



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026

Issue 10

2025/2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WHO'S WHO

CONTACTS

Chair : Catherine Ager
chair@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Deputy Chair : Roger May
vicechair@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Treasurer : Margaret Weaver
treasurer@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Business Secretary : Pat Stanway
secretary@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Membership : Wendy Cheshire
membership@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Activity Groups : Jean Windsor
groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Speaker Organiser : Denise Hall
speakers@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Web Master : Ann Apps
webmaster@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Committee Member : Eva Lawson

Committee Member : Steve Millns

Almoner : Hazel Perry
almoner@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Book Exchange
Sue Rivers

Newsletter Editor
Catherine Ager

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Pat Cooper
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Refreshments Organiser
Lesley Mason

Social Media
Roger May

Website Editors
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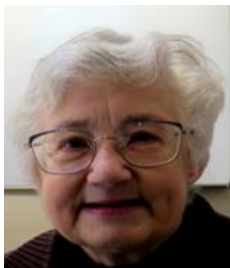
Catherine Ager



Roger May



Margaret Weaver



Pat Stanway



Ann Apps



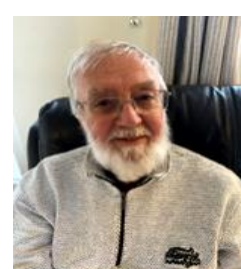
Wendy Cheshire



Denise Hall



Eva Lawson



Steve Millns



Jean Windsor

A warm welcome to the new Committee ratified at the AGM. Mostly familiar faces but with some appointed to new roles ~ significantly Catherine Ager (Chair) and Roger May (Deputy Chair) ~ plus new members Eva Lawson and (Steve Millns (previously coopted) joining us.

Happily those staying on, or extending their term of office, are Margaret Weaver, Pat Stanway, Ann Apps, Wendy Cheshire, Denise Hall and Jean Windsor. The Committee very much appreciated Richard Lawson offering his services as our new Auditor and continuing to make a substantial contribution to the group are Hazel Perry (Almoner), Barbara Matthews and Pat Cooper (Outings), Eileen Gilligan and Hilary Harmer (Website Editors) and Lesley Mason (Refreshments).

Sue Rivers stepped down as Chair but will be coopted onto the Committee as Acting Treasurer when required, manage the book exchange and be a friendly presence at Coffee Mornings and Monthly Meetings.

Good to know the smooth running of New Mills and District u3a is in safe hands!

SUE RIVERS reflects on her time as Chair and CATHERINE AGER considers her new role

**Flowers and Applause for
Outgoing Chair, Sue Rivers**



Four years ago I embarked on my new role as Chair of your u3a. It wasn't a decision I took lightly, I had never chaired a meeting before, nor spoken in public, never mind with a microphone in my hand.

My first Committee meeting went well, I was nervous but with the help of great Committee members we got through it.

Then came getting to grips with THE MIKE. The Christmas Quiz came first, I opened my mouth to speak, nothing came out.

I caught the eye of our resident quiz presenter, the lovely Lesley Thompson, and we laughed. All was going to be ok.

From then my confidence grew and although I still rehearsed what I was going to say before each meeting; I just remembered I was with friends.

So thank you all for helping me the last four years and I am leaving the Committee in safe hands. I shall still be at meetings with the book exchange stall and helping out at Coffee Mornings, so look forward to still seeing you all. Remember live well, have a laugh when you can, and occasionally take a chance and best wishes for the New Year!

Sue

**Newly Elected Chair,
Catherine Ager**



I joined New Mills & District u3a just a few years ago when we moved back to the north from Devon. I have been a member of the Committee for most of that time as Newsletter Editor and Minute Secretary.

So despite my trepidation at following in the capable footsteps of Sue, who has of course been the best of Chairs, I know I will have excellent support from the rest of the team.

At our first meeting in December we welcomed new members Eva Lawson and Steve Millns. We agreed responsibilities and very much appreciated Ann Apps offering to take on the task of Minute Secretary.

