



Ashby de la Zouch



U3A

Newsletter October 2017

Interest Groups Timetable for November

Interest group	Mtg Date	Time	Venue
Arts & Crafts	Thu 23rd	2 pm	Shirley's house
Bird Watching	TBA	TBA	TBA
Bridge	Mon 6th Mon 13th	2 pm 7 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre Ivanhoe Social Club
Calligraphy	Tue 14th	10 am	Ann's house
Canasta	Thu 9th Thu 23rd	10 am 10 am	The Masseys' The Masseys'
Computer	Wed 1st Mon 20th	2 pm 2 pm	16 Winchester Way 16 Winchester Way
Digital Photos	Thu 2nd	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing & painting	Wed 15th	10 am	2 Woodcock Way, Ashby.
Family History	Wed 8th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 16th	2 pm	Packington Hall. Craft demonstration. Please bring some green foliage
History	Thu 23rd	2 pm	Packington Hall. The Grey Family. A talk by Peter Liddle
Industrial Heritage	Wed 22nd	TBA	Royal Armoury, Leeds.
Italian	Mon 6th	10 am	9 St Michael's Close
Literature	Tue 14th	1.30 pm	28 Willesley Gardens
Lunch	Thu 9th	12 for 12.30 pm	Unicorn Inn, Orton on the Hill
Medium Walks	Mon 13th	9.45 for 10 am	Meet at Packington car park on Measham Rd close to the church
Music Appreciation	Wed 1st	10 am	40 Willesley Gardens
Quiz	Wed 15th	2.30 pm	Bull and Lion, Packington
Recorder	Thu 2nd Thu 16th	10 am 10 am	Joan's house TBA
Short Walks	Fri 17th	10 am	Meet at Conkers main site near to the tunnel through to Canal side
Trips and Outings	Wed 21st March	2 pm	Theatre Royal Nottingham to see Warhorse. See Margaret or John Howlett for details.
Walking	Tue 7th Tue 21st	9:45 for 10 am 9:45 for 10 am	The Hurt Arms, Ambergate. DE56 2EJ Calke Park

Early December

Interest group	Mtg Date	Time	Venue
Bridge	Mon 4th	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 6th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photos	Thu 7th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Music Appreciation	Wed 6th	10 am	43 Cambrian Way
Recorder	Thu 7th	10 am	TBA
Walking	Tue 5th	9.45 for 10 am	TBA – leader required

*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

MONTHLY MEETINGS

2017	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
November	Sandra, Cynthia, Brenda and Trecia	David Oakley	Calligraphy, Drawing & Painting
December	Christmas event – The Committee	The Committee	No reports this month

Last meeting – 24th October – New Zealand slide show by Colin Ellis

Because of a late cancellation by our booked speaker due to a family bereavement, we were able to hear the remainder of Colin Ellis' New Zealand holiday account, backed up by an excellent slide-show, which he had started to give when Charles Hanson was delayed getting to us earlier this year.

After préising the first half of his story, Colin took us on a pictorial voyage across both Islands, staring with the North Island and Auckland and on to South Island and the spectacular mountains and fjords which make travel by plane almost essential.

The scenery is stunning, including a 50 mile long beach (Called 90 Mile Beach), and also mountains, lakes and great rivers. The Islands are volcanic but not active in the sense that they spew fountains of lava all the time, That said there are many thermal springs and they do suffer earthquakes. The history of the Islands is commemorated with Maori buildings of great beauty and War Canoes made from the huge Cowrie trees, now a protected species. Many of the historic buildings date from Captain Cook's time.

Colin showed us many beautiful photographs taken from the air as well as the ground. Some of the many large lakes are cruised by old steamships, and there are heritage railways and expeditions into the mountains.

The South Island was briefly the centre of a gold rush, leaving behind towns looking more like the Wild West of America that anywhere else. Fortunately they are now maintained as heritage centres. Our voyage terminated looking out into the Southern Ocean: next stop Argentina!

