



#### Interest Groups Timetable for December

Interest group	Mtg Date	Time	Venue
Arts & Crafts			No meeting in December
Bird Watching			No meeting in December
Bridge	Mon 4th Mon 11th	2-4 pm 2-4 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre Hood Park Leisure Centre
Calligraphy	Tue 12th	TBA	The Tap House, Annwell Lane, Smisby. Christmas Meal
Canasta	Thu 14th	10 am	The Masseys'
Computer	Wed 6th Mon 18th	2 pm 2 pm	16 Winchester Way 16 Winchester Way
Digital Photos	Thu 4th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 20th	9.30 am	Meet at Christine's house. Car share visit to Burton Library gallery and coffee shop
Family History	Wed 13th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 21st	1.45 pm	Packington Hall Christmas Buffet. Please bring an item of food
History			No meeting in December
Industrial Heritage	Wed 13th	11 am	Planning meeting at Beeches, Burton Rd, Ashby
Italian			No meeting in December
Literature	Tue 5th	1.30 pm	28 Willesley Gardens
Lunch	Thu 7th	12 for 12.30 pm	Christmas Lunch at Willesley Park Golf Club.
Medium Walks	Mon 11th	9.45 for 10 am	Meet at Ferrers Arms, Lount. Walk to Staunton Harold and back, then a meal at The Ferrers Arms.
Music Appreciation	Wed 6th	10 am	43 Cambrian Way
Quiz	Wed 20th	2.30 pm	Bull and Lion, Packington
Recorder	Thu 7th	10 am	Joan's house
Short Walks	Fri 15th	10 am	Meet at Hicks Lodge CP for a walk around the lake
Supper Club			New group starting in January
Walking	Tue 5th Tue 19th	9.45 for 10 am 9.45 for 10 am	The Grouse Inn, Froggatt, Derbys S11 7TZ Walk to Heath End with lunch at the Smisby Arms.

## **Early January 2018**

Many groups have changed or cancelled their meeting dates in January. Check with the Group leaders before you attend.

Interest group	Mtg Date	Time	Venue
Bridge	Mon 1st	7 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club – To be confirmed
	Mon 8th	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 3rd	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photos	Thu 4th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Literature	Tue 9th	1.30 pm	28 Willesley Gardens
Medium Walks	Mon 8th	9.45 for 10 am	TBA
Recorder	Thu 7th	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](http://www.ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## **VARIOUS TRIPS AND OUTINGS**

There are 4 trips and outings being planned at the moment, for which there are a very few tickets available. If you wish to buy tickets please contact the organisers listed below to check availability.

Thu 15th Feb 2.30 pm at Birmingham Symphony Hall

Grieg piano concerto, Elgar Symphony No1

Tickets £22.40. Car share into Birmingham

Optional lunch at Carluccio's before the concert

Contact Colin Ellis on 01530 272592

Fri 2nd March 7.30 pm at De Montfort Hall, Leicester

The Russian State Ballet of Siberia are performing The Nutcracker

Tickets £37.50 for concessions. Car share into Leicester

£10 deposit required.

Contact Mike Stow on 01530 469152

Wed 21st March 2 pm at Theatre Royal Nottingham, "Warhorse"

Tickets £37.50 + cost of coach.

Contact Margaret Howlett on 01530 461774

Thu 24th May Coach trip to Bristol. A chance to see the city, Clifton suspension bridge and

SS Great Britain. Costs: Coach £16 approx, SS Great Britain £11 + £2 optional guided tour.

£10 deposit required.

Contact Margaret Howlett on 01530 461774

## **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

2017-18	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
December	Christmas event – The Committee	The Committee	No reports this month
January	Jane Harris, Wendy Somers, et al	TBA	Computers & Digital photography

## **Last meeting – 29th November – The RNLI by Derek Jones**

Derek is the Chairman of the Leicestershire RNLI.

He gave us a succinct rundown of the history of the RNLI from its foundation in 1824 by William Hilary as The National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck. A rather large mouthful, now thankfully abbreviated.

Originally intended for action around the Isle of Man, its remit now covers all of the British Isles and the Irish Republic and over 90,000 miles of coastline and the Institution manages 346 boats of all sizes, the largest and newest costing over £2,000,000 each. The Statistics are impressive, with 237 stations, including four on the Thames, they have so far saved over 140,000 lives with thousands more helped to safety in non-life-threatening situations. They also handle lifeguard duties on 240 beaches around the coasts, and work closely with the Emergency Services in serious flood situations.

