



Ashby de la Zouch



U3A

Newsletter Aug 2017

Reminder - Social Evening on Friday 8th September

We will again be holding a social evening from 7.30 to 11.00 pm at Blackfordby Village Hall.

Music and entertainment by the band "Flashback".

Licensed bar – Fish and chip supper (other food choices are available) – Raffle

Tickets £3 inc. supper and raffle. **This is your last chance to buy tickets.** Speak to any committee member.

Last Monthly Meeting: 22nd August

This was our Cream Tea Event with scones, jam and clotted cream, tea and coffee served by the Committee and some very welcome volunteers. The weather was fine and allowed us to use the garden behind the church as well as inside.

Before we got stuck into the scones, our new Chairman, Tony Smith was announced and introduced to those present.

There is normally no speaker at the Cream Tea Event but this year, at short notice, we were contacted by Andy Barson of Leicestershire County Council Local Area Co-ordination who asked to give a 5 minute talk on the services which his department can offer. They can help isolated or vulnerable people to be put in contact with the right people if they need help, whether that is local services or voluntary organisations. Andy can be reached at Ashby Library where he is based. Individuals or their family or friends can make the initial contact.

Ann Thomson reminded us that tickets for the Christmas lunch will go on sale next month. A non-refundable deposit of £10 is required. It will be held at Willesley Park Golf Club on December 7th at a cost of £23 for 4 courses + coffee

Next Monthly Meeting: 26th Sept

David Price is to give a talk on the Can-Can!

2017	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
September		Cynthia Wells + 1	Trips & Outings, Walking
October		Neil Roberts	Bird Watching, Bridge
November		David Oakley	Calligraphy, Drawing & Painting

Interest Groups Timetable: September 2017

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Arts & Crafts	28th Sept at 2 pm	Shirley's house
Bird Watching	Mon 25th Sept at 10 am	Willington Nature Reserve. Ring Anne for parking details. 01283 760348
Bridge	4th & 18th Sept at 7-9 pm 11th & 25th Sept at 2-4 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club, front lounge. Hood Park Leisure Centre, 1st floor.
Calligraphy	12th Sept at 10 am	Jenny's house
Computer	Wed 6th Sept at 2 pm Mon 18th Sept at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	7th Sept at 10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	No meeting this month	
Family History	13th Sept at 2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	21st Sept at 10.30 am	Coach trip to Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Dep. From Ivanhoe School CP
History	28th Sept	Self-drive visit to Kedleston Hall. Details via history@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Industrial Heritage	Sat. 23rd Sept. Car share. Wed 27th Sept. Coach trip.	Barrow Hill Roundhouse Rail museum Duxford Air museum
Italian	4th Sept at 10 am	9 St Michaels Close
Literature	12th Sept at 1.30 pm	28 Willesley Gardens
Lunch	14th Sept at 12 noon for 12.30	The Hollybush Inn, Breedon
Medium Walks	11th Sept at 9.45 for 10 am	Meet at layby, Tamworth Rd, 600m North of M42 J11, (SK313107)
Music Appreciation	6th Sept at 10 am	43 Cambrian Way
Quiz	20th Sept at 2.30 pm	Bull and Lion, Packington
Recorder	7th Sept at 10 am 21st Sept at 10 am	TBA Joan's house
Short Walks	15th Sept at 10 am	Meet at CP at Bradgate Park main entrance
Trips and Outings	No trips planned	
Walking	5th Sept 9.45 for 10 am start 19th Sept 9.45 for 10 am start	Ye Olde Red Lion, Market Bosworth TBA

Early October

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Bridge	2nd Oct at 7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club, front lounge
Computer	4th Oct at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	5th Oct at 10 am	16 Winchester Way
Music Appreciation	4th Oct at 10 am	43 Cambrian Way
Recorder	5th Oct at 10 am	Joan's house
Walking	3rd Oct at 9.45 for 10 am	TBA

*For trips, outings, walks and other events which meet away from the usual venues, see further details in the relevant Group Reports below, or on our website www.ashbyu3a.co.uk

Group Reports

Arts and Crafts

9th August The group met again to finish working on their Teddy bears and will meet again on 28th September.

