



Newsletter October 2021

Interest Groups Timetable for November

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 23rd Nov	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby Mark Walsh - "Dads Army. We're all doomed!"
Arts and Crafts	Thu 4th Nov	10 am	TBA
Bridge	Mon 1st Nov	2 pm	Hood Park leisure Centre
	Mon 8th Nov	7 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club
Calligraphy	Tue 9th Nov	10:00 am	At Gill's. Christmas project. Using italics to write text from a Christmas Carol in a Christmas tree shape
Computer	Wed 3rd Nov	2:00 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 4th Nov	10:00 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 17th Nov	10:00 am	Meet at the Co-Op on Derby Road to walk the Poppy Trail. Alternative venue TBA if wet.
Family History	Wed 10th Nov	2:00 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 18th Nov	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Talk on bonsai plants. £3 entry fee
History	Thu 25th Nov	Note later start at 2:30 pm	Packington Village Hall. Colin Ellis - Settle & Carlisle Railway
Industrial Heritage	Wed 24th Nov	TBA	Planning meeting for next year. Venue TBA
Literature	Tue 9th Nov	1:30 pm	Meeting at Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 11th Nov	12 for 12:30pm	The Mill Wheel, Ticknall Rd, Hartshorne, DE11 7AS
Medium Walks	Mon 8th Nov	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at QE Diamond Jubilee Wood CP LE67 2TD
Music Appreciation	Wed 3rd Nov	10:00 am	At Sid and Ann's house. 23 Grange Close
Recorder	Thu 4th Nov	10:00 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Science & Technology	Mon 8th Nov	2:00 pm	Ashby Alliance Evangelical Church. Kurt Kovach - The Accident of Life

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Short Walks	Fri 19th Nov	10:00 am	Meet at the Oakthorpe colliery picnic site.
Supper Club	Thu 25th Nov	7 for 7.30 pm	The Smisby Arms, Nelsons Square, Smisby, LE65 2UA
Walking	Tue 2nd Nov	9.45 for 10 am start	Meet at Robin Hood pub car park, Burton Road, Overseal, DE12 6LQ. Car park entrance is off Lullington Road. (OS ref. SK295154)
	Tue 16th Nov	9.45 for 10 am start	TBA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 17th Nov	7:00 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early December

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Music Appreciation	Wed 1st	10 am	TBA
Computer	Wed 1st	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital photography	Thu 2nd	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Recorder	Thu 2nd	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Bridge	Mon 6th	TBA	TBA
Walking	Tue 7th	9.45 for 10 am start	Meet at 10 Rydal Gdns, LE65 1FJ
Christmas Lunch	Thu 9th	12:30 for 1 pm	Willesley Park Golf Club £23.95pp. Just a few tickets left. See details below

Coming Events

Event	Date	Time	Venue
Burns Supper	Thu 27th Jan 2022	7 for 7:30 pm	Willesley Park Golf Club. Tickets on sale from Nov meeting.

NEWS

INTEREST GROUPS RESTARTING

As you can see from the timetable above, things are starting to get back to normal. 18 groups will be meeting this month. The Curling, Italian and Quiz groups are not yet restarting mostly through lack of venue or group leader.

Both the Calligraphy and Music Appreciation groups could do with a couple more members. If you are interested in joining either, email either calligraphy@ashbyu3a.co.uk or musicapp@ashbyu3a.co.uk to get more information.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH - Thursday 9th December, 12 for 12:30 pm

The Christmas lunch is back on this year. We have booked the Willesley Park Golf Club as usual and Avril has been taking bookings. **We have a very few places left**, so if you wish to come phone Avril as soon as possible. She will need to know your menu choices (please state if you have any dietary requirements, almost all can be catered for). We also need to know which table to seat you at. A seating plan will be available at the next monthly meeting, but we can email a copy to people if necessary. As the tables fill up, we may have to move people about to fill the last seats.

After your place is confirmed please send a cheque for £23.9pp, payable to Ashby u3a.