The crews are all volunteers, except for the permanent station on Spurn Point which is too far from habitation to be able to call on volunteers in reasonable time. The work is very often dangerous and has led to the tragic loss of crew men from time to time. The worst tragedy in recent times was the loss of the Penlee boat in 1981 during hurricane force winds.

The crews are thoroughly trained at the national Training Centre in Poole where they can simulate almost every situation the crews are likely to meet. They are also trained in First Aid and their boats are fully equipped to help in this. The biggest boats can often carry, or call upon, qualified doctors as part of their crew. They even once mounted a dog kennel on one boat to illustrate the fact that a lot of rescues involve adults trying to save their dogs. When the dogs could easily save themselves!

Derek finished his talk with a short film on the work of the Institution, showing both simulated and actual rescues in progress. One brave U3A member demonstrated the kit the men (and women) wear. It is heavy and hot, but a life saver.

There was a lively Q&A session covering the equivalent services in other countries, what tests and training takes place at the Centre and elsewhere, the range and types of boats (none now propelled by oars!) some of which can drive at 40 knots.

The dedication and skill of the crew has to be seen to be believed, despite their meagre recompense. It may not need emphasising here, but the Institution relies almost exclusively on donations to cover its costs of £146,000,000 per year.

A true inspiration and a cautionary tale for all those who venture on or near the water.

**Next Monthly Meeting on 12th Dec at 2 pm:** We shall be entertained by the Ashby Spa WI Singers, followed by tea, coffee and mince pies served by the Committee.

## **GROUP REPORTS**

### **Arts and Crafts – Leader Shirley Bunting 01530 415755**

#### **30th November**

The group gathered together their newly-finished teddy bears today, not for a picnic, but for a photo shoot. Pictures will appear on the website soon. They followed that up by making Christmas cards.

They are not meeting in December or January and so their next meeting won't be until 22nd Feb.

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

The group have not been out this month and the date and venue for their next trip has yet to be decided.

### **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**

14th November Four members met at Diane's house and we worked on our piece of writing in our chosen font.

We discussed the Christmas meal which will take place on Tuesday December 12th at the Tap House Annwell Lane, Smisby.

### **Canasta – Leaders Tom & Gillian Massey 01283 212380**

Tom and Gill's canasta group has been running for some months now and last week they were up to 6 members. There is space for more. Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Thursday mornings each month at 10 am to 12. If you are interested in joining, then contact them on the above number or email [canasta@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:canasta@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

### **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.

20th November A select company of five today.

We discussed the Word text editing bar and the way it can be hidden or revealed, and the curious case of the vanishing drop down menu. Solution: Ask Google!

There was a conclave around the table to look at which text editor should be used for FileZilla which some members use to amend or update the interest group pages.

### **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.

Only four showed up today, and one hadn't been to the location shoot last time, so we did not show our photos. However we did discuss camera technology and the way in which older cameras dealt with fast moving objects. Which was not very well! The use of focal plane shutters (those with a rectangular shutter moving up the field of view) naturally received light from the bottom of the object before that from the top, so that the wheels of fast moving race cars would appear oval, the top of the wheel having moved on relative to the bottom by the time it was recorded on the film.

We looked at the problem of shooting one moving object when another, moving in the opposite direction, crosses the 'shot'.

Finally, the railway enthusiasts discussed why locos were often shot straight from the works in a grey colour before being painted in their proper livery. This is because the grey shade shows up their nooks and crannies better than almost any other. Especially in black and white photos of the time.

There is no meeting on the 7th December, as the Christmas Lunch is the same day, so we shall next meet on January 4th.

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

### **18th November**

Five of us at this month's session concentrated on "getting ready for Christmas", and created Christmas cards, gift tags and scenes.

Next meeting, congregate at 2 Marlborough Way on Wednesday 20th December, to car share, at 9.30am for a group festive outing to Burton Library gallery and coffee shop.

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

### **8th November**

A pleasant day brought 6 to the table.

We welcomed Sue to our number. As Sue is a complete beginner, the Leader concentrated on getting her started with a temporary Tree on Ancestry. She has a small but fascinating collection of papers going back into the 19th century, so excellent 'brick wall busting' fodder! We started her tree in the usual way, entering up her immediate family and predecessors. We used the basic search functions to establish base data on births deaths and marriages, as well as locations. We looked at the 'Hints' options and found some useful items, and worked on the 'Profile' page as well as the two Tree views. Sue will continue to experiment with this and build backwards. She has a problem getting past her father, so the Leader will suggest a technique to push round the 'brick wall.'

