



# Ashby U3A



## Newsletter February 2019

### A REMINDER ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your membership renewal is due on 1st April. The fee this year is £16.50, or £13.00 if you are the 2nd member at one address or a fully paid up member at another U3A.

Renewal forms are downloadable by clicking on the "Information" tab on the website or from the Membership Sec., Iain Banns. Please don't just send money, we need the completed the form to comply with Data Protection legislation.

### Interest Groups Timetable for March

Date	Time	Group	Venue or Meeting point
Mon 4th	2-4 pm	Bridge	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Tue 5th	9:45 for 10:00 start	Walking	The Lathkil Hotel, Over Haddon, Nr Bakewell DE45 1JE
Wed 6th	10:00 am	Music Appreciation	Nev's at 26 Homecroft Drive, Packington, LE65 1WG
Wed 6th	2:00 pm	Computer	16 Winchester Way
Thu 7th	10:00 am	Recorder	Joan's house
Thu 7th	10:00 am	Digital Photography	16 Winchester Way. Workshop - "Taking your camera off Auto"
Mon 11th	9.45 for 10 am start	Medium Walks	Ibstock church
Mon 11th	7-9 pm	Bridge	Ivanhoe Social Club
Tue 12th	10:00 am	Calligraphy	At Megan's A formal approach to precise layout.
Tue 12th	1:30 pm	Literature	28 Willesley Gardens
Wed 13th	2:00 pm	Family History	2 Marlborough Way
Thu 14th	12 for 12.30 pm	Lunch	Bull's Head, Thringstone
Fri 15th	10:00 am	Short Walks	Meet at Oakthorpe Picnic site off Willesley Road just before you reach Donisthorpe
Mon 18th	2:00 pm	Computer	16 Winchester Way
Mon 18th	2-4 pm	Bridge	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Tue 19th	Concert starts at 7 pm	Trips and Outings	Theatre Royal Nottingham "The Magic Flute". This is now sold out.
Tue 19th	TBA	Walking	TBA
Wed 20th	2:30 pm	Quiz	Bull and Lion, Packington
Thu 21st	2:00 pm	Gardening	Packington Village Hall "Birds in the Garden" by David Tidswell. £3 pp
Mon 25th	9:30 am	Italian	Lynda's house
Mon 25th	7-9 pm	Bridge	Ivanhoe Social Club
Wed 27th	TBA	Industrial Heritage	Amazon Fulfilment Centre, Rugeley
Thu 28th	2:00 pm	History	Packington Hall. Bill Devitt – "The Orient Express"
Thu 28th	7 for 7.30 pm	Supper Club	The Bull's Head, Wilson

## **Early April**

Date	Time	Group	Venue or Meeting point
Mon 1st	2-4 pm	Bridge	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Tue 2nd	TBA	Walking	TBA
Wed 3rd	10:00 am	Music Appreciation	TBA
Thu 4th	9:45 am	Digital Photography	The Attenborough Wildlife Centre. Meet at Winchester Way for Car share

\*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)

## **Tea Rota etc. for the monthly meetings**

Month	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
March	John Howlett, Joyce Ottey, Margaret Berry, Mary Gough	TBA	Computing and Digital Photography
April	Jane Barnett, Sheila Hampson Marian Shuttlewood, June Meir,	TBA	Drawing & Painting and Family History

## **MONTHLY MEETING** - Tuesday 26th February

Two talks today, the first by William J French, a butler to royalty and the second by Sharleen Taylor of the Royal Voluntary Service.

William came dressed to impress in his butlers uniform looking very smart and his talk didn't disappoint.

William started his career by getting his brother to forge his mother's signature to be able to join the Navy at 15½. After basic training he went to HMS Chatham to train as a chef. On completion of his chef's training he realised that he would prefer to be a steward and so joined a 16 week course coming out as the number 1 steward on the course.

His first posting was not to sea but to Watford at RAF Northwood, which is a deep bunker used as NATO HQ where he was the personal valet to Admiral Sandy Woodward.

Then in 1982 the Falklands war started and he was sent off to do basic gunnery training and First Aid before being shipped out there on HMS Battleaxe. While he was there he was airlifted onto the stricken HMS Galahad to help the injured and badly burnt crew members. One of those he helped was Simon Weston. William, still only 17½, said that he grew up very quickly.

