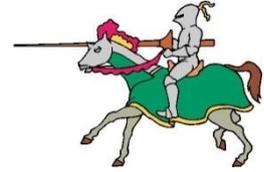




# Ashby de la Zouch



## U3A

### Newsletter January 2017

#### Change of meeting date

**General Meetings will in future be held on the FOURTH Tuesday of each month from 2pm to 4pm at the Congregational Church, Kilwardby Street, Ashby de la Zouch.** This makes the date more regular and hopefully allows a little more time to publish this newsletter after the meeting.

#### Change of membership year

To bring us in line with the national office and most other branches, the committee has decided to change our membership year from July 1st- June 30th to April 1st – March 31st starting this April. This greatly simplifies our accounting with the National Office.

As members have already paid for 12 months up to June 30th, next year's membership fees will be reduced from £16.50 to £13.50. This consists of £10 for 9 months + £3.50 fee which is paid to the National office to cover insurance, the magazine, legal support etc. This fee unfortunately cannot be reduced pro rata.

New members will pay £16.50 for the full year. The usual discounts will apply to new members joining part way through the year, or to those who are members of other U3A branches.

#### Last General Meeting: 31st January

Speaker Ben Devine gave us a talk on the purpose and functioning of the 'Black to Green' Project, organised by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

This is a project, concentrated in an area of about 10 square miles in the centre of the National Forest, which surveys and manages the development of woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, heathland and derelict land within the area. The purpose is to map the progression of these features within the area from pre-industrial through industrial revolution to post industrial times. Also covered is the survival of ancient habitats unchanged throughout this period.

The Trust deploys a wide range of tools and techniques to deal with this complex set of tasks. These include data collection and surveys, active management of habitats and wildlife, involvement of local agencies, landowners, individual 'civilians' and volunteer groups. These all help in many ways to support and further the Trust's efforts.

The results and activities are fed back into the community in research projects, education opportunities and presentations (such as today's). The Trust produces maps, statistical digests and reports at all levels of expertise to enable access to everybody who might help.

There are activities for all to get involved in, such as the Moth Breakfast, and garden surveys and data collection programmes for all to help in. The Annual Citizen Science Projects are organised programmes of research involving the public, concentrating each year on one species, such as bats or hedgehogs. There are currently three showcase sites: Swadlincote Woodlands, Moira Furnace and Overseal Towpath.

The Trust currently has 300 volunteers, collected 3000 sets of records and logged 5000 hours of work so far.

If you wish to get involved, go straight to [www.blacktogreen.org.uk](http://www.blacktogreen.org.uk)

The Trust meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month from February to November and there are also courses on birding at Hicks Lodge on five dates in 2017 beginning on the 25th February.

## **Next General Meeting: 28th February**

**Speaker:** Pat Hall will give a talk called “Life’s funny like that”

### **New Groups**

Four new groups have been proposed: Play Reading, Poetry, Ladies Golf and Arts & Crafts. If anyone is interested in joining, or indeed leading, any of these groups please contact James Bloor at [interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

<b>2017</b>	<b>Tea and Coffee Rota</b>	<b>Meeters and Greeters</b>	<b>Reporting Groups</b>
<b>February</b>	Sonia Spence, Jane Barnett and Patricia Lardner	Sandra Fox and Cynthia Wells	
<b>March</b>	Bill & Avril Wilson, Glenys Morrice, Maggie Rice		

### **Interest Groups Timetable: February 2017**

<b>Interest group</b>	<b>Meeting date and time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>Bird Watching</b>	TBA	TBA
<b>Bridge</b>	6th & 20th Feb at 7-9 pm 13th & 27th Feb at 2-4 pm	Royal Hotel, Ashby.
<b>Calligraphy</b>	14th Feb at 10 am	At Lynda’s
<b>Computer</b>	Wed 1st Feb at 2 pm Mon 20th Feb at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
<b>Digital Photography</b>	2nd Feb at 10 am	16 Winchester Way.
<b>Drawing and painting</b>	15th Feb at 10 am	2 Marlborough Way
<b>Family History</b>	8th Feb at 2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
<b>Gardening</b>	16th Feb at 2 pm	Packington Village Hall. Introduction to Alpines
<b>History</b>	23rd Feb at 2 pm	Packington Village Hall
<b>Industrial Heritage</b>	22nd Feb	National Space Centre, Leicester
<b>Italian</b>	6th Feb at 10 am	TBA
<b>Literature</b>	14th Feb at 12.30 pm	28 Willesley Gardens
<b>Lunch</b>	9th Feb at 12 noon for 12.30	The White Hart, Ashby
<b>Medium Walks</b>	13th Feb at 9.45 for 10 am start	Meeting point TBC. Walk to Dimminsdale Woods
<b>Music Appreciation</b>	1st Feb at 10 am	43 Cambrian Way, Ashby
<b>Quiz</b>	15th Feb at 1 pm for lunch Quiz starts at 2.30 pm	Bull and Lion, Packington
<b>Recorder</b>	2nd Feb at 10 am  16th Feb at 10 am	Janet’s house. Phone 01283 711219 for directions. Marion’s house. Ashbrook, Slackley Lane, Moira, DE12 6BX
<b>Short Walks</b>	17th Feb at 10 am	Meet at the lower car park at Staunton Harold Garden centre.
<b>Trips and Outings</b>	No trips currently planned	
<b>Walking</b>	7th Feb 9:45 for 10 am start 21st Feb 9.45 for 10 am start	TBA The Chesterfield Arms, Bretby DE15 0QA