Oh, and there are plenty of sheep, although not much in evidence, as well as cattle, so our preconceptions were well catered for. A beautiful voyage across a dreamlike landscape, delivered with great aplomb. Many thanks Colin.

Next Monthly Meeting on 28th Nov at 2 pm: Speaker Mr Young will talk about the RNLI

GROUP REPORTS

Arts and Crafts – Leader Shirley Bunting 01530 415755

26th October

The group were planning to gather their teddy bears (possibly for a picnic) but ostensibly for a photo shoot, although I understand this has been delayed. We await the photographs.

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

30th October-Trip to Hicks Lodge

10 members met at the car park and the morning was bright, sunny and clear.

We made our way from the car park, left onto the main track and turned right shortly afterwards over a wooden footbridge and along a path beside the railway line.

As we made our way through the woodland the first sound we heard was a Jay which is a sharp screechy cry. Unfortunately no sighting at this time. Blue tits and Great Tits were spotted and a Great Spotted Woodpecker flew over. A Robin was heard singing and spotted on a tree eating a berry.

We made our way through an undiscovered path which led us around the site. On our way a Wren flew past on the edge of the field on the right hand side and shortly after a Jay was spotted on the path in front of us. A Kestrel flew over and a Green Woodpecker was heard and seen close by.

We arrived at the brand new Hide overlooking the big lake and the ranger had lent us the key to open up. We had a rest here and observed the bird life on the water.

2 Cormorants sat side by side. There were a number of Tufted Duck, 2 Great Crested Grebe and a Dab chick (little Grebe) close by. A Heron was seen on the bank and a number of Lapwing (Peewit) on a gravel bank. We were very pleased to see 2 Pochard Drakes and had a very good look at these through James's Scope which he kindly set up for us in the Hide.

Black Headed gulls were seen on the bank and Coots were plentiful with just 2 Moorhens.

On leaving the Hide we passed a number of Canada Geese "resting" in a field.

Finally on our approach to the Café a Buzzard flew overhead enjoying the thermals and the warm sunshine. The site is well worth a visit and the bird life is increasing every year.

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

10th October

The group were continuing to work on their "Solid block of text" and honing their calligraphy skills.

Canasta – Leaders Tom & Gillian Massey 01283 212380

Tom and Gill's canasta group has been running for a couple of months now and last week there were 5 members playing. The next meeting will be on Nov 9th and thereafter 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

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 October 6 turned up at No 2 but there were few problems to solve.

Dorothy needed help with formatting the place name cards for the Christmas Lunch. This required half the text to be upside down with respect to the other half, and this proved difficult using Open Office software. Mike and Steve solved the problem by placing one half of the text inside a text box and rotating it 180 degrees. Not immediately obvious!

Dave had a problem with unwanted Facebook Notifications. He wanted to delete them, but we couldn't find a way of doing this. So John and he just used the 'Hide' tool.

Colin worked on organising his Train film library.

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 October

Four gathered together on a bright, sunny morning and decided to go 'on location' to the Pot Kiln Cafe in Measham. When we got there the sun decided to go away.

We split up and wandered around for an hour to see what autumn had to offer, and then repaired to the cafe for coffee and cakes.

Then the sun came out, so one or two dashed outside for a few shots.

As we left we were accosted by some inquisitive ducks trying to get into the cafe. They took careful notice of the 'Mind the step' notice and hopped inside.

Drawing and Painting – Contact Chris Dogherty 01530 411148

18th October

Painting and Drawing was a "thin" harvest as only three of us were able to meet for our "harvest time" session. But, as ever, some good results to show for two good hours of relaxed concentration.

Next meeting; Wednesday November 15th 10am, at Megan's home. Theme: "getting ready for Christmas".

Family History – Leader John Dogherty 01530 411148

11th October Despite a showery day, we had five today.

Progress was made today on most fronts although some hard pounding was required.

John has pushed his line back to about 1800, although he is bothered by two marriages, seemingly between the same two people in the same church and town, but 3 years apart. He is also concerned that he has no corroborative evidence to support the links he has forged so far, and is understandably reluctant to rely too much on just one line of reasoning.