Please note the Minutes File is available on the Information Desk at monthly Speaker Meetings so do take the opportunity to check what has been discussed and decisions made. And if you have any queries or items you would wish to raise with the Committee just let one of us know.

Finally, just to say thank you all who braved the wretched weather to attend the AGM and I hope to meet many more of you at one of our future monthly meetings.

Catherine

REPORTS FROM THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Chair
Sue Rivers

Chair, Sue Rivers, welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined health and safety procedures. She confirmed the current number of registered members was approximately 500.

The Annual Groups' Displays at the Town Hall had been well attended and Sue thanked those who had set up stands and all the other participants for helping make it such a success. It was pleasing to hear from the Membership Secretary that three new members had been recruited during the event.



Sue also thanked Denise Hall, the Speaker Organiser, for organising such a varied and eclectic programme this year. The presentations had been well received and the 2026 schedule was now complete and uploaded on the website. The Coffee Mornings continued to be popular and the Chair hoped for repeated well attendance at the monthly Speaker Meetings.

This was to be the last time Sue would officiate at meetings but would remain fully involved

with the u3a. She thanked everyone for making her time as Chair so enjoyable and was sure her successor Catherine Ager, who had been a presence at her right hand side throughout, would be absolutely fine. Sue therefore had pleasure in passing over the traditional token of office ~ that is the handbell!

On behalf of all members Catherine thanked the outgoing Chair for her work and commitment and Wendy Cheshire presented sue with a bouquet of flowers.



Treasurer
Margaret Weaver

The Treasurer circulated copies of the Financial Statement for the year ended 30th September 2025 which was proposed and accepted.

She drew attention to the closing balance of £5500, compared to £9000 at the same time last year, and said this 40% decrease could be accounted for partly by a reduced membership but also because of substantial rises in some room hire cost. The payment to the Third Age Trust covered both this year and last because of a delay in receiving the 2024 invoice.

The Treasurer asked members to note that the transfer to the Social Account, held to administer the Outings and Singing Groups, was a temporary loan to avoid an overdraft. Also that a one year Gift Aid claim had yet to be processed.

The membership fee had been held at £10 per annum for a considerable period but because of the unavoidable increases in expenditure the Committee proposed a change to £15. This was carried unanimously. Members'

contributions to room hire fees had been raised from £2 to £3 and from 50p to £1. However, the Treasurer reassured that she would keep a check and review the situation next year.

Finally, she thanked Richard Lawson for volunteering his services to audit the accounts and invited anyone with a query to contact her. She would, as requested, provide a list of room hire charges to enable members to make the most economical choices.

ANNUAL GROUPS DISPLAY

The annual Groups' Display is a regular feature in the New Mills Festival calendar. Always a wonderful showcase for us and this year was certainly no different. There was a wonderful buzz and an ideal platform for Activity Groups to share enthusiasms, enlist new recruits, socialise with other members and chat to visitors.

Jean Windsor, Groups' Coordinator who manages the event tells us "I was pleased to see that the Groups' Displays went well. And although there were actually fewer groups taking part, there seemed to be more visitors this year." And as confirmed by Wendy Cheshire, our Membership Secretary, we recruited three new members.

As well as those pictured here, other stands on



Members and Visitors start to arrive

display were Birds and Botany; Country Dancing; Current Affairs; Freewheelers; French Conversation; Gardening; Medium Walk; Outings; Short Walks; Singing for Fun; Spanish together with the Information Desk and Books Table.



Needlecraft



Photo I



Gardening



Art



Art Appreciation



Photo II

HEARING FROM ACTIVITY GROUP LEADERS

ART

Meets: Monthly Last Monday

Time: 2:00pm ~ 4:00pm

Venue: St Georges Hall, Church Lane

Group Leader: Liz Wilson

Contact: groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk



At the Groups Display morning at the Town Hall Ernest agreed to come and run a session with our Practical Art Group. He suggested using acrylic paint and a palette knife. This was a venture hugely out of our comfort zone and none of us really knew what to expect! But it was brilliant! His instructions were clear, we liked the subject matter he chose and we all had a go. He was happy to chat as he demonstrated and as promised he sent us a copy of the finished painting. Absolutely fabulous! So thank you Ernest.