## Early March

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Bird Watching	TBA	TBA
Bridge	6th Mar at 7-9 pm	Royal Hotel, Ashby.
Computer	1st Mar at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	2nd Mar at 10 am	16 Winchester Way
Music Appreciation	1st Mar at 10 am	TBA
Recorder	2nd Mar at 10 am	65 Gresley Wood Rd, Church Gresley
Walking	7th Mar at 9.45 for 10am	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](http://www.ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## Group Reports

### Bird Watching – Leader James Bloor [birdwatch@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:birdwatch@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

The Bird Watching Group didn't meet in January. Their next meeting is yet to be arranged.

### 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. We meet weekly on Mondays at the Royal Hotel, Ashby and at present we alternate afternoons and evenings.

The agreement with the Royal is that we pay for refreshments. Currently when we play we pay £2.50 per week. The Royal provide Car Parking Permits free to our group when playing Bridge.

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. In February we shall meet at Lynda's to attempt "Valentine in a heart (with a difference!)"

### 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.

#### 16th January

For our first session of the year we had nine come along to play.

We dealt with scanning slides and photos in different formats into a PC, using different types of technology, opening and printing .xls spreadsheets in Windows 10 with Open Office, Dropbox installation and use, opening Rich Text Format documents, downloading GEDCOM files in Ancestry from tablets (not solved on the day but by later experiment successful), adding photos into the U3A Website and tweaking the music part of a Windows Movie Maker movie.

### **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.

#### **5th January**

On a bright winter's day and as an antidote to all those mince pies and trifle, we were entertained to three videos created to test our knowledge of Windows Movie Maker.

Colin showed us the restoration of a King Class loco, to the strains of 'Zadok' by Handel; John D took us through an expedition to the Lakes with mixed 'Mountain' type music; and Steve entertained us to a Christmas medley. Each used similar but different aspects of the software.

Then Steve 'treated' us to a quiz on digital photography terminology, which surprised us all.

There was a short discussion of the ways of treating low light subjects in high contrast back grounds (e.g. people indoors with a window behind them).

Next time we will take our cameras outdoors if the weather is suitable. Otherwise we will meet indoors and hopefully others will bring their videos along...

### **Drawing and Painting – Contact Chris Dogherty 01530 411148**

#### **18th January**

The January session was a trip to Leicester art gallery where 6 of us spent an interesting morning. Works on display included Hogarth, Frith, Lowry, Spencer, Turner and Sisley as well as the 90th birthday portrait of Leics' famous son David Attenborough painted by local artist Bryan Organ.

### **Family History – Leader John Dogherty 01530 411148**

#### **11th January**

To start the New Year we had a new member: Rosemary Phillips. Welcome Rosemary! In addition five others came: John D, John H, Iris, Audrey and Lesley.

We got Rosemary logged on and set up with a trial sub to Ancestry, then helped her start a Tree. This is probably the best tool to get you started, as it provides a structure and reference point for developing a plan. Almost immediately we were able to get to her grandparents on her mother's side, an area not yet covered. We were able to print off the Census for 1891 with a whole family for Rosemary to develop at home. We also decided to look at ways of exporting the embryonic Family Tree to other software if Rosemary does not choose to take up a long term subscription to Ancestry. Audrey has some interesting developments from the German side of her ancestors, supplied by distant relatives, with information going back to the early 18th Century.

John is still trying to capitalise on the progress made with his Irish ancestors before Christmas.

Iris had a slow start as her copy of Ancestry was curiously slow to bring up the Tree. Once in place she was able to proceed as normal.

Lesley is steadily working up her tree; there is a lot to do!

A good workmanlike start to the year. We all have targets we are working on, and help each other over the tricky bits.