Eileen and John worked together on Eileen's antecedents, who are blessed with a name which should be easy to find but which appears and disappears like a will o' the wisp with the target family never all being in the same census together at the same time. And sometimes completely disappearing. Despite a marriage certificate which clearly shows both parents and their occupations the origins of the family are proving devilish hard to pin down. The hunt goes on.

Audrey is working on the story of her father. Without her laptop this necessitated pencil and paper, but it was interesting to see her approach to organising her thoughts. A model for us all.

Rosemary is making steady progress on her 'brick walls', but has not yet come to a conclusion.

John mentioned a Facebook page he has found that seems to offer a great deal of help from all quarters, and is worth visiting. It is Ancestry UK. Not related to the website Ancestry.co.uk.

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 October. Gardening Group Harvest Lunch

Our Harvest lunch was lovely, with lots of beautiful food and drink provided by our Gardeners. Everyone was busy chatting to old friends and welcoming new members. We had over thirty people in attendance. We began with notices for future events, followed by the meal itself. We had a leisurely meal then a quick clear away, thank you to everyone for helping in whatever capacity. Next we had our free raffle with some super plants as prizes. A good afternoon out on a very rainy day.

Note to members: Please ensure you confirm whether you are attending November's meeting at Packington Village Hall. If you do not confirm we will assume you are unable to attend and the craft equipment will not be ordered for you.

History – Leader Jane Harris 01530 838025

26th October The Historic Dockyard Chatham

45 present.

Tony Smith and Mike Stow presented an absorbing account of the Industrial Heritage Group's visit to the Historic Chatham Dockyards. The Group stayed overnight in order to make the most of their visit.

Tony rendered a thorough account of the fascinating history of the site, from the earliest times in the 1500's up to the present.

Originally a stores centre for the Royal Navy, Chatham served the docks at Deptford and Woolwich. By Henry VIII's time these latter had become inadequate and Chatham was selected to take over.

Through the centuries successive rebuilds and extensions took place to deal with the ever-increasing calls on the Navy.

Even so, until the Dutch Wars of the 17th century, ships were compelled to anchor out in the main stream of the Medway to be refurbished and re-victualled by lighter as the docks could not accommodate them.

Despite the fact that this facility was the major centre for the Royal Navy, it seems that it was not properly protected. During the Anglo-Dutch Wars, in 1667 just after the Great Fire, the Dutch managed to bypass all the security measures, including a great Chain across the river at Upnor Castle, and burn several ships at anchor and take some away. Samuel Pepys' account confirms what Tony reported, that there is a mystery as to how the Chain became broken.

He further reports that one of the ships taken, the Royal Navy's flagship Royal Charles, was taken out down river when the river was too low to sail her properly, by laying her over on her side: a feat that the Navy pilots did not consider possible. This it seems was the last (successful) hostile invasion by a foreign power.

Development continued with extra buildings and, eventually in the 19th century, a whole set of interconnected basins. The original open air dry docks were covered in to protect the ships (not the men!) and by the late 19th Century were at the peak of development.

Decommissioned in 1984 the whole site was sold off to an independent charity and redeveloped into a series of facilities, with housing, shops and the magnificent Centre the Group visited.

Tony showed us pictures of all the key buildings and facilities, explaining how much archaeology remains and has been uncovered, and the history of the key ships (and boats: submarines are boats, not ships Even the Germans concur in this!). He gave a very clear presentation of the various manufacturing processes and services these facilities provided, including rope making and iron working on a genuinely industrial scale.

At its height the docks employed 109, 000 men and covered 4000 acres, requiring a network of railways and a tram system.

There are many well-known phrases that we now use which originated in the Navy: You have me over a barrel; Not enough room to swing a cat; Toe the line; No slacking.