Liz Wilson

THE DEMONSTRATION

I am not a member of the u3a Art Group, but was asked to do a presentation for them.

I have been an amateur painter for around 30 years, with membership of several Art Groups over that time. It was agreed I would demonstrate the use of painting knives with acrylic paint as this was unfamiliar to the group.

The session started with a description of the benefits of using knives with thick acrylic paint, the different effects that can be achieved and the differences compared with brushes. I also gave a brief summary of the characteristics of acrylic paint, and some guidance on handling it, particularly with regard to its quick drying time.

The subject I chose was based on a photograph I took the previous day of the River Goyt in the Memorial Park in Whaley Bridge. Members of the group also painted using their own subject matter.

The session was a lively one, with lots of questions as we went along. The painting was unfinished, of course, in the time allotted, and is now completed.

Ernest Ager



The Finished Piece
River Goyt, Memorial Park
Whaley Bridge

FREEWHEELERS PUBLIC TRANSPORT GROUP

Meets: Various dates

Time: As arranged

Venue: Various locations

Contact: petenann58@hotmail.com

We are a relatively new group and organise monthly outings to different locations. We do not have a fixed day of the month and start times vary.

Our first outing was to Derby. We met at Buxton Market Place in time to catch the Trans Peak bus to Derby.

Starting after 9:30am we were able to use our bus passes for a “free” ride.

The route took us through lovely Peak district countryside with splendid views, villages and townships. Two hours later saw us at Derby bus station and we ambled across to a café for refreshments and toilet stop.

We retraced our steps catching the Trans Peak again , then saying our farewells with promises of going on the next trip to Chester scheduled for October, a bus journey from Buxton to Castleton and back and a get together at a café in New Mills for coffee and mince pies.

We have many more trips planned (including a circular route from Buxton to Macclesfield) and would like more people to join us. If you are interested please contact me at above email address.

Ann Clark

MONTHLY RAMBLERS

Meets: Monthly 1st Thursday

Time: As arranged

Venue: Various locations

Contact: monthlyramblers@newmillsu3a.org.uk

We now have a few spaces available in our group. Walks usually take place on the first Thursday of the month. Route and joining details are sent out by email to members who have requested to be included on the contacts list.

Jan Smith



FRENCH CONVERSATION

Meets: Monthly 2nd and 4th Thursday

Time: 10am ~ 12 noon

Venue: New Mills Golf Club

Group Leader: Wendy Cheshire

Contact: wendy.cheshire@yahoo.co.uk



FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP



PARLEZ-VOUS FRANÇAIS?.....

.....Alors pourquoi ne pas nous rejoindre ?

Nous animons la réunion à tour de rôle en proposant un sujet de discussion.
On arrive généralement à rester dans le sujet, mais on peut parfois dévier du cap !

Nous sommes un groupe sociable aux capacités mixtes et nous vous encourageons à nous essayer.

Vous nous trouverez au New Mills Golf Club, dans le Kinder Room à droite du bar, le 2ème et 4ème jeudi du mois.

Co-ordinator: Wendy Cheshire
01663 745112
wendy.cheshire@yahoo.co.uk

GARDENING

Meets: Monthly 2nd Monday

Time: 2:00pm ~ 4:00pm

Venue: Library Seminar Room

Contact: gardening@newmillsu3a.org.uk

We aim to cover a variety of topics and events which have previously included visits to members' gardens, guest presentations, a garden nursery tour, seed and plant swap and the occasional workshop.

For example in August we had a Plant & Seed Swap. Indoor and outdoor plants, seeds, fruit and vegetables, equipment, pots - anything garden related. Followed by a lovely chat about all things garden related.

Then in September we were enjoyed a fascinating, illustrated talk given by Sue Cooper an expert bee keeper. With time allowed for questions and the added treat of a honey tasting!