John continued struggling with trying to validate his Irish ancestors.

Eileen and Rosemary worked steadily on their Trees, whilst Audrey developed the story of her father. She is looking at different styles of presenting his life: either as a straightforward, but possibly boring, account. or in a more creative but challenging style. We await the outcome with considerable interest!

## **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.

### **16th November**

Brr, it's very cold today, which brings me to the gardening meeting which I am pleased to say we held indoors. Typically our November meeting is a craft session and today was no different.

Previously we have made wreaths and garlands from greenery primarily from our gardens and this year to ring the changes our speaker showed us how to make a wreath with a difference as it was decorated with sweets and ribbon or tinsel, sound strange? Not a bit of it, the end results looked lovely, suitable for everyone depending on the type of sweets used. We had some very positive feedback from the members who attended.

There was a range of extra decorations that members could buy at quite reasonable prices. We were also shown two or three more traditional wreaths for comparison. Overall a great session giving opportunity to learn and socialize.

## **History – Leader Jane Harris 01530 838025**

### **23rd November A talk on The Houses of The Grey Family by Peter Liddle.**

Peter is always a good draw and we had 31 to listen to his piece on the houses of the Grey family.

The Grey family can trace its family back at least to the Norman Conquest. It is not to be confused with the family of Early Grey of Northumberland, an equally ancient line.

They became ennobled in the Middle ages and progressed through the ranks of aristocracy by judicious marriages and in the process they acquired a series of grand houses.

Groby Hall (originally (Grooby) was built by the Ferrars/Ferrers family. There were several incarnations of the building, and the Hall and Barony passed to the Greys around 1432 on marriage.

Elizabeth Woodville and Lady Jane Grey were two of the most famous scions of this house.

Peter took us through the various aspects of the buildings, both extant and excavated, using old maps and photos, and excavation documents. He showed us how the ruins relate very closely to a pre-existing Norman Motte and Bailey castle. He discussed various ideas as to the interrelationship of the structures thought to have been there, using such clues as the Ferrars Coat of Arms on a brick tower, and the way in which the stone structures seem to be of later date than the brick ones. This is possibly the oldest brick built quality house in England.

Particularly interesting was the fact that the roof timbers of one part, now above the later ceiling, show that it must have been a traditional Great Hall, open to the central fire down below.

So interesting that Time Team used the site for a significant dig in 2010.

The other House was Bradgate House in the Park.

This was built by Henry Grey in the 1530's. Peter explored the evidence from various sources for this date, including a splendid coin of Henry VIII's reign.

The site is currently the venue for a three year training exercise for students at de Montfort University. The Short Walkers had the privilege of watching them at work last year, and listen to them describing their finds.

Strangely the first mention of the Hall is as a Lodge, and the grounds did not cover all of the present Park.

Just as with Groby Hall, the archaeology presents several conundrums which Peter expertly navigated for us. The plan is clearly of a great house, with a broad 'U' shape. However the remains of odd structures were discovered in the main courtyard which seem to pre-date the main hall.

A particular feature was the presence of several structures with the highly technical designation of 'sticky-out-bits', one of which, it became clear, was an ancient en-suite. Or Toilet Tower!

There was much more but there isn't space for it all!

A splendid return visit. Thank you Peter!

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

### **22nd November - A trip to Leeds Royal Armouries**

A dozen members braved the trials of the M1 to visit Leeds on a cold and blustery day. Fortunately, or possibly well-planned, our November visit was to an indoor site. And a free one at that. The museum was formed when many of the exhibits from the Tower of London were moved to Leeds as the London site was too small to show them all. There are displays of arms and armour from around the world and from ancient times to the present. The latest included a display of the mobile defences used to create Fort Bastion in Afghanistan

The museum stretches over 5 floors and is a warren of rooms showing tableaux ranging from famous battles such as Agincourt and Waterloo in miniature to full size displays of horses and even elephants in full battle armour.

Some of us had a go on the crossbow range with the chance to be William Tell for a few minutes, although his son would have been a lot more worried if we had been firing at an apple on his head!

There is apparently a full size tiltyard where they hold jousting contests annually. Unfortunately not on the day we were there.

