavis Worthington

Committee Members: Sue Colston, Kath Garside, Marian Parker, Pam Hartley.

Non Committee Roles

Almoner and Accessibility Officer: Hazel Perry

Accessibility Contacts: Hazel Perry, Ann Apps (access@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

Refreshment Organiser and Book Exchange: Sue Rivers

Newsletter Editor: Mike Perry (newsletter@newmillsu3A.org.uk)

Webmaster: Ann Apps

Website Editors: Hilary Harmer, Eileen Gilligan, Ann Apps (website@newmillsu3a.org.uk)

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 to: newsletter@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Mike Perry, the editor, can also be contacted on 01663 611318. Please understand that contributions may be edited.

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