### **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.

### 19th January

Our January gardening meeting was held at Packington village hall, where we received a talk and slide presentation from Jane and Graham Wagstaff of Measham. They explained how they grow their vegetables in small spaces and containers. Graham also highlighted the different approach they take for show vegetables compared to vegetables grown for the table. Part of the slide presentation showed Tatton Park and Jane and Graham's winning vegetables. Their garden has been filmed by the BBC for a program on growing vegetables in a small garden.

### **History – Leader Dorothy Chapman 01530 413042**

#### 26th January

Colin Ellis gave a talk on Ashby Canal Tramroads

A record turnout of 49 members was treated to an absorbing account of the development of the horse drawn tramways associated with the Ashby Canal.

This is a very complex subject and Colin steered us magnificently through the ins and outs of the variegated network of tramways and tramroads in the area.

The earliest tramroads seem to date from the beginning of the 17th Century, but proliferated as the canal system spread through the country. The 'roads were needed to connect the canals to locations such as mines and other industrial workings which were difficult, expensive or inconvenient of access to the canals.

As the century unfolded the technology of the system evolved from wooden tracks to metal.

The late 18th Century saw an upsurge in the Ashby area with the Ashby Canal Act of 1794.

The 'roads retained their utility when the steam railways began to arrive, but the multiplicity of lines, and their varied economic viability proved the end of many lines, some before they were even built.

Colin carefully traced out the way in which the lines were brought into play, and put out pseudo-pods to likely locations. He used maps, photos and sketches to illustrate the changing shape of the network, and how traces of it can still be seen in the landscape and built environments.

A thoroughly fascinating glimpse into a vanished part of the local industrial environment, so basic to the development of Ashby.

### **Industrial Heritage – Leader Mike Stow 01530 469152**

#### 25th January – Visit to Nottingham's City of Caves and Galleries of Justice

This proved to be our most popular visit yet with 30 people booked on the trip (the maximum either venue could take) plus 8 people on the waiting list in case of cancellations. After the usual gathering in Ashby to car-share, we travelled to Clifton South to get the tram to the Lace Market. The

subterranean Caves are strangely accessed from the first floor of Broadmarsh Shopping Centre!

These caves have been occupied since the 12<sup>th</sup>C although there is evidence that similar caves have been used for many hundreds of years before. The bedrock under Nottingham is sandstone and so easily excavated with simple tools and so the town developed downward rather than outward. There are believed to be over 500 caves under Nottingham, many of them interlinked. They were used for storage, stabling and various industries were practiced including tanning. The pits in which the hides were soaked for months covered in urine and other noxious substances can still be clearly seen. The smell must have been horrendous. People even lived down there until it was banned in 1845. One hundred years later they were still in use as air raid shelters during WWII.

From the caves we walked up to the old court house where our costumed guide conducted us around. The sheriffs of Nottingham were based here dating back to 1125 and a court has been on this site since at least 1375. We started in the Victorian Court Room where some of us were persuaded to re-enact a trial of some poor soul accused of inciting a riot. He was found guilty and would have hanged had the condemned cells not been full, so he was transported to the Antipodes. If he had been hanged, it may well have been on the front steps of the Court for the public to watch. From the Courtroom we were sent down, literally, into the gaol.

On the first level is the Victorian County Gaol, unpleasant enough, but lower down are the medieval cells, the solitary confinement cells and below that an oubliette where people were left to rot. Also to see are the main exercise yard complete with gallows, the women's prison and then an exhibition about the convict ships bound for Australia. A further exhibition is of the recent HMP prison cells, in use until 1985. We were told that it takes about 90mins to complete the tour, but 2-3 hours would be more suitable. After the horrors of medieval life we retired to the pub immediately opposite to recover and to eat an excellent meal.

### **Italian Group – Leader Lynda Hall 01530 415922**

23rd January

For our first meeting of 2017 three students attended class.

Lynda handed us text books provided from U3A funds, which will be so much easier than using pages copied in Black and White from Lynda's own copy.

We were given lessons in booking hotel rooms on the telephone, using the Italian telephonic alphabet. This uses the names of cities, such as Ancona, to make clear the letter being spoken. In this case 'A'. Booking called for us to recall vocabulary and verbs we have already learned. Next we reviewed key elements of grammar, laid out over two pages in a good easy to revise pattern.

### **Literature Group - Leader Sandra Harris 01530 416653**

The Group are due to read "Underground Time" by Delphine de Vigan this month, before meeting at 1.30 on 14th February to discuss the book.

### **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 January meal was relocated to the Monkey Tree in Mill Lane Ashby at short notice as the intended venue, the White Hart, was being decorated. With the decorating now complete, we shall meet at the White Hart on February 9th at the usual time.