The highlight of the museum though were undoubtedly the Gallery Talks. I was expecting a somewhat dry explanation of various battles, but we were treated to one of the staff in full Royalist Officer costume recount "his" story of a fight against a fully armoured opponent during the Civil War (apparently that was the last time a soldier took to the battlefield in full armour) complete with much declamation and sword-waving. The same member of staff (in 19thC costume) later explained the ins and outs of the Battle of Waterloo and allowed us to handle the swords, muskets and rifles. Finally he told a moving tale of an English archer fighting the Scots at Flodden Field in Northumberland in 1513

His knowledge of all things military, and particularly of horses, was amazing and he answered all the awkward questions thrown at him. Well worth the trip to Leeds alone.

The lowlight of the trip was undoubtedly the café which served some of the worst food we've ever come across on our travels. However it didn't outweigh the excellent museum and its staff.

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

29th November The usual five were there today.

This was the third and last of our November meetings. We concentrated still on shopping. After a particularly difficult listening piece between two women discussing where the best shops were, we went on to exercises involving shop types and the produce they offered. Weights and measures, plurals and the indefinite article all were in the mix, and Lynda made us work us hard for our Christmas break.

We won't meet in December and so the next meeting will be on 29th January

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

The Group met on 14th November to discuss Claire Tomalin's biography "Jane Austen, A Life". This month they will be concluding their Austen season by reading "Persuasion".

#### **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 form below the notice board 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 phone number.

9th November This month we met at the Unicorn Inn at Orton on the Hill near Twycross, a place which many of us were unfamiliar with, and some had never even heard of before. The friendly helpful staff served us large and delicious plates of food in very pleasant surroundings.

As this should have been the last lunch organised by Ray Bentley, after many years of finding us excellent pubs to visit, a presentation was made to Ray to thank him for all his hard work. Colin and Sharon Woodward will be taking over co-ordinating duties next year, but unfortunately family problems have taken them to Singapore for several weeks, and so Ray has offered to arrange one final January meal too. Thank you Ray for all the hard work.

Our next meal will of course be the Christmas lunch at the Golf Club on December 7th.

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

Wednesday 1st November.

A meeting of ten members settled down for two hours of our usual varied music selection, which this month was kindly hosted by Neil Roberts. We welcomed Baj and Peter, two new members, and had an apology for absence from Dorothy.

Paul kicked us off with 'He ain't heavy, he's my brother', not from the expected Hollies but from Neil Diamond.

Nev followed up with two tracks from his usual carefully considered song selection, this time with November 11th in mind. His first was Peter, Paul and Mary's 'The Cruel War' followed by 'The Green Fields of France' performed by Arthur Docherty.

Mike was pleased to find that this month no one else had chosen the same tracks as him. His first choice was also war-related being about the Vietnam War - Marvin Gaye singing 'What's Going On', followed by Stevie Wonder and 'Village Ghetto Land' from his album 'Songs in the Key of Life'. A song with a lush score but lyrics that describe desolation and hardship.

Our new member Baj had chosen to play and display her choice via Youtube on her laptop. We watched and listened to 2Cellos, a Croatian cello duo, play 'Benedictus' composed by Karl Jenkins. Peter had selected Nessun Dorma sung by the German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, described as the greatest living tenor.

Ann brought us back to an easy listening frame of mind with Bert Kaempfert's 'Spanish Eyes', hoping it might remind us of warmer climes, she followed this up with 'Speak Softly Love' by Andy Williams.

Sallie had chosen two piano pieces by Tchaikovsky, 'October' and 'November'. They were from 'The Seasons' twelve short piano pieces. They were commissioned by the St Petersburg music magazine Nouvellist with readers promised a new piece published each month of 1876.

David had selected two tracks from an Anthony Newley compilation album. The first was 'Something in your smile' written for the 1967 film 'Dr Dolittle', whilst the second was the better known song 'Who can I turn to?'

Trish had brought along a Three Tenors recording and had chosen Pavarotti singing 'Porquoi Me Reveiller' by Massenet, and secondly John Denver, a favourite singer of hers, singing 'Sunshine on my Shoulders'.

Neil had thought long and hard about his choice and had selected Don Williams 'Gypsy Woman', a song he wasn't originally much fond of but later grew to enjoy. His second track was 'Papa was a Rolling Stone' by the Temptations, and finally a song none of us knew; Art Garfunkel's 'Do spacemen pass dead souls on the way to the Moon?'