Returning to RAF Northwood after the Falklands, he had a call to go for an interview for the Royal Yacht Britannia, for which he was successful and started the very next day.

It was, and still is, a floating palace, gleaming everywhere, including the engine room which was polished every day and it was still steered by a wooden ship's wheel. All navy personal wore white plimsolls so as not to mark the decks or make a noise.

After 48 hours on board he was told the ship was off for 9 months to China where the Queen and the Duke would be joining them, but on the way the Yacht was diverted to Aden to assist with the evacuation of British and other civilians caught up in a civil war. Over 1000 people were evacuated from the beach. On arriving at Singapore the Queen joined the ship and personally served all the crew with their rum ration which had to be downed in one in front of her. William was now the Queen's breakfast steward, and enjoyed it, as he felt it was like talking to your gran! She is a nice, witty, down to earth lady. The Royals were on board for a fortnight.

Then the Yacht was off to Brunei with the Prince and Princess of Wales, to meet the Sultan of Brunei. where his gift to them was an Aston Martin. to be brought back to UK in one of the two garages on board the ship, thereby displacing the crew's ration of beer!

Here William broke with protocol and asked Diana if he could take a photograph of her, she obliged. He showed us the framed photo, signed by her and latterly by Princes William & Harry.

He also went to Cowes week, and up to Scotland for the Royal Family's holidays where everyone would be relaxed and some of the Royals came down to the ship's bar of an evening.

Having become married during his time on the yacht, his new wife wanted him home so he left the Navy and went as a butler to Lord Rothschild. He then returned to Royal duties at Kensington Palace with Princess Diana. After her untimely death he worked for Lord Rothermere and the eccentric Lord Brockett.

He worked then for Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise and their two adopted children. When the couple split he stayed on with Nicole travelling with her to film sets and preparing her for red carpet do's which is where he regaled us with a story about chicken fillets!!!

William was with her for 7 years before she moved to the US. He then worked as a roving butler for Paramount Pictures looking after A list actors like Robert Redford and Daniel Craig, he even had a small part in the new Mary Poppins film.

He finished his very entertaining and humorous talk by showing us the art of napkin folding, also how to put your favourite perfume into the top filter of your vacuum to make your house smell wonderful.

Next we had a short talk from Sharleen Taylor of the RVS. Sharleen gave us a brief history of how it was formed in 1938 as the Woman's Voluntary Service for Air Raid Protection. This became shortened to WVS and after the war received its Royal tag to become the WRVS.

Recently its has become the Royal Voluntary Service now that it is open to men too!

Royal Voluntary Service is a national charity built on local volunteering, giving support to people who need it in our hospitals and communities.

Sharleen brought a volunteer with her, who explained some of their duties and how she checks at the hospitals in Coalville and Loughborough to see who is about to return home, and then asks them if they need anyone to visit them. Having confirmed that they do, she then makes an appointment to visit, which can be weekly for up to 6 weeks.

They are looking for volunteers, so if you are interested and feel that you could help, call 01162667706 or visit [royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) or email [leicsrutlandhub@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:leicsrutlandhub@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

### **Next Monthly Meeting on Tue 26th March at 2 pm**

Pat and Pete Fitzpatrick will give a talk on the Taj Mahal

## **GROUP REPORTS**

### **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 venues. They usually 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.

We are back to the usual schedule now that refurbishment at Ivanhoe has been completed.

March 4th will be at Hood Park Leisure Centre at 2pm, and March 11th will be the first time back at Ivanhoe Social Club at 7pm

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**

#### February 12th

Five members met at Diane's house and practised using dip pens and ink in the font of our own choice.

One member was using gouache instead of ink and some of us experimented with that. We looked at the advantages of gouache and ink.

We discussed the possibility of having a teacher, Jane Lappage, visit the group in the future and Diane said she would investigate further.

### **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. If you have a computer problem, come along and we'll see if we can fix it.

#### 18th February

Mike and Colin worked with John to install a new hard drive in his laptop using an adapted optical drive caddy. After a false start or two all went smoothly, and the laptop now has 800 GB of storage as compared with 50GB before. Mike showed how the Documents folder can be moved to the new drive in such a way that that Windows knows where it is.

This has several advantages:

1. The data can be stored on the large drive and the programmes on the small one
2. The large drive can be taken out very easily as a security/backup method.
3. If wanted the process can be repeated for additional hard drives.
4. The old DVD drive can still be used when new programmes etc need to be added to the small drive.