We welcome new members and are always keen to share experience, skills and garden knowledge.

Catherine Ager



"Anyone who thinks they're too small to make a difference has never met the honeybee." (Anon)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Meets: Monthly 1st Wednesday

Time: 10am ~ 12 noon

Venue: Council Chambers

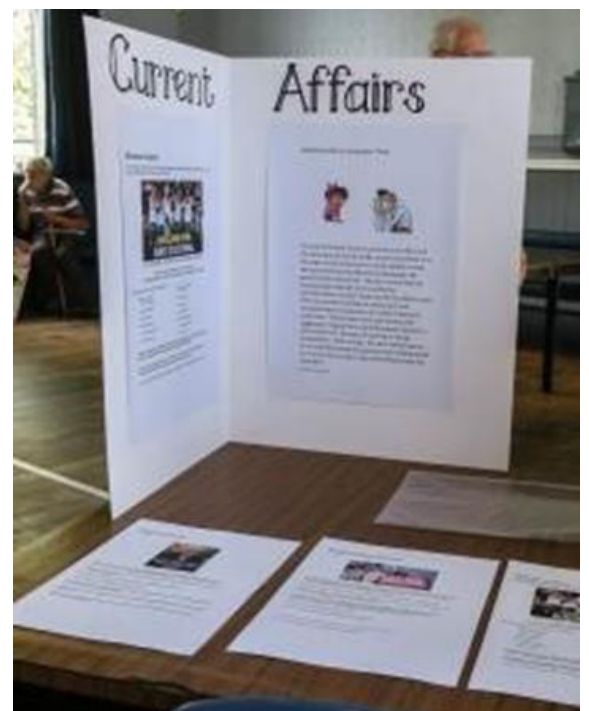
Group Leader: Ann Clark

Contact: groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk

Two members manned our table at the Groups' Display event in September and were so enthusiastic that we gained several more members.

We are a vibrant group with lively but polite discussions on many varied topics. From Artificial Intelligence to voting for the sixteen year old and local government.

Ann Clark



SHORTER WALKS THEN PUB LUNCH

Meets: Monthly 2nd Tuesday & 4th Friday

Time: 10:30am

Venue: Various

Contact: shorterwalks@newmillsu3a.org.uk

We had a pretty successful year in 2025 seeing a number of new participants joining our walks. The advantage of having two outings each month means members can join one or both as their commitments or stamina allows. Here just a selected resumé of some of most recent.

OUT AND ABOUT AROUND MELLOR

In August despite a sprinkling of rain we enjoyed a new walk around Mellor. The spectacular views were a little dulled by the hazy skies, but the walk was exhilarating. Followed by a very pleasant lunch at the Devonshire.

ALONG MIDDLEWOOD WAY

In September our walk along the canal and back along Middlewood Way was greatly appreciated. As was lunch in the Poachers afterwards, So much so that many lagged behind afterwards until almost closing time!

NEW MILLS TO DISLEY

One of our walks in October appears to have been a real success, judging by the feedback from everyone. With the best turnout of the year so far it was unanimously agreed that lunch at the Dandy Cock was splendid. The weather was kind to us with those choosing to walk back to New Mills along the Goyt Valley were only slightly sprinkled upon for a few minutes - certainly not enough to wet us.



LYMEFIELDS GARDEN CENTRE

In November following a suggestion from Judith and Peter, two of our regular members, we had a new circuit to try out to suit all abilities. We met at Lymefields Garden centre in Broadbottom and after a very enjoyable circular walk had an excellent lunch in the restaurant followed by some early Christmas shopping in the charming shop.

PEAK FOREST CANAL

In December the weather was not so good but a few of us managed a bracing walk along the Canal starting from the Cock Inn in Whaley Bridge. We had to make a diversion from the towpath at the footbridge because it was blocked by a huge beech tree which had been brought down probably by strong winds. Then everyone met up in the Cock Inn for a lively celebratory lunch.