Bird Watching – Leader Anne Donegan - birdwatch@ashbyu3a.co.uk 01283 760348

31st July - Visit to Drakelow Nature Reserve

Drakelow NR has been in operation since 1970 and consists of old gravel pits and riverside meadow in the floodplain of the River Trent just upstream of Burton. Its location has made it an important flyway for birds for many years and it now forms a significant link in a chain of wetland reserves along the Trent Valley. The variety of habitat attracts a wide range of species including large numbers of wildfowl in the winter months, breeding and roosting cormorants and a range of smaller species including reed warbler in summer and water rail in winter. During summer the site is also rich in butterflies and dragonflies.

Four members of the Group met at the reserve's entrance on Walton Road. The weather started sunny and warm and we stopped at the first Hide near the car park. We watched Cormorants and at least 6 young and could see the nests in the trees surrounding the Lake. One nest appeared to be still occupied with a young bird.

On the water there were tufted duck, coots and their young, a single black headed gull, 2 gadwall, a pair of swans and one cygnet, 2 great crested grebe and a heron fishing from a nearby bank.

We moved on to the next Hide also nearby but this area of water was much quieter given the time of year. However we waited and soon we could see a pair of black swans, always interesting if not part of our native wildlife. Finally Jim identified a Hobby flying over the water catching insects, a treat for those of us not having seen one before.

Our final stop was in the Hide overlooking the lake known as Area B on the information map, where we had our lunch. Suddenly Paula spotted a kingfisher perched on a stick like branch and he stayed long enough for all of us to get a good look. This was Paula's first sight of a kingfisher and she was delighted. The site is known for kingfishers but they are not always easy to see.

On our way round the site we spotted a number of butterflies on some Buddleia trees, 4 peacocks and 1 red admiral.

A very enjoyable day and well worth another visit at a different time of year.

Anne Donegan

Bridge – Leader Neil Roberts 01530 455957

This is Bridge for players of all levels playing friendly Contract Bridge with some chatter. Several of our number are "beginners" or "returners" and we have experienced players who are happy to help others improve their game. We now have about 20 active players.

The group has 2 new venues. They now meet at the Hood Park Leisure Centre in the 1st floor function room for afternoon sessions and at Ivanhoe Social Club in the front lounge for the evening sessions. Free car parking is available at both venues, but must be signed in at Hood Park.

If you would like to know more contact Neil on 01530 455957 or Pat Ford on 01827 830672

Calligraphy – Leader Jenny Slawson 01283 229718

A small but friendly group, we enjoy extending our calligraphy skills through a more experimental and creative approach to writing texts. We focus mainly on italic and uncial scripts and have produced some very imaginative pieces both at home and during our monthly meetings. We usually meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 10am.

The Group didn't meet in August due to holidays but are due to meet on the 12th Sept to attempt to master one font without having to use crib sheets.

Computers – Leader John Howlett 01530 461774

We meet twice monthly to try to solve anyone's computer problems and to better learn how to use them whether they are PCs, Macs, iPads or Android Tablets. All are welcome. No experience necessary.

21st Aug Seven attended today.

JD reported a laptop consistently declaring 'Running short of memory'. On inspecting the Task List (accessed by ctrl/alt/delete) it was found that there are two versions of McAfee running. Further work is needed to see how to get rid of the surplus one.

David's camera seems not to be recognised by his laptop (JD reported this also) when connected by cable. This should be sorted by ensuring the correct menu item is chosen on the cameras. But different systems react differently, so experimentation is required.

Peter looked at setting up distribution lists and scanning in photos.

Finally, we looked at an app for mobiles which allows the user to record speech and download later.