John H worked with Carolyn on solving a niggling problem with backing up. Not entirely solved, but a way forward was found and this will be pursued.

### **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.

## 7th February

Only four met today, but we made the best of it, discussing a schedule of meetings and activities for the coming months. We discussed visiting National Trust and English Heritage locations such as Ashby Castle, Staunton Harold, Melbourne, Clay Mills Pumping Station, Lichfield Cathedral, EM Aeropark, Holme Pierrepont National Watersports Centre, Attenborough Centre for Wildlife and some railway and industrial locations.

We also looked at manual settings for both sophisticated and simpler cameras and of getting Steve to hold a Master Class series of "How to's".

Our programme for the next few months is:

March: A workshop on using the manual settings on your camera. Anyone interested in learning a bit more about taking better photos with their camera is welcome to come along.

April: The Attenborough Centre for Wildlife

May: Church Interiors, location TBD.

June: The National Watersport Centre for white water rafting (non-participation!)

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

### 20th February

Although the weather is unseasonably mild, the balance was redressed by the group's efforts to capture winter scenes. Brrrrrrr.

Next month: A planned trip to Derby Museum and Art gallery to view the precious and rarely seen Leonardo da Vinci drawings from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth's collection, currently on tour throughout the UK.

Travel and timing details to be arranged.

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

### 13th February

For our second meeting after the New Year we had a great turnout of six, including a new recruit: Diane. Welcome, Diane!

Diane is just starting out, but has already got some paper records on the go. She has an Ancestry account so we got her started on that, transcribing her established information.

Leslie and Rosemary are working hard on more difficult areas, and we had to exercise our eyes and brains on deciphering some hard to read Census occupations.

Keith is still building his main interactive Tree from a fixed tree supplied by a cousin: no sign of a .gedcom from the cousin yet, unfortunately!

Audrey is still working on her story.

John H is faced with three John's in two years in the 1850's to the same parents. There seems no way to distinguish between them, although it is possible one died early and a new baby took his name later. But three entries takes some explaining.

He also worked to try and find some of John D's earliest Irish ancestors. Not too much luck there, although one possible turned up. He may be too young, though.

A very good session all round. Our next meeting will be on 13th March at 2.00 pm

## **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.

### **21st February**

A pre-visit talk on Hidcote Manor Gardens

For the February meeting we had a talk on the history of Hidcote Manor and how the gardens have evolved, given by Derick who has been a guide there for the last 15 years. It was very informative with lots of archive pictures starting from the early 1900s and when it was taken over by the National Trust in the mid 1940s.

We shall be visiting the Gardens in May.

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

### **28th February - Sandra Moore "Loving Memories"**

35 members turned out to witness a memorable performance by the long dead Elizabeth, resident of Belgrave cemetery in Leicester.

One of about 15,000 residents, Elizabeth expounded on the life and times of some of her most famous and/or interesting neighbours. The cemetery was opened for business in 1881 to relieve pressure on local churchyards resulting from the explosive growth of the cities in the Industrial Revolution.

Before taking up residence in 1922, Elizabeth had worked for 25 years as a head teacher at the Belgrave Church School, where around 300 children began their journey into life. Her neighbours numbered active members of the Temperance Society, the Chief Constable of Leicestershire, a Pharmacist renowned for his yellow powder (the formula for which he guards to this day), a lady who was formerly the oldest resident at 103 years, a notable horse breeder and shoe-salesman, who was transported thither in full glass carriage and 4 black horse panoply. Many more still await recognition.

Notable features of the Cemetery are a splendid Celtic Cross, statues displaying the "Morton Toe" (see note below) and, until Neville Bray (yes, OUR Nev Bray!) and his friends demolished them in favour of a brick toilet block, two splendid Chapels: one Church of England and one non-Conformist. The layout of the Cemetery clearly shows how the sheep were separated from the goats.

The Residence is a very Family Friendly place, with many plots containing whole families. The one, I think we will all remember, was for one Joseph Cave, who had his grave dug before he had qualified, ensuring it was brick-lined for comfort. He supervised the construction and, on completion, jumped down into it and sang the song "Poor Old Joe" which Elizabeth managed to get all of us to perform!

