



Newsletter December 2019

Interest Groups Timetable for January 2020

Date	Time	Group	Venue or Meeting point
Mon 6th	2 pm	Bridge	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Tue 7th	9:45 for 10 am start	Walking	Waterside Cafe, Alvaston Park, Derby DE24 8FD
Wed 8th	10 am	Music Appreciation	At Nev's
Wed 8th	2 pm	Family History	2 Marlborough Way
Thu 9th	10 am	Arts and Crafts	2 Marlborough Way. Making patchwork quilts
Thu 9th	12 for 12.30 pm	Lunch	Angel Inn, Swadlincote, DE11 8LF
Thu 9th	1:45 pm	Recorder	Joan's house
Mon 13th	9.45 for 10 am start	Medium Walks	Meet at the Ferrers, Lount
Mon 13th	7 pm	Bridge	Ivanhoe Social Club
Tue 14th	1:30 pm	Literature	28 Willesley Gardens
Wed 15th	10 am	Drawing and painting	Meet at Megan's house. Suggested theme: Something beginning with J
Wed 15th	2:30 pm	Quiz	Function Room at the Beeches.
Thu 16th	12.30 for 1 pm	Calligraphy	The Angel, Church St, Swadlincote For our New Year meal. (Note it's a Thursday not Tuesday)
Thu 16th	2 pm	Gardening	Packington Village Hall Talk by Francesca Sinclair on Garden Design. £3 entry fee.
Fri 17th	10 am	Short Walks	Meet at Sarah's wood post code DE12 6GA off Rawdon Road
Mon 20th	2 pm	Bridge	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Mon 20th	2 pm	Computer	16 Winchester Way
Tue 21st	9:45 for 10 am start	Walking	
Wed 22nd	9:30 am	Industrial Heritage	Meet at Featherbed Lane to car share to RAF Cosford
Thu 23rd	1:45 pm	Recorder	Joan's house
Thu 23rd	2 pm	History	Packington Hall Celia Sanger - Suffragettes
Fri 24th	7 for 7.30 pm	Social Events	Willesley Park Golf Club Burns Supper, £27pp.
Mon 27th	1 pm	Curling	Charles Booth Centre, The Green, Thringstone
Mon 27th	7 pm	Bridge	Ivanhoe Social Club

Early February

Date	Time	Group	Venue or Meeting point
Mon 3rd	1 pm	Curling	Charles Booth Centre, The Green, Thringstone
Mon 3rd	2 pm	Bridge	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Tue 4th	9:45 for 10 am start	Walking	Conkers Discovery Centre
Thu 6th	10 am	Digital Photography	16 Winchester Way
Thu 6th	1:45 pm	Recorder	Joan's house

*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

Tea Rota etc. for the monthly meetings

Month	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
Jan	TBA	TBA	Bridge & Calligraphy
Feb	TBA	TBA	Computers & Curling

NOTICES

BURNS SUPPER

We are holding a Burns Supper at Willesley Park Golf Club on Friday 24th January at 7 for 7.30 pm.

There will be the usual fayre of Soup, Haggis Neeps & Tatties, Cranachan. There will be the traditional Piping in of the Haggis and the Address to the Haggis will be performed by Bill Wilson.

Tickets at £27 inc. wine and a wee dram are still available and will be on sale at the monthly meetings or contact Bill or Avril Wilson on 01530 413182.

WELFARE

Estelle Sandles is an experienced welfare officer and is willing to provide support and information. If you or another member would welcome the support of our Welfare to find the help you need, email welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk or ring Estelle on **01530 459858**

Or there is THE SILVER LINE - www.thesilverline.org.uk
The free, 24 hour, confidential helpline for older people.
0800 4 70 80 90 Open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

CURLING

The Curling group will be up and running with our taster session on Monday 27th Jan. from 1 to 3pm at the Charles Booth Centre, The Green, Thringstone.

The following 1st & 3rd Mondays fall as follows: Feb 3/17, Mar 2/16, Apr 6/20, May 4/18 (Mayday holiday falls on Friday the 8th in 2020), Just in time for your new diaries! Reminders will be sent to those who have signed up.

New members always warmly welcomed for a fun filled session so send your name in to Estelle on 01530 459858/07919 986456 or email sandyoz42_@hotmail.com

LIFTS TO MEETINGS

Sometimes the winter months are a difficult time for some members to get to monthly meetings. If this is you, and you would welcome a lift, just contact any committee member (details on the last page) and we can arrange someone to collect you.

Last Month's Meeting - 10th December "Ayres & Graces" with Nick Gravestock

For our Christmas meeting we were entertained with an introduction into the music, songs and poems of the 16th century.

The musician was Nick Gravestock, who was dressed in the costume of the period which started as high fashion in Venice in the early 1500s and gradually crossed Europe to become fashionable in the UK some years later.

Nick demonstrated the Theorbo lute which he was to play first, it has an extended neck with extra base strings. It was developed to play the music of Monteverdi, and is mainly used to accompany singers and not as a solo instrument. Nick demonstrated its sound with an original arrangement of a traditional piece.

He then moved on to one of his more traditional lutes and played a solo piece "Gaytas" which means bagpipes, which the sound is said to represent.

Nick told us of how Christmas was celebrated in the 1500's. They had 2 weeks of holiday and feasting, now represented by our 12 days of Christmas. No 'hard' work was done during this period (except for the cooks!) so the spinning wheel, seen as an object of work, was decorated with flowers.

The large houses would expect to serve about 40 people for the holiday period, including family, servants, local families and any travellers passing by. Every one was welcome. Roast birds were served for the first time as Christmas fare.

Nick read us a poem by George Herbert titled Christmas No. 1; he was a mystic poet of the Elizabethan era.

We were then shown another ordinary Lute, which has 13 strings but weighs less than 2lb. The back is made of plum wood and the top of spruce, it is today strung with nylgut, a synthetic material, but originally strings would be of sheep's gut or silk.

We then listened to a Derbyshire Christmas song, which originates from medieval times and Nick played several more Christmas tunes written by a variety of composers.

Nick is most impressed by the lutanist John Dowland. Born in 1563 he studied music and finally achieved his doctorate in 1623, sadly only 3 years before he died. He wrote books of music and Nick showed us a copy of one with the various parts of the music and words of each tune written in a variety of directions, up, down, left and right across the page. As the book sold for 2 shillings, about £160 today, only one copy would be bought and placed in the centre of a table for the musicians to sit around and read from all angles. Ingenious.

Nick finished with the Coventry Carol and a poem by Robert Southwell written 400 years ago.

A very interesting and fascinating afternoon's entertainment which was followed by mince pies, tea and coffee served by the committee.

Our next monthly meeting will be on Tuesday Jan 28th at 2pm when Stephanie and Trevor Mee will talk about "The confessions of game show junkies"

GROUP REPORTS

Arts and Crafts – Leader Sharon Woodland – 01530 413867

5th December

Just two of us and a welcome visitor came to December's Meeting.

We managed to carry on with the patchwork sewing, making steady progress

The next meeting will be on January 9th at 10 am at 2 Marlborough Way.

Anyone interested in joining the group or observing the work in progress will be very welcome.

Bridge – Leader Neil Roberts - 01530 455957

16th December

The Bridge Group had our Xmas Buffet at which the trophy for our annual Duplicate Competition was presented to Ann Gurd.

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 every Monday alternately 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 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 December

Five people braved the wet and windy weather to continue the Christmas themed piece. There was quite a range of styles used from a more precise approach to quite free but all with appropriate seasonal embellishments - very relaxing to do! We also discussed who would lead the group next year and organised the meetings up to Easter.

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.

16th December

There were only 3 of us present.

The problem to be solved concerned a Samsung mobile phone. The Samsung J3 keeps reporting "Google Play Services Has Stopped" this does not stop the phone from working but does affect the keyboard, slows performance and clutters the screen. We found a website that took us through various scenarios which were thought to eliminate a problem caused by the latest update. This took 1 and a half hours and in the end did not solve the problem. It looks as if the owner will have to wait until the next update which will probably solve the problem.

We next meet on January 20th 2020

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 December

There were only 5 present, and, as the weather was cold and grey, we stayed 'at home'. Steve showed us his photos from various trips to SE Asia, and we discussed the venues, critiquing the photos as we went.

We next meet on February 6th

Drawing and Painting – Contact Chris Dogherty - 01530 411148

20th December

We dedicated the meeting to discussing and progressing ideas and layouts for the proposed U3A exhibit at the forthcoming 2020 Ashby outdoor Art festival.

Watch this space!!!!

Next meeting, 15th January 2020, 10:00 at Megan's.

Suggested topic.....something beginning with J....

Family History – Leader John Dogherty - 01530 411148

11th December

For our last meeting before Christmas six finder-outers turned out.

John worked with Ana on identifying the recipient of a silver fob-watch she had inherited. The inscription, dedicated by Hexham and District, mysteriously referred to "The 1st VB.N.F" and to "The 1st Service Coy. N.F. In the South African War 1900 -1901." We deduced this referred to the Boer War, and the Volunteers Brigade, but it wasn't until after the session we worked out that the "N.F." referred to the Northumberland Fusiliers. It seems that Hexham and District made a practice of issuing these watches to the Volunteers, as JD found another such on an auction site.

Eileen is still trying to pin down the origin of the name 'Kenfield' as a middle name in an ancestor. On inspection, the men in that family were all given middle names from the maiden surnames of female ancestors. But this name does not appear for any ancestor. However, there is one female ancestor for whom no maiden surname has been found, and it seems very likely that this is hers. So far, though Eileen has not been able to trace anyone of this name. The hunt continues!

Keith is now concentrating on building his tree vertical line by line, rather than spreading out horizontally across any particular generation. JD showed him how to take a snip, and where to find the snipping tool. This will give him a printable screenshot for working on.

Christine worked with JH to trace a line that went from Ireland to England. They were able to identify him in barracks in 1911 and his wife in Army accommodation.

A very good session and topped off with Christmas mince pies and spiffing biccies!

We meet again in the New Year on 8th January at Marlborough Way.

Gardening - Leader Paul Dean - 01283 295987

19th December

The December meeting for the gardening group was held at Packington Village Hall where we hosted our secret Santa buffet. We had lots of lovely food which was made or bought by our members. We decorated the tables with Christmas-time flowers and candles which became the prizes for our free raffle.

Christmas music played in the background and we socialised with other members while we enjoyed the food and drinks. Following the food we each had a pick from Santa's sack and tried not to choose the gift we had brought ourselves.

Everyone appeared to have a good time.

Our next meeting is at Packington Village hall on 16th January when we shall have a talk on garden design by a local garden designer.

History – Leader Jane Harris - 01530 838025

December

The History Group didn't meet in December as the date clashed with something called Boxing Day! However the group's committee did get together to decide on the programme for next year which is now on the website and, I understand, programme leaflets have been printed.

The first event of the year will be on 23rd Jan at Packington Hall – a talk by Celia Sanger on the Suffragettes.

Industrial Heritage – Leader Mike Stow - 01530 469152

12th December

Rather like the History Group, Industrial Heritage found that its December date fell on Christmas Day and so they gathered a couple of weeks early at the Blue Bell Inn in Ashby to decide next years' programme of events. The Blue Bell doesn't usually open lunchtimes but, with a little influence from Bill Wilson, were happy to host 18 of us for a morning meeting followed by lunch in the pub. And very nice it was too.

We have most of the programme sorted now but some venues turned out to be undergoing refurbishment or just didn't quite fit our time requirements. However a provisional programme is now on the website and our first trip, on January 22nd, will be to RAF Cosford museum. This has the advantage of not requiring pre-booking and is free to get in. If the weather turns bad we will be able to cancel or postpone or go somewhere else at very short notice. Assuming decent weather, gather at Featherbed Lane at 9.30 am to car share.

Italian Group – Leader Lynda Hall - 01530 415922

December

Italian was yet another group not to meet in December and they are still working on meeting dates. Look out for announcements on the website and I'm sure regular attendees will be notified directly of the next meeting.

Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo a tutti!

Literature Group - Leader Sandra Harris - 01530 416653

The group met in Dec for their Christmas lunch whilst apparently discussing "The Kashmir Shawl" by Rosie Thomas. Next month they will meet on 14th January to discuss "The Woodlanders" by Thomas Hardy. I'm assured this has nothing to do with the leaders of the Luncheon Group – see below.

Luncheon Group – Leaders Colin & Sharon Woodland - 01530 413867

12th December

This was another group that found itself clashing with important events this December, this time with our Christmas lunch at the Willesley Park Golf Club organised by the Social Events Group. See their report for details.

As Colin and Sharon are currently indisposed, Mike Stow is organising the next outing which will be on the 9th January at 12 noon for 12.30 pm at the Angel Inn, 10 Church Road, Swadlincote DE11 8LF. So for just this month phone Mike on 01530 469152 if you wish to join them.

All U3A members are welcome to join us, just sign up at the Monthly meeting, email luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk or call 01530 413867 to book a place.

Music Appreciation – Leader Lesley Thomas - musicapp@ashbyu3a.co.uk

4th December

4th December saw a select group of four for our Christmas music special with nibbles supplied by Dorothy.

Mike began our meeting with Lesley Garrett singing "Simple Gifts" then Eartha Kitt with "Santa Baby", Bing Crosby and David Bowie with "Little Drummer Boy" and finished with The Ronettes' rendition of "Sleigh Ride".

Nev was next and started with The King's Singers singing a Caribbean song "De Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy" then introduced two songs from Aimee Mann - "Winter Wonderland" and "God Rest You Merry Gentleman" we then had Maddy Prior and the 16th century "Coventry Carol", "Gloria in excelsis" and lastly "Away In A Manger"

Dorothy brought a "O Du Frohliche, O Du Selige" a Sicilian folk song sung in German. Then Michael Bubl  's "This Christmas"

Lesley played Elvis Presley's "Santa Claus is Back In Town", "The Nativity Carol" by John Rutter, "O Come, O Come Emanuel" by Jim Hendricks (not Jimi Hendrix as some thought!) and finished with Louis Armstrong singing "Zat You Santa"

Many thanks to Dorothy for the nibbles.

We meet again after Christmas on the 8th January 2020 at Nev's.
Very happy Christmas to everyone, see you next year.

Quiz group – Leaders Pat Ford and Clive Caulfield – quiz@ashbyu3a.co.uk

18th December

Although only a week before Christmas, we had 18 very competitive quizzers at the Beeches, including some newcomers, which is always very nice. Obviously our relaxed but intensive quizzes are gaining a following! We are now inviting our quizzers to provide the questions for our monthly meeting, as this changes the dynamics sometimes.

Plenty of offers, but certainly one month next year is clear;

I wish everyone a good and healthy New Year, and hope that lots of us are available on January 15th (always the third Wednesday in the month). See you in the Function Room for a 2.30 start.

All new members are very welcome; just ring 07762 054925 or 01827 830672 or just turn up.

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

19th December

We had our last meeting of the year this afternoon.

The new time is confirmed as 13:45 to 15:45, still at my place

In January, we will meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 9th and 23rd January, as there are 5 Thursdays in January, and we may still be in holiday mode on 2nd January.

We will return to the usual 1st and 3rd Thursdays in February.

There were 5 of us this afternoon, the first time we've have that many for ages, in the heady days of the start of the group. We started by playing some of the usual trios, with 2 on descant/soprano, the 2 on the treble/alto part (played on trebles or treble and bass), and one tenor:

Madrigals

Easy Celtic Arrangements

Earle of Salisbury (Galliard and Pavan)

After the break, we played Christmas music:

Three Kings by Marg Hall

3 carols from "20 Christmas Carols" by Alan Davis

Christmas Medley 1 and 2, which are in 4 parts, finishing with "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

It's lovely to have more players, as it gives us more choice in the music we play, and we sometimes have two to a part! Some of us are also members of other recorder groups, which give us the opportunity to play in larger ensembles, with a wider range of music.

It's good to finish the year on a positive note. We're looking forward to 2020.

Social Events - Contact Avril Wilson – socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk

12th December

Despite the awful weather we have been having lately, 63 members made it to Willesley Park Golf Club for our Christmas Lunch. As usual, the Club provided an excellent combination of venue, good service and great food and everyone seemed to have a good time.

We are organising a Burns Supper on Friday 24th January. See details at the start of the Newsletter.

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 us, please sign up at the monthly meeting or contact Colin, by phone or by email. If you need transport please see Colin and we will try to arrange for some car-sharing.

December

Yet another group whose usual date clashed with Christmas. With many groups having their own Christmas meals together and with our own date falling on Boxing Day we decided to skip December. Also there will be no Supper Club in January as it clashes with the Burns Supper planned for the 24th, so we hope to see everyone in February, when we hope we can get back to normal.

Trips Group – Contact John or Margaret Howlett - 01530 461774

17th December – Hallé Christmas Concert, Nottingham Concert Hall

Most of us started off the evening with a pre-concert meal near to the venue before making our way into the hall. Orchestra and audience were all in festive mood and the concert hall was packed.

The programme for the evening included a variety of music not all relating to Christmas but ranging from Handel and Mozart pieces to well-known late 20th century music.

The soprano soloist, Jennifer France, entertained us beautifully and it was hard to believe that she had only just recovered from flu.

Each piece was introduced by the conductor, Stephen Bell, always with a humorous note and with the inclusion of some very corny cracker jokes. If he ever needs a second string to his bow he could be a passable stand-up comedian. A very enjoyable evening was had by all.

The next planned trip will be organised by Colin Ellis to Birmingham Symphony Hall on Friday 17th April at 7.30 pm to hear the Siberian Symphony Orchestra play some Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky.

Full details are on the website.

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.

17th December. Ashby to Swannington

This was the last walk of 2019, the 23rd of the year.

We set off on a linear walk from Featherbed Lane in Ashby on a cold, dull, slightly misty but dry morning, We crossed the A42 at Flagstaff Island and joined the bridleway through Rough Park, down to Lount Nature Reserve where we paused for coffee etc. We continued crossing the main road at Gelsmoor into Coleorton and turning right through the Christmas tree farm to Aqueduct Road, through the Woolrooms onto Stoney Lane and then up Bakewells Lane, all the while avoiding potentially flooded and water logged paths.

Off Bakewells we took a shortcut path up to the A511, a mistake as this one was overgrown! A short walk along the main road then before turning up Mill Lane to Hough Mill, with its new sails. It was then down the hill over Swannington Common into Swannington village and the Robin Hood to meet 4 non-walking members for a lovely lunch.

There were 11 walkers and we walked about 6 miles in 3 hours. Some of the group were able to scrounge lifts back to Ashby in the cars of the non-walkers, others used their bus passes on the 29 bus.

Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman - 01530 222634

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

11th November. Sutton Cheney Wharf to Bosworth Field, led by Alison

Heavy rain on the preceding days and on the morning of the walk deterred some but 4 hardy souls turned up and by the 10 am start the rain had stopped. I wouldn't say that the sun was shining on the righteous but, at least, the weather wasn't trying to drown us.

The plan was to follow the path into Ambion Wood from the wharf, however our route was cruelly compromised by severe flooding not long after leaving the wharf. The 2 ladies present thought the 2 men might have given us a piggy-back but it wasn't to be! So we changed course and did a linear walk instead of a circular one along the tow path to Shenton train station onto the Battlefield Visitor Centre where we re-enacted the Battle of Bosworth Field - this time with Richard winning! We returned to the car park the way we came. 4 miles completed.

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.

13th December. Staunton Harold

9 walkers met at the lower car park at Staunton Harold. The weather was fine but we anticipated the ground would be very wet. Sandra was prepared to lead the walk but not sure about a metalled only walk was possible so John led the way around the road back towards Ticknall but turned right passed the main garden centre car park and down to the bridge over the lake. We took a slight detour to look at the church which was not open but was apparently the only High Anglican church built during the Commonwealth in defiance of the Puritan's beliefs in plainer buildings. We returned to the road over the bridge and the turn right leaving the lake and house on our right until we reach the road to Melbourne. From here we returned to the car park and the took the footpath back to the stable yard and a hot drink and cake. Total distance just over 1 1/2 miles.

Your Committee are:

Colin Ellis	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 272592
Anne Donegan	Business Secretary	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01283 760348
Val Reed	Treasurer	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 564279
Iain Banns	Membership Secretary	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 416697
Colin Woodland	Groups Co-ordinator	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413867
Peter Clement	Minutes Secretary	minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 560894
Estelle Sandles	Welfare	welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 459858
Bill Wilson	Speaker seeker	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413182
Mike Stow	Communications	webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 469152
Avril Wilson	Social Secretary	socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413182
Tony Smith	Member	tony@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 831822