Digital Photography – Leader John Howlett 01530 461774

We meet to try to understand how to get the best out of our digital cameras whether they are simple compact cameras or full-blooded DSLRs and how to edit or modify the pictures afterwards. We try to get out and practice every other month. We do not as yet enter competitions.

3rd Aug We were 5 again today, to look over our photos from the 'site' visit last time.

There were some really impressive close-ups of dragonflies and lace wings, and a surprisingly varied selection of butterflies and moths which we endeavoured to identify using a book John H produced. The lighting conditions were very good, allowing for really good discrimination between the brightly coloured insects and their background. There was even a fortuitous sighting of the lesser hatted U3A photographer stalking his prey in the undergrowth!

John D presented a task which everybody declared possibly too difficult: it was a partial shot of a painting set inside an ornate frame in the ceiling of a National Trust property. The plan was to complete the frame, part of which had been clipped in the photo, by using other parts of the same frame. Although very fiddly but possible, it would have left 'cut' marks showing where pieces had been spliced in.

The conversation turned to older films, their uses and styles, including roll film and 35 mm film. Also to cameras old and new which the members had owned. The techniques used to get the best out of these were discussed.

A suggestion was made that a photographic survey of Ashby could be used to create a 'before and after' sequence of shots to show how the town has changed. A visit to the Museum was recommended.

Drawing and Painting – Contact Chris Dogherty 01530 411148

16th Aug The August meeting theme was "the fruits of summer" and four of us produced a colourful "fruit salad" including melon, strawberries, bananas and grapes!!
Good enough to eat!!!

The next meeting is not until October, when the theme will be "harvest time".

Family History – Leader John Dogherty 01530 411148

9th Aug We were down to four today, but had a useful session.

We helped Iris work through the process of downloading a .GEDCOM file from Ancestry, and finding it for upload to another computer/software programme. In the process we had a small Computer Group exercise in finding our way through Apple's system to locate said file.

Eileen reported complete success in using this exact process to transfer her Tree from JD's Ancestry account into her own account. Both she and John H made steady progress in their further searches.

JD reported the outcome of the Strange Case of the Wobbly Wills. The correct version has been received and that search has now ended.

There was a discussion on the additional information that Certificates of Birth, Death and Marriage can provide. It turns out that some jurisdictions show children of the deceased, others show the parents. Both are of inestimable value.

The advice to avoid using Ancestry to obtain Certificates was reiterated, as that can incur unnecessary cost.

Gardening - Leader Paul Dean 01283 295987

The Gardening Group is one of the largest interest groups. The committee try hard to provide a selection of activities suitable for all, including talks on various topics, trips out to well-known gardens and social events where plants are swapped and garden problems are solved! There is always food and drink at the end of each meeting and occasionally prizes to be won! Please come along and meet us and give the gardening club a try.

17th Aug Our self-drive trip was brilliant, we visited two venues and all those present thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We were very lucky with the weather because it rained heavily first thing but by the time we started out it had dried up. The first venue was Meynall Langley Trials Garden, Kirk Langley, Nr. Ashbourne, we had a guided tour and the plant specimens were inspirational. There was a very nice café too.

The second venue was Burrows Gardens about 5 minutes' drive away. This was a peaceful very beautiful garden that forms the grounds of a lovely country house. Again, refreshments were available with some superb cakes available before our drive home.

For the trip to the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham on Sept 21st, the coach will pick up at Ivanhoe School, in the pick-up bay through the gates, at 10.30 am

History – Leader Jane Harris 01530 838025

24th Aug. “Ernest Shackleton” Presenter John Whitehead gave an enthralling presentation of the explorer and in particular his 'Endurance' expedition to the South Pole between 1914 and 1917. Possibly the most remarkable story of leadership and survival in the history of polar exploration.

Shackleton recruited 27 men during 1912 and 1913 for a Transpolar expedition, supported from the other side by a second team, of whose trials we learned little but who fared considerably less well, in less stressful conditions.