"Elizabeth" was in fact Sandra Moore, ably helped by her "apprentice". She dressed in full Victorian black "Widow's Weeds" and ensured we all behaved ourselves, favouring more than one of us with her baleful glare and admonishments to "Sit up straight and pay attention".

A splendid tour de force and a fascinating look at the lives and times of the occupants of a notable local cemetery.

Note: Morton's toe is the condition of a shortened first metatarsal in relation to the second metatarsal. It is a type of brachymetatarsia. So now you know!

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

### **23rd February – Claymills Victorian Pumping Station**

There were 22 members and 2 guests for our visit to the Claymills Victorian Pumping Station on its first 'steaming' day of the year.

After tea or coffee at the Stoker's Rest cafe, we were split into 2 groups for our guided tour. Our group was led by Steve, the other group by Mike, both very experienced and knowledgeable, they knew every nut and bolt on the site, Steve having been a volunteer for 25 years! They gave lots of technical detail on sizes, weights and powers and this can also be found on their excellent web-site (<http://claymills.org.uk/index.html>).

The first stop was the Dynamo House, with its ancient looking exposed 'blade' type breakers for switching on the DC circuits which are far too dangerous for modern use. Onto the workshop, built in 1900 and restored from a ruinous state. All the machines are still steam-driven via belts and pulleys, another health and safety nightmare, but an efficient use of the available steam and safe if you keep your hands away from moving parts. It also had a false floor covering a pit to allow work on traction engines. Up next was the forge, complete with a working blacksmith hammering away to make 4 large nails. ...no mass production here. Once outside, we stood in awe of the 35m chimney, belching smoke from the boilers, and were told the top 10m had to be replaced after the debris had been cleared by hand through a tiny soot door at the base. Also, outside was a sewer-cleaning steam engine being run for the very first time since restoration. One of the enthusiastic machine operators reminded the group that 2019 marked the 200th anniversary of the death of James Watt, and the 250th anniversary of his invention of the separate condenser...as if we could forget!

It was then time for the star attraction, the newly restored steam driven beam engine, Engine B. After 6 years of toil, the restoration engineer has now promised to get the last and very rusty Engine A, back to working order. Unfortunately, problems with the boiler prevented this engine running while we were there, but its gleaming polished brass and wood fittings left us in no doubt it was a working masterpiece. So it was onto the boiler house where we saw coal from Russia or Columbia shovelled by hand into the mechanical stokers feeding the boiler, the bright red glow through the fire door lighting up the gloom. They also burn scrap wood to warm up the boilers to keep the temperature and the costs down but it all means more manual slog. With 5 boilers and with Engine A restored our guide said it would be the first site to have the capability to run all 4 engines at the same time. It also boasts having 32 working original ancillary steam driven engines, thanks to careful storage and cataloguing by the station's last Chief Engineer.

The finale was seeing Engine D in full operation and later, Engine C being started, a complex synchronised action requiring manual movement of the steam valves. The beams are unusual for their riveted box construction and the Watt speed governors are works of engineering art. Lastly, we went into the only bathroom on site, a tiny windowless room below ground level. The decor here, unaffected by daylight, was key to the redecoration of the engine halls back to their original colour scheme. Use of the bath was a special treat but to get hot water required careful control of steam flow directly into the bath water!

There are about 250 volunteers and about 5000 visitors per year. The visit gave an insight into the workings of these magnificent engines, the lives of those who worked there and the dedication of the volunteers who have restored and managed the site.

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

25th February

We had our usual 4 today.

Lynda started us off with a bit of listening, matched to a street view which was presented in two versions. Our task was to match the spoken words to the correct version and spot the deliberate mistake, as well.

Next we went on to constructing an invitation to a friend to an event, by telephone.

Finally we had to sort out the participants in an annual display of high diving from a bridge over the Tiber in Rome. A little sentence describing them, their ages and the order in which they dove.

The next meeting will be on Monday the 25th March at 9.30 am, at Lynda's, but we will be looking at the viability of changing to Thursdays.