Industrial Heritage – Leader Mike Stow 01530 469152

18th October. Great Central Railway

Twelve of us gathered at Quorn for an outing to the Great Central Railway. This was a week earlier than our normal group outing, but the railway only operates mid-week during half-term at this time of year. We were able to admire some components for a new steam locomotive being constructed, although it does not yet look much like a complete one - other work is being undertaken elsewhere. Also in the yard was a visiting locomotive which was about to be taken to another railway. Two low-loaders were parked ready and, by lunchtime, it was loaded and on its way.

We adjourned to the platform, negotiated at the booking office for tickets and awaited the 1015 train from Loughborough. This was hauled by a small steam tank locomotive, which took us across the Swithland Reservoir viaduct to Leicester. Although there is not much to see here at present, ambitious plans are afoot to construct a large museum in conjunction with the National Railway Museum at York. This will enable much better viewing of a number of preserved locomotives, many of which will have some connection with the Great Central Railway.

Returning on the train to Loughborough, the station there is original and has been beautifully restored. We walked down to the yard to view the locomotives there. These included one, which formerly worked on the line, which had only finished restoration a fortnight previously, some 50 years after it had been withdrawn from normal service. Meanwhile, our engine had indulged in a drink from the original water tank to prepare for its next task.

We re-boarded our train for another trip to Leicester but this time four alighted at Quorn for lunch at the café there, whilst the remaining eight indulged in an all-day breakfast, cooked on the train and served to us. It turned out to be excellent value and, as can be seen from the photograph, was enjoyed by all. On the return journey, the satiated eight alighted at Quorn to meet up with the other four and to collect our cars for the journey home.

Italian Group – Leader Lynda Hall 01530 415922

The Group didn't meet again this month. The next meeting will be on Monday November 6th at 9 St Michael's Close.

Literature Group - Leader Sandra Harris 01530 416653

The Group met on 10th October to discuss "Sense & Sensibility" by Jane Austen. This month they will be discussing Claire Tomalin's biography "Jane Austen, A Life" as part of their Austen season.

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.

12th October The October meal was held at The Belper Arms, Newton Burgoland. Like many pubs in the area, this one has changed hands recently. Although the landlady didn't seem to know we were coming despite it being in their book, the food arrived in reasonable time and the service was pleasant. We all seemed to enjoy our meals and some managed to eat the lovely looking puddings.

Music Appreciation – Leader David Oakley 01530 563409

Wednesday 4th October.

This month our meeting was kindly hosted by Trish and Paul and together there were seven members present with apologies for absence from Sally, Nev and Neil.

Ann set us on our October musical journey with two pieces chosen just because she likes them. The first was 'Slow Boat to China' by Bette Midler, a duet with Barry Manilow from her 'Rosemary Clooney Songbook' album. This was followed up by Matt Monrow's song 'Portrait of my Love', a singer she never tires of.

Dorothy had chosen part of the soundtrack from the film 'Titanic', composed by James Horner. Dorothy was impressed how the composer had included a number of elements from the film story into the music mood.

Lesley took us into Jeff Wayne's musical version of 'The War of the Worlds', apparently a composition written with the help of David Essex. The first track was a cover version of 'Forever Autumn' by Gary Barlow, and the second was 'Spirit of Man' performed by Joss Stone and Maverick Sabre.

Paul had opted for tracks from the 'Year of the Cat' album by Al Stewart. First off was 'On the Border' followed by 'Year of the Cat', tracks it seems we remembered when they were played, and certainly enjoyed.

Mike had brought along the 'Buena Vista Social Club' album, the ensemble of elderly Cuban musicians brought together in 1996. The album had been produced by Ry Cooder and a subsequent successful documentary film about them gave them international success. The chosen tracks were 'Dos Gardenias' and 'Murmullo'.

David wanted to record the recent death of the singer Barbara Cook so had chosen two songs by her from two Broadway productions. The first was 'Ice Cream' from the musical 'She Loves Me' and the second was 'Losing my Mind' from the concert of 'Follies' given in 1989.