### **Music Appreciation – Leader David Oakley 01530 563409**

The group did not meet in January, but the next meeting will be on Feb 1st at 43, Cambrian Way at 10 am

### **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.

There was no meeting in January due to the pub being closed at short notice.

However, the February meeting will take place as planned with the winter lunch at 1.0 pm on Wednesday 15th followed by a quiz at 2.30pm. The list for lunch bookings has now closed with 17 members signed up.

### **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.

### **Trips and Outings Group - Contact Margaret Howlett 01530 461774**

#### **Visit to Bradford National Media Museum – March 22nd**

The Trips and Outings group are combining with Industrial Heritage to organise a trip to the National Media Museum in Bradford on 22nd March. Entry to the museum is free, as is a one hour behind-the-scenes guided tour, but if enough people are interested, we can hire a 34 seat coach for £450 and so the cost would be about £15pp depending on the numbers. Further details to follow. If you wish to go please contact either:

Margaret Howlett: 01530 461774 or [trips@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:trips@ashbyu3a.co.uk) or

Mike Stow: 01530 469152 or [indhist@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:indhist@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

### **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 normally have a lunch stop at a pub near to, or at the end of, the walk.

#### **3rd January**

The New Year calorie burn-off mystery walk turned out to be last November's Calke Abbey walk but in reverse, and for the sake of saving a mile, missing out Wilson. 10 members braved the cold and potential mud to meet at Castle Square in Melbourne. Around the pond and up a muddy field or two brought us out onto last month's route. Alongside Blackwell Brook and through a very muddy gate led up to the Melbourne Rd and into Spring Wood, Dimminsdale and Calke Abbey grounds. A quick if belated coffee stop at the NT café refreshed us for the return leg. Round beside the ponds, up past the deer park and over the fields where the very slippery track was 5m wide down to Broadstone Lane. From there the green lane took us above the reservoir back to Melbourne. After a quick change of footwear, we drove around to the Bulls Head at Wilson for welcome refreshments. 7.2 enjoyable if somewhat muddy miles.

#### **17th January**

This was the 150th walk done by the group. Fourteen hardy souls met up at the Cross Keys in Newbold Coleorton on a cool, dry, overcast morning. After a short stretch of road walking to Gelsmoor we ventured across some fields and up a climb behind the old school into Griffydam. It was then through somebody's garden, through fields and across Stordon Lane on to Osgathorpe. After climbing Barrow Hill we came on to Breedon Lane adjacent to Breedon Brand Farm. We then skirted Cloud Hill Quarry and looped back into Worthington where we picked up the Ivanhoe Way towards Gelsmoor. Before Gelsmoor we turned right to Newbold and back to the Cross Keys for a very agreeable lunch. About 6.5 miles.

### **Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman**

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

### 9th January

I arrived outside the pub in Smisby to find John, Mike and Barry and between us we decided that the rain had set in for the day, and so decided to cancel the walk, although Barry was going to continue and do the walk. I then went round the corner to find Colin, and told him that we had cancelled the walk. He told me that Trev and Val had been at the church, but had left. We have been rained off only once before, so feel that the weather has been kind to us.

Barry reported afterwards "I've done the walk. Instructions were good, didn't get lost. Mud average but firm underfoot. Rain stopped after Hartshorne. 4.7 miles. From Limehouse Dam are a lot of uphill sections."

### **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.

### 20th January - Walk around Ashby.

13 people met at the Royal Hotel for the walk. We walked along the new path around Bath grounds leaving at the far end. We then went up Prior Park road and along Mount Walk where we stopped in glorious sunshine for a photo with the Hastings Tower. We then went to Huntingdon Court and around the Hood Park Leisure centre and across the new bridge into the new estate built on the old soap factory. We followed the estate road into the Biscuit factory estate with roads named Meredith and Drew.

We crossed the Smisby road and into the Bovis estate and walked down to the Jitty by the Flour Mill and by the old Gas works and gas holder site.

We had coffee at Betty's cafe in Pass's passage where we were made very welcome.

### **Your Committee**

Following the AGM on 26th July 2016, the members below were (re)elected to the Committee.

John Howlett	Chairman	<a href="mailto:chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk">chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
James Bloor	Groups Coordinator	<a href="mailto:interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk">interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Dorothy Chapman	Membership Secretary	<a href="mailto:members@ashbyu3a.co.uk">members@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Sheila Dean	Welfare	<a href="mailto:welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk">welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Anne Donegan	Business Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk">secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Colin Ellis	Minutes Secretary	<a href="mailto:minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk">minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Isobel Salt	Speaker seeker	<a href="mailto:speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk">speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Tony Smith	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk">treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Mike Stow	Communications	<a href="mailto:webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk">webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>