Roger May



NOTICEBOARD



ACTIVITY GROUPS

We currently offer thirty seven Activity Groups (NB: German is temporarily suspended) with others being added as requested. To join an existing one please get in touch with the relevant Group Leader.

For details of who this is go to the website click on the link to Activity Groups and then on the visual icon of the one which has caught your interest. If you find the group you would like to join is full it is possible there is a waiting list for you to add your name. Or you could consider starting your additional own.

Suggested subjects for a potential new group should go Jean Windsor, Groups Coordinator at groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk and if you are interested in running a group, she would be very pleased to



STANDING FOR THE u3a COUNCIL

The Third Age Trust is asking for u3a members to put themselves forward for a role on the u3a Council and have confirmed they need volunteers from the East Midlands area.

Nominations open from Thursday 8th January until Tuesday 3rd February and further information will be available on the u3a website.

Successful members will join the Council on 1st April 2026.

Anyone interested in putting themselves forward will need to be nominated by New Mills and District u3a and seconded by another.

The full role description and requirements will be published on the u3a website and updates on the Election Page. All queries to the Third Age Trust at council@u3a.org.uk



OUTINGS GROUP YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Have you checked the outings videos uploaded on YouTube by Roger May?

Now showing are the visits to Haddon Hall, Kedleston Hall, Bolsover Castle and Liverpool Bay. A pleasant reminder of your trip or, if you did not make it, an interesting reflection of some of the wonderful places this country has to offer. See the website for the appropriate links.



2026 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Please note your 2026 Membership Renewal Form will be sent out after 10th April 2026 which is slightly later than usual. As unanimously agreed at the AGM in November the yearly subscription will be increased to **£15**.

Up until now Treasurer, Margaret Weaver, has managed to keep the books balanced whilst keeping the membership fee at just £10. However, in the current economic climate the Committee agreed with her recommendation that it was time to consider a change. We have been affected financially across the board of course and particularly by substantial rises in room hire charges. Nevertheless, we think you will find your subscription is still very much value for money. A real bargain at just £1.25 a month for so much learning, laughing and living ~ we hope you agree!

POLICE ALERT

Thank you to the member who, following an unfortunate incident, drew our attention to this important police alert.

STOP THINK TELL

NEVER ASSUME SOMEONE IS WHO THEY SAY THEY ARE

ASK QUESTIONS –

1 WHAT IS YOUR NAME

2 WHERE ARE YOU FROM

IF THEY SAY **BANK, COMPUTER PROVIDER, YOU OWE MONEY, YOU HAVE WON SOME MONEY, AMAZON – PUT THE PHONE DOWN**

IF THEY SAY POLICE ASK FOR THEIR NAME AND NUMBER THEN USE ANOTHER PHONE TO DIAL 101 DERBYSHIRE POLICE TO

1 CHECK ON THEM

2 TO REPORT A CRIME

POLICE AT DOOR check ID ON 101

TEXT message you are not sure about FORWARD IT to 7726 (SPAM)

If you want to go EX-DIRECTORY call BT on 03301234150

STOP – Check phone to make sure you know the caller

THINK – IF NOT let them go to ANSWER PHONE

2026 Dates *for your* Diary

**SPEAKER MEETINGS ARE HELD IN THE MAIN HALL OF NEW MILLS
TOWN HALL OPEN TO ALL CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS
START AT 10:30AM WITH REFRESHMENTS**

20TH JANUARY



PETER SLATER SPORTS REPORTER

Peter Slater is a retired BBC Sports Reporter and Producer and will share with us some of his close encounters with significant personalities in the sporting world.

17TH FEBRUARY



NEIL HANSON BRITAIN'S HIGHEST PUB

A popular quiz question could be "Name the Highest Pub in Britain". Neil Hanson might surprise you with the answer.

17TH MARCH



CLARE O'DONNELL THE ORIGINS OF GIN

We know gin pairs well with tonic and it will be interesting to hear from Clare O'Donnell the historical context.

21ST APRIL



CHRIS DUNKLEY LYME PARK WILDLIFE

Managed by the National Trust, and right here on our doorstep, it will be fascinating to have an insight into the diverse range of wildlife from Chris Dunkley.