The Expedition was mounted from South Georgia and became ice fast before even making 'land'. Over a long period in a most unusually cold Antarctic summer, they eventually lost their ship, 'Endurance' and had to camp out on the ice. They decided to set out over the ice for the long peninsula sticking out towards South America. Unfortunately, the ice conditions forced them ever northwards until they had to sail on to the uninhabited Elephant Island. The last landfall for 800 miles.

There, Shackleton left 22 men and two boats, and set off to sail the 800 miles (1280 kilometres) to South Georgia over some of the wildest seas in the world, in an open 22 foot boat. They arrived after 15 days by a feat of navigation probably unequalled before or since. Imagine sleeping, cooking and sailing in such a small vessel, in mountainous seas and howling winds, frozen and soaked most of the time? If they had missed the island by even 10 miles in those conditions, they were faced with a journey of 2,800 miles to South Africa on that heading, or 1000 miles to the Falkland Isles on the other. In other words, sure death. On arrival on the uninhabited side of South Georgia, three of them then had to trek for 36 hours over the island to get help from the whaling station at Stromness. They then had to go back to pick up the other three, then to Elephant Island to recover the other men. Even then the ice conditions forced them to go via the Falkland Isles!

John told the story with such vividness we almost felt the cold and discomfort, but he emphasised the extreme and (for his time) unusual qualities of leadership Shackleton displayed which undoubtedly ensured the survival of all his crew. Not one man died, and only a few got frostbite.

A most inspiring account. If you want the full story you should read 'South: The Endurance Expedition' by Sir Ernest Shackleton. It is a first class example of storytelling at the very least, and of an heroic struggle of epic proportions it would be hard to beat even in fiction.

Industrial Heritage – Leader Mike Stow 01530 469152

23rd Aug. 15 members attended Forge Mill Needle Museum near Redditch.

The Redditch area was famous for its manufacture of needles of all shapes and sizes from the middle ages through to the 20th Century. By the 17th and early 18th Centuries, needle making had developed into a cottage industry with many people working in their own homes to carry out some part of the needle making process. Unbelievably there are over 30 different processes required to make a needle and each person or family specialised in one of those processes. As well as making the needles, Forge Mill had a scouring shed in which the black and somewhat dirty needles were transformed into the bright and shiny objects we all know as sewing needles.

After our guided tour there was time to visit the rest of the museum with its display of all types of needles and equipment used for their manufacture. The Redditch area also produced high quality needles for use in surgery, gramophones and sail making. There was also a lucrative business in fish hooks and other angling tackle. The longest needle on display was 6ft long. What do you think that was used for?

Everyone then adjourned to the nearby Beefeater for lunch and afterwards some took the opportunity to visit the adjacent ruined Bordesley Abbey and the small museum next to the needle museum.

Italian Group – Leader Lynda Hall 01530 415922

The Group didn't meet this month due to holidays. They next meet on 4th Sept at 9 St Michaels Close

Literature Group - Leader Sandra Harris 01530 416653

The Group didn't meet in August but will meet on 19th September to discuss "What Milo Saw" by Virginia McGregor

Luncheon Group – Leader Ray Bentley 01530 412505

We are a group of men and ladies who enjoy a meal together, we take it in turn to choose a venue and organise it. Everyone is welcome, all we ask is that you sign the notice board in the coffee room at the monthly meeting prior to the lunch, so we can book the relevant number of seats. If you cannot make the monthly meeting please use the contact email or phone number.

The August meal was held at The Black Horse Inn, Market Bosworth. We arrived to be told that the kitchen was out of action due to an electrical problem but an electrician was on site. After a brief delay orders were taken and the food arrived surprisingly promptly considering. There was a slight delay for some of the puddings but overall the food, beer, wine and service were very good.

Music Appreciation – Leader David Oakley 01530 563409

2nd Aug With three apologies for absence we were nine in number for this month's meeting and as usual we weren't disappointed with the wide range of the music selection.

