



Newsletter July 2021

Interest Groups Timetable

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 24th Aug	2:00 pm	Our annual Cream Tea event at the Congregational Church
Computer	Mon 16th Aug	2:00 pm	2 Marlborough Way NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE
Digital Photography	Thu 2nd Sep	10:00 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 18th Aug	10:00 am	Meet at 2 Marlborough Way or Virtually. Suggested Theme "The Glorious 12th"
Family History	Wed 11th Aug	2:00 pm	Format TBD 2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 19th Aug	2 pm to 4 pm	Members garden in Ashby. FREE event. Limit of 30 members on first come, first served basis. Please contact Paul Dean to be added to our list
Industrial Heritage			Hoping to restart soon but very few museums etc have reopened. I've not found any factory visits running yet.
Literature			Meeting on WhatsApp
Medium Walks	Mon 9th Aug	9.45 for 10 am start	Meet on Breedon Green
Music Appreciation	Wed 1st Sep	10:00 am	Sallie's at Woodside Cottage, 61, Melbourne Road, Newbold. LE67 8JH
Recorder			TBA
Science & Technology	Mon 13th Sep	2:00 pm	Ashby Alliance Evangelical Church, in jitty between Tamworth Rd and Avenue Rd
Social Events	Fri 6th Aug	6pm	Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club. Come along and try your hand at bowls for free. Bar open afterwards. This is restricted to 12 members and is now fully booked.
Short Walks	Fri 20th Aug	10:00 am	Meet at Beacon Hill lower car park
Walking	Tue 17th Aug	9.45 for 10 am start	Meet at the Robin Hood Inn, Spring Lane, Swannington, LE67 8QQ.

FROM THE EDITOR

Interest Group Meetings

For the first time in 17 months we have a program of events worthy of filling a timetable as you can see above. Not all groups are restarting yet, some will restart in September and some are not decided yet. However it is good news to see some small return to normality.

AGM 27th July

Our AGM took place at the church as planned although the voting was all done by post or email in advance due to the uncertainty of whether we would be able to hold a face to face meeting. 43 people attended and 53 people submitted voting papers.

The minutes of the meeting will be posted in next month's newsletter but suffice to say all the motions were carried unanimously. Colin Ellis has come to the end of his term of office as Chairman and the Committee will chose a new Chair, and the other committee posts, at their next Committee meeting as per our constitution. The new posts will be announced at our next monthly meeting in August.

This was followed by a talk by Bill Devitt, see below.

New Membership Forms

As you may have read in the email sent out a while back, we purposely withheld chasing membership renewals until July until we would know what program of events we could put on. Well we still cannot be exactly certain what we will be able to run. However we would encourage you to renew now as many groups are restarting activities now or shortly, and we do ask that if you are actively taking part in any of the groups which have restarted, or are about to restart, whether in person or online, that you please renew before taking part. We also held our first monthly meeting in July and next month should be our annual Cream Tea event.

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.

Unfortunately, this may not work if you are using Apple products. I'm working on that.

Ashby u3a Website

Things are changing and groups are starting to re-open. 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.

Covid cases

Covid cases still seem to be rising sharply in the NW Leics area so be extra careful out there. The good news is that once double-vaccinated the chance of hospitalisation or serious illness is extremely rare.

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.

NHS Covid Pass

As the country and world is starting to open up to travel and larger events, here is some information about obtaining a NHS Covid Pass should you need one to prove your double vaccination status.

A NHS Covid Pass letter can be obtained by calling 119. There is no expiry date on these.

You can also request a NHS Covid Pass via the NHS website or the NHS app (not the NHS Covid app, that's for contact tracing)

You can then print this out. It contains a QR code which can be scanned wherever it is required.

Some venues will accept mobile phone proof of vaccination status in England through the NHS app.

Please be aware that the rules can be different for travel in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

NHS Covid-19 Test and Trace

If you have a smartphone, we would encourage you to download the NHS Covid 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.

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.

MONTHLY MEETING

July 27th – Bill Devitt “50 years of Clangers”

Our first monthly meeting for 17 months started with our AGM, which passed without any problems and was followed by a talk by Bill Devitt who stepped in at short notice when the planned speaker was unavailable.

Bill opened his talk by telling us that he hails from Bedford which is home to an edible foodstuff consisting of a suet crust and half savoury, half sweet filling and which is rather like a huge sausage roll in appearance. This is a Bedfordshire Clanger!