19TH MAY



RUTH GARRATT CANAL & RIVER TRUST

The Trust is the largest canal charity in the UK looking after 2000 miles of canals and rivers across England and Wales. Heritage adviser, Ruth Garratt, will be letting us know just what this involves.

16TH JUNE



DIANE LAIR GUIDE DOGS

Guide dogs are of course highly trained animals and of huge benefit to those with a visual impairment. It will be inspiring to learn from Dianne Lair more about this much admired man's best friend.

21ST JULY



**CAROL WILSON
FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME**

Apparently, the biggest fire hazards in homes are cooking, heating equipment and electrical malfunctions. Community Safety Officer, Carol Wilson, says her normal job involves working closely to support vulnerable residents in the High Peak community. So we will be receiving expert fire safety advice.

18TH AUGUST



**PAUL AND MANDY MILES
TISSINGTON HALL**

Tissington Hall built in 1609 by Francis FitzHerbert and inherited by Sir Richard FitzHerbert in 1989 who lives there with his family. Tissington's rich history dates back to the eleventh century and is unique in that it is one of only three properties in the country with the descendants of the original builder still living there four hundred years later.

22ND SEPTEMBER



ANNUAL GROUPS' DISPLAY

The Groups' Display is an annual event held in New Mills Town Hall. It attracts a large number of visitors both our own and members of the public and is an opportunity for Groups to showcase their activities.

20TH OCTOBER



**SIMON AUTHOR
MY LIFE OF CRIME**

Simon Michael studied Law at Kings College and was called to the Bar in 1978. Until the late 1990s he worked almost exclusively in the field of criminal law then specialised in clinical negligence. He retired early to resume a successful literary career. The famous Charles Holborne Series are based on his own life, cases and real events.

17TH NOVEMBER



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our important formal meeting when we ratify Committee membership, receive reports from the Chair and Treasurer and vote on resolutions. It also a chance to meet up with other members and enjoy the refreshments provided.

16TH DECEMBER



CHRISTMAS QUIZ

The festive celebrations get off to a good start with our traditional Christmas quiz. Very much a team affair with mince pies and of course some very good company.

**MONTHLY OUTINGS ARE OPEN TO THE FULL MEMBERSHIP
BUT BECAUSE PLACES ARE LIMITED IT IS ADVISABLE TO CHECK
AT MEETINGS OR BY CONTACTING COORDINATORS PAT COOPER
OR BARBARA MATTHEWS outings@newmillsu3a.org.uk**

10TH DECEMBER 2025



NORTON GRANGE HOTEL, ROCHDALE GOLDEN OLDIES FESTIVE LUNCH

We enjoyed a traditional Christmas lunch in the friendly, welcoming atmosphere of Norton Grange Hotel. With entertainment, music and a singalong.

We tucked in to butternut squash soup with warm roll, turkey and pigs in blankets, roast carrots and potatoes, broccoli and gravy! All followed by Christmas Pudding, tea or coffee and mince pies.

A wonderful start to the festive season!



**Pat Cooper and Barbara Matthews
Outings Coordinators**

21ST JANUARY 2026



ANNUAL LUNCH

PARISH HALL, CHURCH LANE

12.30 for 13.00 (no earlier)

Choice of home made meat and potato pie or
cheese and onion pie

a selection of sweets

wine or soft drinks

Please bring dinner plate, cutlery & glass.

£10 (cash only)

NB Members must have paid on or before the
November meeting and selected choice of pie

26TH JANUARY 2026

FIVE DAY BREAK

POTTERS FIVE LAKES RESORT, ESSEX

All meals inclusive

Drinks (excluding premium brands)

Half day Excursion to Maldon

Half day Excursion to Colchester

Executive coach and driver throughout

£529.00 per person (some room supplements)

Please speak to Barbara for tour company
contact details Ltd



**20 YEARS CONSISTENTLY
LEARNING, LAUGHING, LIVING**