to: Ashby u3a Social Sec, 8 Rotherwood Drive, Ashby, LE65 2JD

MENU

1. Leek, Potato & Pancetta Soup

2. Duck Liver Parfait – Duck Bonbon – Spiced Apple & Date Chutney
Sour Dough Bread Crisp

3. Goats Cheese, Pear & Walnut Tart – Micro Herb Salad (v)

4. Smoked Salmon & Prawn Salad – Pickled Beetroot – Gin Crème Fraiche

A. Roasted & Honey Basted Leicestershire Turkey - Chipolata & Chestnut Stuffing – Warm
Cranberries– Roast Potatoes

B. Confit of Duck – Rosemary Buttered Mash – Red Cabbage
Clementine & Cointreau Jus

C. Pan Fried Seabass – Olive Oil & Crab Crushed New Potatoes
Buttered Samphire

D. Mushroom & Cashew Nut Wellington – White Wine & Leek Cream Sauce (v)
(All served with Seasonal vegetables)

W. Hot Vanilla Waffle – Bananas – Vanilla Pod Ice cream – Caramel Sauce (v)

X. Traditional Christmas Pudding – Brandy Custard- Spiced Fruit & Nuts (v)

Y. “Black Forest Trifle” – Cherry Ice Cream (v)

Z. Selection of Cheese – Festive Chutney – Celery & Nuts (v)

Coffee & Mints

3 courses £23.95

All choices can be provided in GF and/or DF

HELP & WELFARE

Covid

Covid cases are now falling steeply in the NW Leics area but the numbers are still much higher than earlier this year so be careful out there.

We remind you that we cannot guarantee that all members or other participants at u3a meetings or gatherings will have been vaccinated nor that they are virus-free and that it is up to individuals to decide whether or not they are comfortable with the risks of mixing in groups when the virus is still very much at large.

Group leaders may also wish to remind participants that they may wish to wear face masks in crowded spaces, although it isn't compulsory nor is it a legal requirement.

Welfare

Our Welfare person is Sharon Woodland. Sharon can be contacted at welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk

If you know of any member who is unwell or isolating or has a family member who is unwell, please contact Sharon 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.

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.

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.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

October 26th – Guest speaker Sandy Leong - “A nice cup of tea”

Sandy gave us a very interesting talk on the history and customs of tea and tea-drinking from the earliest known mention of tea through to the present day.

Tea was first discovered in China in about 2700 BCE when some camellia leaves fell from a tree into the emperor's bowl of hot water, apparently! The Chinese and then the Japanese refined this, taking it to a high art form. In the late 8thC a Chinese writer Lu Yu wrote the definitive book on tea called the Ch'a Ching. Tea didn't reach the western world until the early 17thC when the Dutch imported the first tea to Holland. It reached England in 1658 when it was being sold in a London coffee house. Yes, we were a nation of coffee drinkers before we became tea drinkers. I say nation, but of course it was only the very rich who could afford to buy it.

As the Chinese had little need of anything we could sell them, they were reluctant to trade until we sold them opium from India! Bu this was still not considered by the British to be a secure way to obtain tea so tea plants were smuggled out of China to set up plantations in British India so that we could guarantee supplies. This brought about the age of the tea clippers such as Cutty Sark who raced back from India at harvest time to be the first ship home and hence able to sell their tea at the highest price.

As tea became more popular the government first tried to tax it at 25p in the £ rising to an incredible 119p/£ but tea was so popular that smuggling it became rife. At one point more tea was smuggled than imported legally. Tax was later reduced to 5p/£ which stopped smuggling but the tax remained until 1964.

Tea was of course partly responsible for the start of the American War of Independence. The Boston Tea Party saw 342 chests of tea thrown in the harbour in a protest about taxation without representation as the colonies had no say in the ways in which they were taxed and often received none of the revenue raised.

Tea has been variously declared by doctors to be healthy or unhealthy for us, often based merely on the opinions of individuals. John Wesley, the evangelist, denounced it but later the temperance movement encouraged its consumption to get working people off of alcohol.

By 1901, the British were drinking over 6lb per person. Most tea today, of course, comes in tea bags. These were invented in the very early 20thC but didn't become popular until the 1970s. Nowadays we drink 100 million cups a day. Although coffee is catching up we still drink more tea than coffee.

A very entertaining talk was of course followed by “a nice cup of tea” (or coffee!) in the back room of the church.

GROUP REPORTS

Bridge

The Bridge are restarting their regular sessions again. Their first meeting will be at Hood Park Leisure Centre on Monday Nov 1st at 10am, and the second at Ivanhoe Social Club on Monday Nov 8th at 7pm and then hopefully every Monday after that alternating venues and times.

Craft

7th October

The group met for their first actual practical crafting since lockdown and were painting Christmas cards.

Calligraphy

12th October

Only three of us managed to meet for our first session due to holidays, illness etc. However, once we had caught up on events we managed to look at different types of italic writing and the type of nibs, pens etc that could be used.

Although we didn't manage to produce any work, we agreed that our homework will be to produce two lines of text, in italics and of any sort, for the next meeting. As we will be starting our Christmas project we will also need to choose a Christmas Carol and begin to plan the layout - one that can fit into the shape of a Christmas Tree.

The next meeting is on Nov 9th at Gill's house, so if there are any interested members out there, please ring Sue for details.

NB. We are very much an amateur, self taught group so nobody need feel concerned about joining us!!

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.

18th October

We had quite a crew today with seven in attendance.

Nobody had any serious problems, but we did have an extended discussion about storage systems looking at the way we can manage the drives on our machines, and identify how much storage we have, with ways to maximise that.