With the short time left to us Paul played his choice of Gerry Rafferty's 'Baker Street' and as Mike reminded us, no-one remembers who played that memorable opening Sax melody. (Google tells us that it was Raphael Ravenscroft).

To finish, Nev keeping to his war theme, played Billy Joel's 'Goodnight Saigon'.

Once again thanks to Neil for his hospitality and the last meeting of the year is on Wednesday December 6th with Ann Thompson at 43 Cambrian Way, and as usual at this time of year we will try for a seasonal flavour.

An early reminder that we do not usually have a meeting in January.

### **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 before the meeting as teams will 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 November quiz was hosted by Chris and Eileen Smith and had a record number of players – 27. A crowded time was had by all.

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

The recorder group meet 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 are gradually branching out into 3-part music. This needs increased skills in keeping in time with each other, as well as playing the majority of correct notes. A challenge, but great fun! We don't have a conductor.

With a small group of players, we can't guarantee enough players for 4-part music, but we are managing one part per player, so, as soon as we get 4 players together, we should manage 4-part harmony! Fingers crossed. Most of us have other responsibilities which prevent our getting to all the meetings.

I've not had the usual interesting description of the last meetings but the next meeting will be on December 7th at Joan's house

### **Supper Club – Contact Colin Ellis 01530 272592 - supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk**

This is a new group which aims to visit local pubs and restaurants for an evening meal. At the moment we aim to meet on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 pm for 7.30 (This is a fortnight away from the Lunch Group), but the date may change depending on what the Group decide. The intention is that we will jointly decide on venues and members will take it in turn to organise it.

Everyone is welcome, all we ask is that you sign the sheet by the display board at the monthly meeting prior to the supper, or contact Colin or Mike, by phone or by email, so we can book the relevant number of seats.

There may sometimes be a limit on numbers depending on the venue's ability to cater for larger numbers, in which case places will be offered strictly on a first come, first served basis. There may also need to be a cut-off date for bookings. This will be stated on the bookings list.

Our first outing will be to the Globe Inn at Snarestone on January 25th.

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

See the details of the various trips being planned listed above.

### **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.

#### **21st November. Ticknall and Calke Park**

It was an overcast day but with little wind and warm for the time of year when 18 people met at The Wheel in Ticknall for the walk around Calke. Having negotiated our lunch time meal we set off into Calke grounds. The path led up to the tramway track which we climbed down to and thence under the tunnel that leads to the Lime kilns. The path leads through the woods among the quarried area to the kilns now cleared of much debris. We continued past the kilns down to the track linking across to Staunton Harold reservoir. We took the branch back into Calke and then took the path down to the fishing lakes and up to the picnic area where we stopped for coffee and comfort break at eleven. After our break we crossed the grounds to the gate leading to the path down to the tramway at Dimminsdale. We followed this until the track in front of a few houses back into Calke grounds via a new path. This path we parted from to go into the woods and out onto the parking and playing area. From here it was a short walk back to the Wheel. We finished just before 1 pm with a recorded distance walked varying from 6.8 miles to 7.4 miles.

### **Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman 01530 222634**

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

#### **13th November. Packington**

Thirteen of us set out on the 13th from Packington - the omens were not set fair!

However, we all returned safely after a gently undulating six mile walk through the Leicestershire countryside. Making our way across the fields, we returned to civilisation (?) to pass underneath the A42 before traversing the golf course. Fortunately, we appeared to be ahead of the golfers and did not have to dodge any flying golf balls.

From there, our route took us through the woods and along the farm track to Oakthorpe. After the village, we traversed the fields to re-cross the A42 and pass through one side of Measham with a little road walking before turning onto a green lane. Turning off across a few rough pasture fields, we encountered a little mud but nothing too threatening before passing by Champneys Springs to follow the path to Normandy Wood. From there it was an easy walk across the field to re-enter Packington along the lane and regain our cars.

### **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.

#### **17th November. Walk from Conkers to Spring Cottage and Moira Furnace**

10 of us met under overcast skies at Conkers car park. We set off through the tunnel and across the tracks down into the meadow before and along the track to the path between Donisthorpe and Spring Cottage. We took the Spring Cottage route to the road, turned left along the pavement to the path to Youth Hostel. At this point the Sun came out as we followed the track now going to Donisthorpe but only as far as the path to Moira Furnace where we had coffee. After a long stop we returned following the canal to Conkers and back to our cars. The walk was 3 1/3 miles.