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

Last month the group read and discussed "Inés of my soul" by Isabel Allende and next month will be reading "The Shepherd's Hut" by Tim Winton

### **Luncheon Group – Leaders Colin & Sharon Woodland 01530 413867**

14th February

Yes we met at The White Hart in Ashby on Valentine's Day! We were in the back room of the pub and Colin & Sharon decorated it with heart-shaped red balloons and heart-shaped glitter on the table. Sharon also provided us all with chocolates and heart-shaped homemade cookies wrapped in red paper. We were all watching to see who would pair up for the two-for-one lunch offers but there were no romantic alliances! Nonetheless we all had a great time and the pub made us welcome and provided lovely food. Well done to Colin and Sharon for all the effort.

We next meet at the Bull's Head in Thringstone on the 14th of March.

All U3A members are welcome to join us, just sign up at the Monthly meeting, email [luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk) or call 01530 513867 to book a place.

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

6th February

The group's first gathering of the year was at Neil's house where we welcomed two new members, Adrian and Bob.

Brenda kicked off the year with a Scottish jazz artist unknown to the rest of us, Carol Kidd, singing "Nice work if you can get it" and with her love of dancing, followed it up with "Putting on the Ritz" by Fred Astaire.

Dorothy gave us two tracks by Enya; "Book of Days" and "Evacuee", the first sung in Gaelic and the second in English, whilst our first newcomer, Bob, continued the female artist theme with another singer unknown to the rest of us; a French woman called Zaz with "Paris sera toujours Paris". He followed with yet another woman, the somewhat better known Kate Bush and "Moments of Pleasure".

Nev changed tempo with "One Hand, One Heart" from the original Broadway recording of "West Side Story" with Larry Kert as Tony and Carol Lawrence as Maria. Another change of tempo and mood gave us Joe Brown's comic "I Like Bananas" from his ukulele album.

Our second newcomer, Adrian, gave us a rousing version of "Stars and Stripes Forever" played by the Washington National Symphony Orchestra led by Rostropovich on his first return to Moscow. The local Muscovites would probably have never heard it before. Then another change of direction; as it was the 60th anniversary of Buddy Holly's death, he gave us Buddy's "Rave On".

Sallie, in a quieter mood, gave us the allegro from Vivaldi's "Winter" from the four seasons and then the incomparable Ella Fitzgerald's "Someone to Watch Over Me".

Mike presented two sides of guitarist Bonnie Raitt, firstly "Give it up", a blues track which morphs into New Orleans trad style, followed by the more melodic ballad "Love has No Pride".

Neil also had picked up on the Buddy Holly anniversary and so offered Buddy's "Brown Eyed Handsome Man" along with the Beatles' version of "Words of Love", written by Buddy.

As we had some time in hand, some of us offered an extra track and so we started with Nev's choice of an acapella version of "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" by Manhattan Transfer, a group many of us had forgotten about. Neil, having played us a long spoken track by Arlo Guthrie at our November meeting, was keen to let us hear him sing (Arlo, that is) so gave us "City of New Orleans", first recorded by Arlo but more famously sung by Willie Nelson.

Bob closed proceedings with another track by Zaz, the more well known "I love Paris (in the Springtime)"

Another session with much variety which somehow blended together to give an excellent selection of music. We next meet at Nev's house at 26 Homecroft Drive, Packington on March 6th.

### **Quiz group - Leader Malcolm Bird 01530 563872**

The group meet at the Bull and Lion, Packington. The Start time is 2.30pm. You do not need to arrange a team before the meeting as teams will be drawn by lots 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.

#### **20th February**

Unfortunately the February quiz had to be cancelled at short notice due to the sudden departure of the pub manager. However a new manager, Debbie, has been appointed, and although the pub is not currently open at lunchtimes owing to the lack of a chef, it seems Debbie will open up especially for us. If you are attending, can you please not arrive before 2.15pm as the pub will not be open.

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

The recorder group is a small but enthusiastic group. However more players in our group would definitely be a welcome addition.

#### **20th February**

Marion and Barbara did their own thing on Thursday this week as Joan was away. Next month, we should have our usual meeting at Joan's house on 7th March.

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

This group visits local pubs and restaurants for an evening meal. We usually meet on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 for 7.30 pm.

If you would like to join in us, please sign up at the monthly meeting or contact Colin, by phone or by email, so we can book the relevant number of seats. If you need transport please see Colin and we will try to arrange for some car-sharing.

## 28th February – The Globe Inn, Snarestone

For our first proper outing this year, having stepped aside to accommodate last month's excellent Burns Supper, we returned to the Globe Inn, the venue of our first Supper Club meeting.