Then we talked about the changes in systems and their hardware from the earliest days as we all need to think about how they will change in the future, and what we need to do to make sure our data etc stays uncorrupted as it moves from one medium to the next.

Today we are already using Solid State drives with much quicker access rates than older hard drives, but they are typically smaller in overall capacity. We looked at the pros and cons of Cloud storage, which is becoming much more common for large files such as photographs but is vulnerable to failures in the access systems. The conversation is ongoing.

One odd, but minor, problem brought up by JD was the strange occurrence of a flickering cursor.

He reported that in Windows 10, while typing a Word document, the cursor began jumping around and flickering randomly. No-one seemed to have seen this before, but JD had found a reference on a Google forum. The respondent there located a mysterious file in his settings with the suffix '.module' which, when deleted cured the problem. JD located a similar file and deleted that, with the same result, and with no apparent after-effects.

Finally, one part of the group studied how to manage large photographic files, and their organisation, including bulk transfers, which can take up a lot of time.

Photography

Thursday 7th October

We ventured out to Moira Furnace for a photographic session for the first time in ages. The weather was kind and gave us blue skies and white clouds so hopefully we will have some good photos to critique next month.

Drawing and painting

Wednesday 20th October

This month has been very busy. Ashby Art Festival invited the U3A D&P group to participate in a "Poppy Trail" involving 100 poppy themed canvases to be displayed in Ashby shop windows during the month of November. It is in celebration of 100 years of the British Legion.

Four canvases are being prepared by us and we are looking forward to seeing them on display.

Also, during the morning, when we met together, the theme for the day was "Poppies and/or Pumpkins. Another stunning gallery was created. This is Brenda's Poppy from the Gallery.



Next Month: If the weather is favourable meet at 10am, November 17th, at the Co-Op on Derby Road, to walk the "poppy trail". If the forecast is poor, alternative arrangements will be notified by email.

Family History

13th October

Another good session today, with four at the table and one in remote attendance.

Eileen is still making progress with the Parish Records back into the 18th century. She is also tracking relatives who went to New Zealand. Dora is now tracking ancestors in Ireland. Keith is still tracking relatives in Canada.

Sylvia was still unable to join us in person but did email some information. She has sight of relatives in Ireland on two censuses, but not elsewhere. So frustrating! Her DNA report has given her links on her father's side, and maternal grandfather's side, but not from her maternal grandmother's side.

She asked about a firm offering dual Irish/British nationality certification for those with an Irish grandparent, and wonders if this is genuine. My response is that I do not know, but I would have thought research on the GRO website would be a good first approach.

This is the first entry on their site:

"Dual citizenship (also known as dual nationality) is allowed in the UK. This means you can be a British citizen and also a citizen of other countries.

You do not need to apply for dual citizenship. You can apply for foreign citizenship and keep your British citizenship.

Many countries do not accept dual citizenship. Check with the country's consulate or embassy in the UK to find out about that country's laws on dual nationality."

Not terribly helpful, but it implies you may not need a private company to help.

John D helped out where possible. He also described some of his adventures researching data for the story he is writing about his ancestors. Colin Ellis has been a fount of knowledge on early Victorian railway practices.

Gardening

21st October

One of our members donated a considerable amount of money for a free buffet. It was held at Packington Village Hall and was attended by forty members. There was a good selection of food, provided by outdoor caterers. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable time. We also had a free raffle with guess what? Plants for prizes!

Our next meeting is on November 18th at 2.15 pm, with a talk on Bonsai plants. £3 entry.

History

The History Group are having their first meeting on 25th November at Packington Hall. Colin Ellis will talk about the skulduggery regarding the surprising origins of the Settle and Carlisle Railway and some views of trains crossing the spectacular high Pennines.

Note that the meeting will start at the later than usual time of 2:30 pm

Industrial History

Wednesday 27th October - Visit to the Museum of Making, Derby

This museum has been undergoing a major renovation for many years, progress having been slowed by Covid of course. However it has finally opened and 20 of us went to have a look round. Entrance is free but it is worth going along. It is situated in the old Silk Mill building which is reputed to be the first ever fully mechanised factory in the world. The exhibits show off all the various industries and factories that have made Derby famous from silk, coal and pottery through to railways, bikes, cars and of course Rolls Royce plus many industries which we didn't know came from Derby. We spent a fascinating couple of hours there before heading off to Wetherspoons for lunch. It was great to be back out visiting places.

Next month we will have a discussion meeting to see where we can go next year when hopefully more places will be open.

Lunch

Thursday 14th October

The luncheon group actually managed to get their first lunch out in 18 months after last month's trip was cancelled at the last minute due to technical issues at the intended venue.