On leaving school Bill worked as an apprentice in the Derby railway works and was surrounded by steam locomotives. He would travel home from Derby to Bedford on a steam hauled train and would often be able to persuade the engine driver to let him ride in the cab. At this time steam was being phased out and new diesels phased in. Bill told us about the time when he climbed up on to the top of one such diesel locomotive in order to fix something when suddenly the locomotive (which was being jacked up at one end) fell off it's jack dislodging Bill's ladder in the process. This left Bill dangling dangerously from the locomotive. Fortunately he was rescued in the nick of time. On another occasion Bill was spotted climbing into the cab of an engine at Wellingborough only to find the police waiting for the train at Market Harborough. The police had assumed that Bill was going to hold up the train as this was about the time of the Great Train Robbery.

Bill entertained us with many stories of his time as an apprentice. Once, a fellow apprentice got himself into hot water when he 'stole' a loco from Derby and moved it to Chaddesden sidings. He had put his bicycle into the cab before setting off but the engine derailed when it hit some track points and proceeded to roll down a bank landing on it's side. The young apprentice was apprehended because he couldn't get his bike out of the cab to make his getaway.

Bill told us about many instances when food was spilled from the time when 4 plates of sausage and mash ended up in the engine driver's lap as the train pulled away, to the time when on descending the steep Lickey incline various dishes of pea soup came a clanger when the engine had to suddenly brake.

Later on in his career, Bill went to work for Robert McAlpine who was a steam enthusiast and one-time owner of The Flying Scotsman, and then for James Sherwood who wanted to recreate the Orient Express. Bill went on a mission in James's private jet travelling around Europe trying to locate the necessary coaches. He had to tackle the mafia in Venice and mistook a budget hotel in Germany called the Hamburger Hof for the hotel into which he was booked for the night which was called the Frankfurter Hof and which was the grandest hotel in town.

Bill met the Queen when travelling from London up the East coast but was concerned to hear that she was sitting on the arm of her chair in her own carriage. Bill was aware of a defect in the chair arms which caused them to give way and had a very fretful journey expecting to hear at any moment that the Queen had landed on the floor. In reality, it was only the chairs in second class that had the defect. The Queen, of course, was in 1st class.

Bill went on to remind us that bits of metalwork did fall off engines and coaches quite often and mentioned the time that a rather large bolt became dislodged from an engine whilst passing over a viaduct. The bolt fell to the ground below and finished up in a baby's pram much to the astonishment of the mother who promptly handed it in at the nearest station.

There were many other stories that Bill entertained us with and we all had a very enjoyable time listening to his escapades.

GROUP REPORTS

GROUPS ACTUALLY MEETING IN PERSON

Gardening

Wednesday 21st July. Aqueduct Cottage

Our first trip out since lockdown was very successful. The weather was good and the garden was a little gem in Coleorton. Set in 3 acres it was interestingly landscaped, with lovely views and lots of seating set about in different areas. Our hosts were very friendly, and provided refreshments in a relaxing, themed area near to the house.

Walking

Tuesday 6th July 2021. Melbourne to Swarkestone and return.

Notwithstanding the inclement weather, 14 walkers started the walk from Melbourne. We headed off to King's Newton and walked via the Cloud Trail (disused railway line), the Trent and Mersey Canal and fields to Swarkestone. We saw the Swarkestone Pavilion now owned by the Landmark Trust, and having crossed Swarkestone Bridge we were able to view the Bridge from the adjacent fields side-on and view its length. We continued and returned to Melbourne. No one was too wet at the end of the walk.

Tuesday 20th July. From Hanbury around Fauld Crater.

On a very warm day 17 brave walkers gathered at 10 am outside the Cock Inn at Hanbury. Our common purpose was to circumnavigate the very infamous Fauld Crater without losing anybody to heatstroke. Our route took us through well nurtured farmland mainly put over to dairy herds and sheep. The course at times was hard going and unfortunately offered very little shade but we persevered taking plenty of water breaks to sustain us. By shortening the route by approximately half a mile we were able to make it back to the pub before two. Although the service was a little slow we all enjoyed some liquid refreshment and some interesting fare.

Medium walks

Monday 12th July. Packington round, led by Mary Weeks

We had a cloudy start to our walk this morning, departing from Packington Playing Field car park, with seven walkers for this, our second walk of the restarted season! Thank you all for coming as I am a novice leader and was really pleased so many of you turned up.