Mike launched us off with the track 'Dr. Wanna Do' by Caro Emerald, the Dutch pop and jazz singer whose music is also described as 'Electric Swing'. He followed this up with 'Pantaloons' by Tape Five, also a jazz, electro swing band.

Nev's choice this month was an Al Bowlly track from the 1930's, 'Love Is The Sweetest Thing'. Mozambican-born Al was very popular in the UK. but was killed in London in 1941 during an air-raid. This track was followed up by a Richard Thompson song 'Al Bowlly's in Heaven'. A good match Nev!

Our visitor Margaret had brought along the 1977 live 'Running on Empty' album of Jackson Browne, and had chosen the 'Running on Empty' track. This was followed up by Ryan Adams track 'Damn Sam (I love a woman that rains)'

Trish was next with the Carpenters track 'Jambalaya', although we would have enjoyed any track from that album, so we had a second choice of 'Yesterday Once More', the original Neil Sedaka composition.

Paul had chosen a very personal track with Mike and the Mechanics 'The Living Years', with some thought provoking lyrics. His second choice being Elgar's wonderful 'Nimrod' from Enigma Variations.

Ann took us back to her teenage years as she was a great Gene Pitney fan so had chosen 'Something Got a Hold of my Heart'. Unfortunately technology struck again and we were unable to play her second song from the musical 'Ragtime'. Oddly the Wi-Fi speaker worked perfectly well as soon as everyone had left, rather odd!

Lesley hadn't selected a choral piece this month but chose the shorter version of Donna Summers 'MacArthur's Park', a song once called 'the worst song ever written', but we all enjoyed it. Her second selection was Rod Stewart's 'Blue Moon', which surprisingly features Eric Clapton on guitar.

Mary had brought along a disc recorded by Chris, the pianist who used to play at her pub/restaurant. It was a recording of Scott Joplin's 1902 classic piano rag 'The Entertainer'. Obviously Chris was an excellent pianist.

Finally David had chosen a Johnny Mercer song 'Lazy Bones' followed by the Hoagy Carmichael song 'Stardust, sung by Nat King Cole with arrangements by Gordon Jenkins, a perfect combination.

Quiz group - Leader Malcolm Bird 01530 563872

The group meet at the Bull and Lion, Packington. The Start time is 2.30 and involves tables of four. You do not need to arrange a team of four before the meeting as teams can be organised on the day. This enables single individuals to take part - and to make new friends by joining an ad hoc team. Tea and coffee are served. Total cost £1.20 of which 20p goes to a kitty for prizes.

The Group met for the August quiz as usual and a good time was enjoyed by all. The next quiz will be on Wednesday September 20th at the usual time and place. Even more fabulous prizes will be competed for!

Recorder group - Leader Joan Gibson - recorder@ashbyu3a.co.uk

The recorder group, meet twice a month, to make music in a relaxed, fun way. I would hope that we would be able to cater for a wide range of experience and skill. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday mornings each month. New members would be very welcome. Complete beginners would find it difficult to catch up, though.

"We rearranged the meeting dates this month, as so many people were unavailable, due to school holidays, etc. We moved the first meeting in August from the first Thursday to the second (10th), and the following meeting was on 24th at Barbara M's. It will be back to our usual routine next month, although I don't know what the venue will be, as I'll be away doing child care again. I should be back in action for the 3rd Thursday.

One of our new members joined us again this morning (4 in all). We played music from the previous meeting, and a couple of trios: Eriskay Love Lilt, which we've played before, and a new piece I bought recently: "Four Minuets" by Handel. I had been assured that it was quite easy, but it includes a few notes which we hadn't yet learned, so it will take more practice than anticipated. It is a trio for descant, treble and tenor, and should sound rather nice when we have got our brains and fingers round it. We attempted the first section. More next time." Joan

Trips and Outings Group - Contact Margaret Howlett 01530 461774

There were no trips this month.