12 of us sat down in the upstairs room around one big nicely decorated table. Drinks were served, orders taken and the conversation flowed. The starters duly arrived for those who'd ordered them and half the table fell silent as they tucked in. When the mains arrived, the whole table was quiet. For a while anyway! The desserts provoked oo's and ah's as each lovely looking plate arrived.

Just as last year the food was excellent, the service very good and the conversation and company was great. An altogether great evening. Next month on the 28th March will see us at the Bull's Head in Wilson hopefully for an equally good time.

## **Trips Group – Contact John or Margaret Howlett 01530 461774**

### 12th February - "Blood Brothers"

19 members travelled to the Theatre Royal Nottingham to see Willy Russell's "Blood Brothers". Apparently everyone greatly enjoyed the iconic musical.

### **19th March - "The Magic Flute" at Theatre Royal Nottingham**

All the un-sold tickets for this trip have been returned and the theatre is now sold out. Ticket holders are reminded that this show starts earlier than usual at 7pm. Car-sharing arrangements have all been made.

### **27th May – "A concert of Russian music" at Birmingham Symphony Hall**

22 people have signed up for this. Anyone else wishing to go should contact Colin Ellis (01530 272592) asap. Tickets are £31.80 and must be paid for by the monthly meeting on March 26th at the very latest. Colin will be arranging car-sharing and a meal before the concert. Details to follow.

## **WALKS**

The walk leaders 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.

### 19th February. Swarkestone, Stanton and Kings Newton led by Paul

Twenty three walkers set off from the Crewe and Harpur pub in Swarkestone, on a bright and fresh morning, for a 7 mile walk around the south side of the Trent Valley. After pre-ordering lunch, we set off in single file over a narrow footpath on Swarkestone Bridge and turned off onto the Ingleby road.

Once over a stile onto the floodplain of the Trent we had a good view of the bridge structure. The various modifications and strengthening work since the original build in the 13th century were evident. Paul gave a short history of the bridge and its current Grade 1 Listed and Scheduled Ancient Monument status. Then we walked up a slope into Stanton by Bridge with a view over the Trent valley to the north. After crossing the busy A514 we followed Wards Lane, the route of the original road to Kings Newton, and stopped at Holy Well, an ancient watering hole, for mid-walk refreshments.

We then entered the picturesque hamlet of Kings Newton going through the cemetery and a footpath to get back to the road. We followed a footpath alongside Kings Newton Hall down to the Cloud Trail, the route of a disused railway on a high embankment. At Sarson's Bridge we went west along the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath before following a footpath back to Swarkestone. We stopped at Swarkestone Pavilion to gather up the group and hear a brief history of this Grade 1 Listed building. It was then only a short stroll over fields back to the Crewe and Harpur for a well-earned meal and a drink. 6.9miles.

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

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

#### **11th February – Staunton Harold, Lount and Dimminsdale led by Jane**

On a bright, sunny February morning 8 walkers set off on this month's medium walk. We started from the car park at the tail end of Staunton Harold reservoir, up the hill and down to Staunton Harold, stopping to admire the stunning view of the house. It was then down the driveway, catching sight of our first snowdrops before taking the footpath to Lount, out to the Nottingham Road at the Ferrers Arms, and after negotiating muddy fields the route then took us back through Lount Wood on solid paths finishing up at the Nursery. From there it was a short walk down the drive to enter Dimminsdale Nature Reserve where we found our snowdrops in South West corner of the reserve. They were stunning especially as the sun was shining on them. These snowdrops seem to be better each year. We continued through the reserve to exit just a short walk from the car park.

Total mileage 5.

### **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.

#### **15th February - Staunton Harold led by John H**

10 walkers met at Staunton Harold for the February short walk. The weather was glorious and so we set off along the road to Lount taking the track when the road turned left. The track was muddy frozen to start with but soon turned to real mud and puddles. At the Lount gates there was a lot of snowdrops, not on the scale of Dimminsdale, but more than enough to satisfy the walkers. We returned to the house via the road, again going straight on at the gate where the road turned left. We crossed the field to the main gate where we stopped for a quick photo in the sunshine before going to the cafe in the stable yard.

## **Your Committee**

Tony Smith	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 831822
Colin Ellis	Treasurer	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 272592
Anne Donegan	Business Secretary	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01283 760348
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