The walk went down Babelake Street and we turned left over the stile through a field of sheep, over Gilwiskaw Brook, through Plummers Wood and up through the tree lined ransom strip onto Redburrow Lane. At the top of the lane as it bears to the left we climbed over the stile at the tumbled down brick building known as Tie Barn - bit of work needed there for anyone interested in a project!!!

After crossing a few fields with sheep grazing peacefully we arrived at the top end of Babelake Street by the solar panel farm and at the back of Champney Springs Health Spa. A quick stop for coffee here having done 2.25 miles in approximately one hour then back to the bottom of the lane.

Three of us peeled off at this point. I had mistakenly put the boots on that I had put through the washing machine so my feet were feeling a bit pinched after just over three miles, as they had definitely shrunk but, no doubt will be better next time.....!!

Four of our walkers continued on to do loop two up Mill Street. Report continued by Mike:

"We should have turned left at the stone lions but missed it and so walked on to Ashby Road, bore left and left again to enter the field which borders the A42. Diagonally across the field brought us to a lane which brought us back down past the church yard to return to the parked cars. An extra 1.25M"

The weather was kind to us and it was a very pleasant walking temperature.

Short Walks

Friday 16th July. Ticknall to Calke

The weather was fine even too hot, 8 people and a dog arrived, unlike last month, when nobody came. We took the path from Ticknall into the Calke estate which crosses the rail track and down a good path to the new play area where we stopped for coffee. The route started in the open but soon we were in amongst the trees which made the walk very pleasant. After a good long stop we made our way to the road into Calke across the meadow which used to be a popular parking area for those wanting to play ball games or fly kites. There are now posts discouraging drivers from leaving the road. We continued past a herd of cows sheltering under a tree and between the sheep who mostly ignored the dog which was of course on a lead. At the entrance to Calke we crossed the road and took the path past the chapel back to the car park. Just over 2.5 miles and back before 12.

Recorder Group

Friday 2nd July

Three of us meet in the hall in Overseal this morning, and played a selection of music, ranging from madrigals to the theme music to "Wallace and Gromit", including modern music written for recorder. We are making progress with the less familiar music, some with interesting rhythms, and newer music. It's good to play some of the well-known pieces, as we can relax and enjoy them in a different way.

We will be fewer in number in August, as some of us have grandparent duties but we hope to be able to play from time to time.

Drawing and painting

Seven members took part this month on the theme of "Summertime". All the paintings can be seen in the Gallery page of the Drawing and Painting group webpage.

This painting is by Jenny is titled "Summer far away"



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.

We have had no requests for assistance this month, which is hopefully a good sign that everyone's computers are working just fine!!

Family History

Wednesday 14th July

Two brave souls turned up in person, and two contributed remotely, and we had a good session. Two presented their apologies, which is always helpful. We hope to see them in person next time.

Sylvia was able at long last to meet in person. We had a good long chat about our various researches and results, but without anything specific.

Dora attended by remote using email. She is working on a branch of the family which emigrated to New Zealand in the 1920s. A useful lead is appearing. She is also to do some on site research into the graveyards in Scotland where some of her ancestors may be buried. Often this is the only way to locate them, and also often where additional information can be found.

Shirley also attended in person and is still mapping the life of her great great grandfather. She had no further information at present, but we had an interesting discussion.

John D. There is no more information of the tale of the Rifle, but I have been trying to push back the antecedents of my great grandmother who hailed from Norham, near Berwick. Interestingly, it may be that she was illegitimate, but that is just a suspicion at the moment! FindMyPast is definitely better at this than Ancestry.

John Howlett contributed via WhatsApp. He is trying to determine if someone he has found is his great grandmother. The problem being that her date of birth when calculated from her age registered at her marriage in 1866, in the 1901 Census, and the 1911 Census, varies from 1846 to 1848. And her years of marriage, 42, noted in the 1911 Census don't quite match with a marriage in 1866. It is entirely possible that errors were made in remembering her age, as these are in fact very small differences. He is still in search of her parents' marriage. As these are Irish records that could be difficult.

Our second hybrid meeting also went very well. Hopefully, next time we can have more present.

We next meet on Wednesday, August 11th, 2021

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

Friday 16th July. "My Nuclear life" by Ian Adsley of Burton Science Group

Ian retired six years ago having undertaken research and development in nuclear measurement methods. During his working career he worked on three main topics – coal industry research, nuclear decommissioning and land remediation based at the Harwell Nuclear Site, and finally as a consultant on projects regarding the clean-up of the Cold War nuclear legacy issues in the Former Soviet Union.

He talked of many things including Marie Curie's radium spoil tip, the clean-up of the Olympic park site prior to the 2012 Olympics, the purest gold ever produced, surveying a sunken Russian submarine off Murmansk and also Chernobyl and Fukushima. A most interesting talk.

Our next meeting will be in person at the Alliance Evangelical Church. A talk by a retired Chief Fire Officer on the changes in the pattern of fires and accidents since he joined the fire service in 1964.

Music Appreciation

We only had 2 contributors this month.

Mike said:

I was watching a tv program where Gyles Brandreth and Sheila Hancock were travelling the canals around London and for some reason were talking to Dave Peacock of Chas n Dave. It reminded me of the wonderful music and in particular the lyrics they wrote. So clever and so London, not just Cockney. Often quite wistful. Two other favourite bands who often wrote about London so wistfully were the Kinks and the nutty boys themselves, Madness.

The Kinks possibly originated English whimsical pop. Nev gave us "Sunny Afternoon" last month. I'll back that up with "Waterloo Sunset" from Ray Davies' set at Glastonbury 2010.

Madness couldn't be more London and wrote so many songs that just didn't fit the pop format. Baggy Trousers, One step Beyond, House of Fun etc. but my favourite is "Our House"

So back to Chas n Dave with "I wonder where he is now". This was their last song before Chas died and wasn't ever recorded but they played it live on Jools Holland.

Not exactly whimsical but typical Chas n Dave is the "Sideboard Song" with Dave looking very young in this 1979 video.

As an extra there was a lovely memorial concert to Chas Hodges featuring Dave Peacock, Eric Clapton, Albert Lee, Gary Brooker, Joe Brown, Ralph McTell and many more. It's a bit rough round the edges but it's like a great pub concert. Especially the last half. If you've got the time it's almost the full concert lasting 2h40m.

Very different to all these but picking up on Neil's theme from last month where he talked about song writers who weren't easy on the ear, here is a great Neil Young song but definitely better voiced. It's "After the Gold Rush" by Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris

Nev said:

My first choice is a Beatles track from the 1965 Rubber Soul album. It is "In My Life" which John Lennon claimed that he had written both the lyrics and the music except for the verse harmony which he conceded was Paul McCartney's contribution, McCartney however claims that he set Lennon's lyrics to music from start to finish. The electric piano on the track is by George Martin.

My second choice is "As Time Goes By". This song was written in 1931 by Herbert Hupfeld and became famous when it was featured in the 1942 film "Casablanca" performed by Dooley Wilson. There are many versions of this song but the one I have chosen is performed by a very relaxed Harry Nilsson from his "A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night" album with orchestral arrangements by Gordon Jenkins. On that album Jenkins uses the introduction of a different song for each track eg the introduction to this track is from "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now"

Thirdly I have chosen "Who Know Where the Time Goes" by Fairport Convention. The song was written by Sandy Denny and she recorded a demo record in 1967. In 1968 Denny joined Fairport Convention and she recorded the song with the band on their 1969 "Unhalfbricking" album. The song has been covered by many artists.

The fourth song is “Time in a Bottle” by Jim Croce. Croce wrote the lyrics when his wife told him she was pregnant in December 1970 and it appeared on his debut album “Don’t Mess Around With Jim” in 1972. It was never intended to release the song as a single but after Croce was killed in an plane crash in September 1973 the song received a large amount of airplay and was released as a single in December 1973. It was a no 1 hit in January 1974.

My final choice is the Bob Dylan song “The Times They Are A Changing”. Dylan is thought to have written the song in 1963 and it appeared as the title track of his 1964 album of the same name. It was released as a single in the UK in 1965 reaching no 9 in the charts. The lyrics are as prophetic now as when they were written 58 years ago. There are many versions of the song and the one I have chosen is by Peter, Paul and Mary who featured several Dylan songs in their repertoire.”

We were planning to meet in person in August but unfortunately almost everyone is busy doing something else so we will hopefully next meet in September at Sallie’s house.

GROUPS PLANNING TO RESTART SOON

The following groups have said that they are planning to restart meeting in person this month or next. Watch the website for news of any other groups restarting.

Computer Group

Mon 16th Aug at 2 Marlborough Way

Digital Photography

Thu 2nd Sept at 16 Winchester Way

Industrial Heritage

We hope to restart in September. Few nearby museums have reopened, and I've not found any factory visits running yet. Our first trip will probably be to Derby Museum of Making, formally the Silk Museum.

Science & Technology

They will be holding their first “In person” meeting on Monday 13th Sept. Details in the timetable on page 1.

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