Lastly Trish had selected Elgar's 'Nimrod' and 'Do Sanco Samba' from the 'Latin Jazz' album with various artists and finally from the same album 'Concerto de Aranjuez' performed by Jim Hall, who none of us knew.

Another excellent morning of music selection, and it's always good to hear something new or a piece we have forgotten about.

The group discussed the way music might be selected in future. It was suggested that perhaps our two hours could be divided into larger segments of half an hour or more per member, which would mean not all members would have their choice played each month. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

Neil has very kindly offered to host the November meeting which will be at 10 am on Wednesday 1st November at 40 Willesley Gardens.

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 October quiz was back in the hands of Malcolm but the reins will be passed to Chris and Eileen Smith to run the November meeting.

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.

19th October

We had a trio this morning, so we were able to play a different range of music.

We played some from Abracadabra Bk 5 in 3 parts:

When a Knight Won his Spurs,
Day Oh
You are my sunshine

We played "All in a Garden Green" for descant and treble

We tried some new music which I emailed to the group earlier: another version of "All in a Garden Green" and "Drive the Cold Winter Away", arranged in 4 parts (D1, D2,Tr,Ten) for the U3A. We omitted the D2 part! We did well with the sight-reading, but hope to practise for next time! The middle section is quite different from the ends, and was unfamiliar.

I have some new 4-part music! Lots of fun!

Next meeting 2nd November, here. I hope you can make it.

Trips and Outings Group - Contact Margaret Howlett 01530 461774

There were no trips this month, however they are planning trips to see Warhorse at Theatre Royal, Nottingham on 21st March 2018 and a coach trip to Bristol on 24th May.

See the website or contact Margaret for further details.

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.

17th October. Rosliston

A keen party of 16 turned up at the Bulls Head, Rosliston, to assist walk leader Mike Gibson overcome the trauma of his 70th birthday, alleviated also by the prospect of a fine, clear, sunny day, if a little breezy due to the remnants of Hurricane Ophelia. From the village, we steamed through the Rosliston Forestry Centre plantation to the edge of Rosliston Wood, then south-east along an intermittently muddy track (which would have been a lot muddier if the previous few weeks had not been fairly dry!) to join a path to Caldwell. Through Caldwell and on from Manor Farm across the fields to the edge of Linton, we then headed south through Long Close Wood and Top Wood, passing the old Netherseal Colliery railway embankment, to Park Farm. Turning south-westerly past The Ashes along a woodland track to the end of Coal Pit Lane, we picked up a path through fields close to Church Flatts Farm (the furthest point from the sea in the UK, according to the Ordnance Survey) and on through Coton Wood to Coton-in-the-Elms. After strolling through the village, we continued north along a track and then a footpath, via Brookside Wood, Betts Wood and Daffodil Wood, back to Rosliston and the Bulls Head, a total of 6.9 miles, for a deserved drink and pub lunch.

Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman 01530 222634

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

9th October. Osgathorpe

We started from Osgathorpe church on a dull but mild morning heading from the main street between two houses and soon into fields where we came upon three pigs who greeted us with various squeaks and grunts, probably after food. We crossed over the Hathern road and walked a short way along a lane before heading towards the lofty spire of Belton church via a couple of muddy gates. On reaching the village we continued down the main street before re crossing the Hathern road heading towards Low Woods with a field containing a dozen cattle, who stood and studied us as we passed. On reaching a field of maize with no obvious path through it, we set off keeping an eye on a large tree opposite. After what seemed ages we emerged none the worse for wear near to the stile on the other side. Our coffee stop was taken at the top of the next field with views of Belton and the surrounding countryside. Refreshed we continued along the lane then turned right and via a couple more fields before crossing Gracedieu Lane and one more field, and then back into Church Lane to our start point.

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 October Short walk around Staunton Harold

This month Cynthia organised and led a short walk around Staunton Harold. Next month's will be on the 17th November from Conkers main site close to the tunnel through to the other side

Your Committee

Tony Smith	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 831822
Colin Ellis	Treasurer	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 272592
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Dorothy Chapman	Membership Secretary	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413042
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