Walks

The walk leader will be at the meeting place whatever the weather and will only cancel the walk in consultation with those who turn up on the day. All dogs must be kept under control at all times. Walking boots or strong shoes are recommended. Be prepared for bad weather by taking warm waterproof clothing. Leaders act in a voluntary capacity. All ramblers walk at their own risk.

Walking Group - Leader Bob Baxendale 01530 481435

The walking group usually does walks of between 7-8 miles, twice a month, and we normally have a lunch stop at a pub near to, or at the end of, the walk.

15th Aug There were 11 of us again for a day out in Derbyshire. Although the weather started off cool, it developed into a beautiful summer day perfect for our walk. We parked our cars and set off from near the NT car park at the eastern end of Curbar Edge, walking past Warren Lodge and down the footpath through Bee Wood into Froggatt village. Here we joined the Derwent Valley Way to Grindleford and Upper Padley. It was up hill then to Grindleford Station, at the mouth of the Totley tunnel. Then further uphill to Nether Padley and the open moor, on the edge of the Longshaw Estate, to our lunch venue the Grouse Inn, where we sat outside in the sunshine for pub grub and drinks. After leaving the pub we joined the footpath that took us along Froggatt and Curbar Edges, with the magnificent views over the Derbyshire hills and dales. The walk of 8.5 miles was slightly longer than the 7 miles predicted but was enjoyed by all.

Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman

The Medium Walk group do walks of up to 6 miles. Anyone interested please contact Carole.

14th Aug Seven walkers met outside The Globe in Snarestone, it was overcast and turned to drizzle just before we set off. This continued for an hour when it brightened up and we had some sunshine and a light breeze. We set off Westwards across the A444 into Appleby Lane and up a slope into the fields. Continuing South West, skirting Norton Juxta Twycross, we turned North to Appleby Magna, stopping to commune with the horses on the way. A short road walk and into the fields again. Going South East towards Colludon Farm, we eventually turned left and retraced our steps to Snarestone. There were a number of stiles, some not easy to negotiate.

This walk was a chance to get close to nature. On the way to Norton the going was fairly easy with corn, corn stubble and grass, with one field of clover. Through Cottage Farm, past the airfield was tarmac. Shortly after we came to the area where the farmers appear to have ignored the footpaths. The first field was maize with no footpath so we walked around the first part, on an access road, but then had to dive in and surf through it for about a quarter of a mile, to reach the stile on the other side.

After Appleby we again encountered maize, with part of it having a trod path through it. After the maize it was forcing our way round a field of beans, between beans nettles and weeds. Repeat that in two more fields until we then crossed a short section of beans to a stile. One field of grass and then back to the clover. Total distance was approximately 5.9 miles.

Short walks Group – Leader John Howlett 01530 461774

The short walk group organises walks using well defined paths and routes without stiles. The maximum length is 3 miles. All are welcome.

16th June Walk around Willesley Woods.

Six of us met at the Oakthorpe picnic site. This was Oakthorpe colliery until 1991, now a car park for Willesley woods.

We set off on the track nearest the Willesley lane and followed the gravel track and onto the grassy track right up to the North Western edge of the woods where we found workmen laying a new path. We followed the new path down to the lake where we struggled over a net the workmen had placed to block the path. We then went around the lake and down to the site of the old Oakthorpe pit.

Just as we got back to the car park it started to rain so we adjourned to Moira furnace for coffee only to find it was Moira Furnace Folk Festival setting up. We still managed to park the cars and have our coffee.

Your Committee

Following the AGM on 25th July 2017, the members below were (re)elected to the Committee.

Tony Smith	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Colin Ellis	Treasurer	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Anne Donegan	Business Secretary	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Dorothy Chapman	Membership Secretary	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk
James Bloor	Groups Coordinator	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Isobel Salt	Speaker seeker	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Peter Clement	Minutes Secretary	minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Sheila Dean	Welfare	welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Mike Stow	Communications	webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk