



May Newsletter

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

By the time you receive this newsletter, there will have been fifteen months during which we have been unable to meet. Back in March 2020, how many of us would have predicted it would be so long?

However, just as with good things, all bad things come to an end and we are hopeful that we shall be able to resume next month. As I'm sure you are aware, there is still uncertainty as to whether a complete removal of restrictions will be implemented. This means that we can only plan our June meeting on what may be possible. For that reason, we have asked members to advise us if they intend to participate. Even if all restrictions are removed, we think it sensible initially to have some precautions, including a limit in numbers in the church and also in the back room. Should a 1 metre distancing be required, this would considerably reduce the number who could be accommodated as the pews are not that far apart and so we would only be able to use alternate rows. If the requirement is two metres, the number becomes so small that the meeting would not be worth holding.

It is therefore essential that we are able to contact those who have expressed an interest to confirm whether they can attend.

Participating members will also be advised of other measures to try to avoid the severe congestion which can occur in registration and in obtaining refreshments.

I sincerely hope that these requirements will be very short lived and we will be able to return to the informality which, for me, makes Ashby u3a such an attractive organisation.

I am also hoping that, with the resumption of meetings, the need for these monthly letters will disappear and, if all goes to plan, this will be my last.

It is very encouraging that over 120 members have already renewed this year and that 50 have expressed an intention to come to the June meeting. As Group meetings begin to restart, I am hopeful that the membership will increase further. Indeed, the walking groups have been able to restart as larger groups were permitted outdoors in May and the sun shone on our first outing. Let's hope that was an omen for the future.

Lastly, I would like to express my thanks for your continued support after such a long period during which we have been able to offer so little.

I very much look forward to meeting you all again soon. Fingers very much crossed for 29th June.

With best wishes,

Colin

FROM THE EDITOR

Monthly Meetings

As Colin says above, we are hoping to be able to hold our first monthly meeting for over a year in June, subject to the Covid Roadmap running to time, and so far over 50 people have expressed an interest in coming to it. Again as Colin says, numbers may still be limited and if we can't fit everyone in for this first meeting we will allocate places on a first come first served basis. I will make sure everyone knows what is happening as soon as the government announces what and when the next step will be. It looks like their next announcement will be on June 14th. We are also holding our AGM on July 27th. Hopefully it will be "live" at the Church rather than the Zoom meeting held last year. Details to follow.

New Membership Forms

As you will hopefully have read in the email sent out last month, we shall not be actively seeking membership renewals until July by which time we will hopefully know what program of events we shall be able to put on. However we do ask that if you are actively taking part in any of the groups which have restarted, or are about to restart, like Walking or the groups meeting online, that you please renew before taking part. Also only paid-up members will be able to vote at the AGM.

The 'new member' and 'membership renewal' forms are now on the website. The new forms allow you to complete them online without having to print them out and fill them in by hand, although that option is still possible.

If the forms are downloaded to Acrobat Reader they can be emailed direct to members@ashbyu3a.co.uk after filling them in.

Ashby u3a Website

Things are changing and groups are starting to plan for re-opening. Keep an eye on our website as I shall try to keep it up to date with new developments.

Information For The Newsletters

If you have anything that you would like to see in these newsletters, whether it is a report of something you or a Group have managed to organise despite all the difficulties, or you have some information on safety, health, scams or anything similar, please contact me, Mike Stow at webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk or 01530 469152.

Some New Scams

There appear to be some new scams doing the rounds, the latest of which is in two steps:

Firstly you get a call supposedly from the Post Office or a courier company to say that a parcel couldn't be delivered because of incorrect postage paid or some other reason and that you need to make a payment over the phone so that they can deliver it. They want you to give your bank account details to pay a small charge.

Secondly, a few days later you will get a call apparently from your bank saying that there has been some fraud on your account. They will be able to quote your account details (gathered above) and will say that to prevent more money being taken, you should move your money to a new account which they have set up for you. At that point the criminals will have EMPTIED YOUR ACCOUNT INTO THEIR OWN!

Remember, the Post Office or other courier firms will never ask for payment over the phone and, most importantly banks will NEVER ask you to move money to another account. If there was real fraud on your account they would just lock it and ask you to go into your branch to resolve the matter. Do not believe anything told to you over the phone regarding these sort of transactions. Just hang up.

HELP & WELFARE

If you know of any member who is unwell or shielding or has a family member who is unwell, please contact Estelle or any other committee member and we can see if there is anything we can do to help, whether it is collecting shopping or prescriptions, having a chat or just sending a card.

If at any time you would like or need someone to talk to, the following people are always ready to chat:

Our Welfare Officer, Estelle Sandles 01530 459858, 07919 986456 or email welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

Our Chairman, Colin Ellis 01530 272592

Colin Woodland 01530 413867

Anne Donegan 01283 760348

Tony Smith 01530 831822

Estelle can also offer support and welfare information. Any chats will of course be confidential.

COVID-19 SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Kevin and Christine Green tell me they have been volunteering at Measham Vaccination Centre and they have been asked to try to recruit more volunteers. They are looking for greeters, stewards and chaperones. If you would like to help out in Measham or elsewhere in NW Leics see this link which describes it all in greater detail:

<https://volunteer.valonline.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-volunteers>

ZOE COVID-19 Symptom Tracker

If you wish to help Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals to track the spread of Covid-19 across the country and find out what type of person is getting infected, you can sign up to the Covid-19 Symptom Tracker here at <https://covid/joinzoe.com> You need a smartphone to which an app is installed.

It asks you for some personal details of age, height, weight etc. and general health and medication. This can all be anonymous if you wish.

You can then report each day how you feel even if you are well, it takes seconds. You can see how Covid 19 is spreading or retreating and you will be helping research into how and why it spreads, and who is most vulnerable. Over 4.5 million people are already signed up and contributing.

AgeUK www.ageuk.org.uk has lots of information and advice on all matters regarding coronavirus including matters financial or health.

The u3a National Office has an email Newsletter which you can sign up for at <https://u3a.org.uk/email> It has the latest advice on the virus and also lots of information and advice on how to keep safe and occupied.

NHS Covid-19 Test and Trace

If you have a smartphone, we would encourage you to download the NHS app. It tracks whether you have been in close proximity to someone who subsequently tests positive for Covid-19 and allows Test and Trace to contact you and ask you to isolate for a number of days. Remember this app only works if you carry your phone with you when you go out! It can also be used to check in to pubs, restaurants and other premises for Test and Trace to save having to give your details at the door.

A QUICK QUIZ

(u3a national office seems to have stopped publishing quizzes so these questions are courtesy of Radio Times)

True or False

1. Friends star Lisa Kudrow was originally cast in the sitcom Frasier
2. If you're born between May 1st and 20th, then you're a Gemini
3. Emma Roberts is the daughter of Julia Roberts
4. There are over 2,500 stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
5. Fruit flies were the first living creatures sent into space
6. Cyclones spin in a clockwise direction in the southern hemisphere
7. Goldfish only have a memory of three seconds
8. The capital of Libya is Benghazi
9. Dolly Parton is the godmother of Miley Cyrus
10. Roger Federer has won the most Wimbledon titles of any player
11. An octopus has five hearts
12. Brazil is the only country in the Americas to have the official language of Portuguese
13. The Channel Tunnel is the longest rail tunnel in the world
14. Darth Vader famously says the line "Luke, I am your father" in The Empire Strikes Back
15. Olivia Newton-John represented the UK in the Eurovision Song Contest in 1974, the year ABBA won with "Waterloo"
16. Stephen Hawking declined a knighthood from the Queen
17. The highest mountain in England is Ben Nevis
18. Nicolas Cage and Michael Jackson both married the same woman
19. Japan and Russia did not sign a peace treaty after World War Two so are technically still at war
20. The mathematical name for the shape of a Pringle is hyperbolic paraboloid
21. Charlie Chaplin came first in a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest
22. Michael Keaton's real name is Michael Douglas
23. Napoleon was of below-average height
24. Donald Duck's middle name is Fauntleroy
25. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France
26. According to Scottish law, it is illegal to be drunk in charge of a cow
27. The Great Wall of China is visible from space
28. The first tea bags were made of silk
29. Meghan Markle's first name is Rachel
30. Warsaw is the capital of Bulgaria
31. A metre is further than a yard
32. A woman has walked on the moon
33. Flying in an aeroplane is statistically safer than driving in a car

Answers on the last page

GROUP REPORTS

GROUPS ACTUALLY MEETING IN PERSON

Recorder Group

The recorder group has had occasional, weather-dependent meetings outside in members' gardens when regulations allowed. There are only 5 of us if we're all there.

We have just recommenced meeting in a hall, last Thursday morning, when 3 of us played together. The cost is low, and we are keen to play again even when the weather is unkind. Our regular slots have gone by the board, but we are planning to get back to regular fortnightly Thursday meetings in the hall, while it's allowed.

Walking

Sixteen of us gathered at Ticknall village hall car park for the start for our first walk of 2021 and since relaxation of Covid regulations. The sun shone as we set off out of the rear of the car park towards Hangman's Stone, Foremark and its reservoir. Stopping for banana and coffee break at a lovely spot overlooking the reservoir we were joined by Jackie McKay. After walking along the edge of the reservoir we climbed up a short hill to be greeted by a grassy bank and a few benches where we stopped for lunch. The final part of our walk took us past Scaddows Farm and on to the lime kiln trail back to Ticknall. A few of us then paid a visit to the Staff of Life on the way home.

Short Walks

Friday 21st May. From Moira Furnace to Donisthorpe Woodland Park and back.

Two of us met at the meeting point car park. As it was raining we decided to have a coffee so walked to the Hub Cafe. On the way there we met 2 more walkers who had parked elsewhere at the Furnace and we all went for coffee and discussed next months walk among other things. After coffee we found the weather had brightened and the little bit of rain had stopped so we walked to Donisthorpe, at least to the Woodland Park, and back along the old railway to Moira Furnace. It took about an hour. As no-one had recorded the journey I have included a map of the trial walk which is almost the same. The distance is about 2 miles.

GROUPS MEETING REMOTELY OR VIRTUALLY

Computer Group

The Computer Group is still able to help people with their computer, tablet or smartphone problems. Obviously we can't do repairs, but if you have software problems or other difficulties email help.computer@ashbyu3a.co.uk or phone John Howlett on 01530 461774 and someone will have a look at your problem and get back to you. Subject to the social distancing regulations in force at the time, we may even be able to do house calls.

John D seems to have solved the problem he had when trying to transfer files from an external hard drive to the PC. The transfer starts then stops and the drive disappears from the drive list. On more detailed, folder by folder transfers, the system does not seem to like too many sub/sub/sub folders in any one try. So he has been working steadily through the tree checking each folder first to see how many subs it has, then splitting it down further as necessary. It's slow going. We suspect that because the drive is almost full, there is not enough space to make transfers.

Chris D's laptop, the one Phil recovered for her after she poured wine over it (!), freezes during the current Win 10 updates. Every time. It has to be crashed out of, so stopping the update, but it keeps trying to update. We've tried Googling it, and it is a known problem, but, as usual there are so many conflicting views on a cure, mostly larded with all sorts of dire warnings. More work needed.

Drawing and painting

Five members worked from home this month on the theme of “Life in the National Forest”. This one below was drawn by John. All the other paintings are viewable on the Drawing and Painting Gallery page of our website.



Family History

We had four today, but two others checked in with their apologies. Many thanks: it helps to know who is not able to contribute so that I know my message about the meeting has got through!

Ana is trying to locate the grave of her grandfather. She has some details but needs to locate the plot itself. I recommended a direct approach to the local authority.

Carolyn is trying to decide about keeping Family Tree Maker as a back up location for her files. She wants to discuss gedcoms and backing up.

Shirley is making progress mapping the life of her great, great grandfather. She has found his marriage and death, with further details about the aftermath. We had an interesting side discussion on the origin of the street name “Snig Hill”. It seems to be related to the same root as snag as in “to hit a snag” or “her jumper was caught on a snag”. In the case of the street name the allusion was to the need to use a form of drag chain on carts to stop them running away. Even today, Snig Hill definitely has a pronounced slope!

John D. No research topic today for me but I opened a discussion into what we should do as regards the next meeting. I suggested that we review nearer the date, but that those who feel comfortable could meet here (up to 6), whilst those who do not can continue with WhatsApp.

A very good session: thank you all! We next meet on Wednesday, June 9th

Literature Group

The group appear to be continuing with their WhatsApp group so that they can read at home and then discuss the books they are reading.

Science & Technology

Our next Zoom talk will be on Monday June 14th at 2pm and will be given by Paul McKay entitled "Einstein - his life and his Special Theory of Relativity"

If you would like to watch and listen-in contact Paul McKay on science@ashbyu3a.co.uk and he will add you to his list. Zoom invites will be sent out the week before with a reminder on the day.

Last month's talk on 21st May was by Martin Willett of Burton u3a called "Gas detecting – 200 years of innovation"

There were 12 attendees for this very informative talk based on Martin's long experience in this field of science and instrumentation.

Some gases can be dangerous due to the potential for combustion or even explosions , (eg Methane) , poisoning (eg Carbon Monoxide) or asphyxiation (eg carbon Dioxide) and so in many situations it is important to be able to detect and measure the concentration of such gases. Some gases can be detected by the property of interest such as methane which was, historically, detected by the Davy Lamp which measures the gas by controlled burning. This was replaced by the pellistor which burns the methane on a catalyst and gives a good measurement of concentration by measuring the change in resistance of a coil due to the rise in temperature.

The presence of carbon monoxide in mines was historically detected by the effect on canaries which are very sensitive to the poisoning effects of the gas. It is now measured by the current produced in a fuel cell where the a reaction with a catalyst on the electrode produces a current in an external circuit.

In order to assess asphyxiation risk, oxygen can be measured with a battery in which a lead electrode is consumed , thus limiting the life of the detector.

An ideal gas sensor would have the properties, amongst others, of being safe, reliable, sensitive, small, cheap and have a long life. We are going a long way in achieving these goals.

To contact the Group leaders, Tanya, Paul and Bill please email science@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Music Appreciation

We had 3 contributors again and the themes this month are Paris, Ireland and pop songs with a classical origin.

As usual the complete playlist is here, if anyone else wants to listen to chosen the tracks.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdjMqEt4gpeoPV25kO1gWT9lqK-vu3vEw>

Mike:

Starting with my list, I've chosen pop songs which have a classical origin and the classical pieces themselves to compare them with.

Perhaps the most obvious song to start with is the Beach Boys "Lady Lynda" which is based almost entirely on Bach's "Jesu, joy of man's desiring" here performed by the New London Symphony Orchestra with the Norman Luboff Choir:

A long time favourite song of mine is Sting's "Russians". One of the best anti-war songs ever. Here he is performing it in Moscow, quite a brave thing to do!, although he seems to get a good reception. The tune is based on the Romance theme from "Lieutenant Kije" by Prokofiev, another of my favourites.

My third choice is less obviously based on a classical piece. It is "Light my fire" by the Doors. Organist Ray Manzarek says that he got the organ theme from Bach's Invention No.8 which he used to practice at music college. The organ solo certainly has a Bach style. Interestingly this live version captures Jim Morrison's gravelly voice but listening to the original album version his voice is much lighter and higher pitched. Just goes to show what a bottle of whisky a day does to your voice!

Nev says:

The months go by so quickly but it's not getting any warmer.

My April songs last month featured one of my favourite cities. I refer, of course, to Paris and that has prompted me to pick some songs about that wonderful city.

The first choice is a 1953 Cole Porter song called "I Love Paris". There are many fine versions of this song by many famous singers but the version I've chosen is by a group I discovered on YouTube called the "The Avalon Jazz Band".

My second choice is "Parisienne Walkways". This song was written by Gary Moore and Phil Lynott and reached no 8 in the UK charts in 1979. Not sure about the reference to St Michel in the lyrics! The melody is based on jazz standard "Blue Bossa" by Kenny Dorham. It became Gary Moore's signature song. I have chosen a version by Thin Lizzy.

My third choice is "Under the Bridges of Paris". This song was written in 1913 by Vincent Scotto with original French lyrics ("Sous les Ponts de Paris") by Jean Rodor. English lyrics were added by Dorcas Cochran in 1952. The version I have chosen is by Eartha Kitt which was recorded in 1953. I think Eartha Kitt sounds even more sexy (if that is possible) when singing in French!

My final choice is not a song about Paris but is played over the opening credits of a Woody Allen film called "Midnight in Paris" which features many views of the city. It is an instrumental tune called "Si Tu Vois Ma Mere" composed by American jazz saxophonist/clarinettist Sidney Bechet. Bechet was born in New Orleans in 1897 and moved to Paris in his later life. He died in Garches near Paris on May 14th 1959, his 62nd birthday. This version is the original Bechet recording.

Neil says:

A couple of months ago I included some tracks from my Top 20 of some years ago.

Here is another. "Baby Please Don't Go" by Them, who were fronted by a very young Van Morrison. They took this old Blues number and gave it a very different treatment. It's a great version, and as an added bonus, if you look carefully you will see Van the Man crack a smile !

Another number from my Top 20 is "Tower of Song" by Leonard Cohen. I have played Lenny's version before and also Tom Jones's. Here is Lenny singing it with U2. It is an excerpt from "I'm Your Man", a documentary film about Leonard Cohen,

The Waterboys are an Irish band who have made some really good records, but have never made it big. This is their most famous offering, with an all action performance. "Fisherman's Blues"

I was once on holiday in Killarney, where there is an excellent live music scene. At one of the bars I asked the house band if they played this, and was told that they haven't for a long while, but would give it a go. It went down a storm, and when I returned to the same bar a few nights later it had been added to their set.

Finally, here is another offering from U2, this time accompanying Luciano Pavarotti. "Miss Sarajevo"

It is from an album called Original Soundtracks 1, which is a studio album recorded by U2 and Brian Eno under the pseudonym Passengers as a side project. Released on 6 November 1995, the album is a collection of songs written for mostly imaginary films.

GROUPS PLANNING TO RESTART SOON

Assuming that the government allows, the following groups have said that they are planning to restart meeting together this month or next. Watch the website for news of any other groups restarting.

Medium Walks

Mon 14th June. Meet at Dimminsdale CP.

Computer Group

Wed 7th July at 16 Winchester Way

Digital Photography

Thu 1st July at 16 Winchester Way

OTHER THINGS TO DO IF YOU ARE STILL STUCK INSIDE

Visit the **U3A National website** at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

There is information about COVID-19, but also lots of more interesting stuff such as what other U3As are doing around the country, bird migration tracking for the British Trust of Ornithology, photography challenges, ideas to keep learning and there are quizzes and maths puzzles to occupy a few minutes or hours!

Google Arts & Culture – <https://artsandculture.google.com> has high resolution photos of many of the world's great paintings and other artworks from 2000 museums round the world, plus you can explore the most famous places in the world such as Eiffel Tower, Angkor Wat, Sydney Opera House plus loads more. Somewhere to get lost for a few hours.

IF YOU WANT TO GET IN TOUCH, OUR CURRENT 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

Quiz Answers

1. True – she was cast as Frasier’s producer Roz but fired after just one episode and replaced by Peri Gilpin
2. False – you’re actually a Taurus if your birthday falls within those dates
3. False – Emma Roberts is actually Julia Roberts’ niece
4. True – there are 2,691 stars as of 2020
5. True – fruit flies were sent into space in a V-2 rocket in 1947
6. True
7. False – scientists have found their memories can actually last for months
8. False – it’s Tripoli
9. True – Dolly is good friends with Miley’s dad, country star Billy Ray Cyrus
10. False – he has won 8, Martina Navratilova won 9
11. False – it has three
12. True
13. False – The Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland is 4 miles longer at 35.5 miles long
14. False – the line is actually “No, I am your father”
15. True
16. True
17. False – Ben Nevis is in Scotland
18. True – to Lisa Marie Presley no less
19. True – the two countries have signed a joint declaration but not a peace treaty
20. True
21. False – he came third
22. True
23. False – at 5 ft 7 in he was slightly above average height for the time
24. True
25. True
26. True
27. False
28. True
29. True
30. False
31. True
32. False
33. True