This month we met at Turpin's in Twycross. Most of us enjoyed good food but one item, ordered by 3 or 4 of us, was disappointingly somewhat less than described on the menu and the kitchen first denied there was a problem and then was not very helpful in rectifying it. It rather spoilt the lunch for many of us. However the company was excellent as ever and it was good to be eating out again.

Next month we shall meet at 12 for 12:30 on Remembrance Day at the Mill Wheel in Hartshorne. We should have reasonable time to get there for those attending the ceremonies in Ashby.

Literature Group

The group are now meeting at Sandra's house each month so that they can discuss the books they are reading. The discussions are lively, one hears.

Recorder Group

Thursday 21st October

We had a successful meeting this morning, with 5 of us, including our newest two recruits, who both found us via the Ashby u3a website. We now have 7 on the books. It's amazing, having so many members! Mind you, we haven't had all of us together yet: one member is off on a walking holiday, and another is due for a hip operation, so is presumably self-isolating.

We can now play a greater variety of music, sometimes with two (or more!) to a part. We started off with some simpler pieces in two parts, which we played on 4 different sizes of recorders. We also played trios and quartets. The music was varied, from renaissance, baroque, folk songs, and more modern music, including "Basse Danse" from Peter Warlock's Capriol Suite, and a new acquisition, "The Entertainer" by Scot Joplin. Some of the music has uninspiring lower parts, but that written by ensemble players can be more imaginative. A case in point is an arrangement of a Chaconne by Purcell by Helen Hooker, a well-known player/teacher/arranger/etc, who was busy on the internet during lockdown.

And the sun shone!

Science & Technology

Monday 11th October.

'A Blast from the Past' by Mike Hardy

Mike Hardy recalled his experiences and reminiscences of quarrying and blast operations from 1964 to 2004. Sixteen members listened as Mike described his early working life, transferring from agriculture to managing large quarry operations. Starting work at the Breedon and Cloud Hill site, he moved to sites in Wales, Southampton and back to the Midlands, gaining experience with mining and blasting limestone and granite. The various methods of drilling for blast holes and the layout of the holes (burden, spacing and hole depth) were described with the aid of images and videos. The types of rocks being quarried were briefly described, from oolitic limestone, a sedimentary rock, to granite, a hard igneous rock and how the strength of the explosive was matched to rock type. Then the type of explosives and detonators used depended on the wetness of the blast hole and the dimensions of the rock face. Finally, the adverse effects of a blast on people and buildings needs to be considered, including ground vibration, air shock wave and flyrock (projectiles). Mike brought along examples of firing mechanisms and 'dummy' detonators and recalled many anecdotes that brought his talk to life.

After the refreshment break Paul McKay gave two brief talks, one on the recent release of beavers by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust into the Willington Nature Reserve. The second talk summarised the recent 'flyby' of planet Mercury by the BepiColombo orbiters.

Supper club

Thursday 28th October

This month 13 of us met at the Unicorn at Orton on the Hill. Fortunately all went well despite our unlucky number. The Unicorn has had a serious makeover since we were last there some 2 or 3 years ago, and very nice it is too. The food was very good, mostly in huge quantities, and reasonably priced. There were no complaints and some doggy bags were taken home.

Next month we shall be at the Smisby Arms where we have had to pay a deposit and will have to pre-order the food. Another complication to sort out!

Walking

Tuesday 19th October. Thornton, led by Trev and Val

As the weather forecast was for heavy rain at 10am, it was a pleasant surprise to find we had an unusually warm and humid morning,

12 hardy members left the Bricklayers Arms in Thornton to circumnavigate the reservoir, before heading off into the countryside and an encounter with a freight train when crossing the railway line.

A drink stop was taken by the fishing ponds on Bagworth Heath before heading off into Royal Tigers Wood and on to Bagworth church ruins, continuing downhill and passing under the railway line and back up to Thornton. After 6.5 miles we were back and we all enjoyed a drink and a meal at the pub.

Medium walks

11th October. Moira Furnace, led by Alison

12 of us set off on a very pleasant morning from Moira Furnace. We welcomed a new member to our group - Stephen - and hope to see him again. The walk took the Newfield incline to Hicks Lodge, skirted the lake and on to Willesley Wood, Oakthorpe and back to Moira via the canal path from Donisthorpe Woodland Park. 5 miles.

Short Walks

Friday 15th October. Snibston Country Park car park.

Again 10 walkers and Lily the dog met at the country park on a glorious sunny day to explore the newly landscaped coal tip and very attractive it is. The car park is both for the country park and the Century Theatre. We followed the blue trail which goes around the borders of the park. It started off with a climb to a point overlooking Coalville football ground before the path took a gentle slope down until it levelled out arriving eventually at the fishing ponds. We continued along the path to the golf centre entrance and from there we followed the road to the old railway track which is now a good path to the café. Sadly the café was closed and remained resolutely shut so the party split up and went their separate ways. Total distance about 1 3/4 miles.

Music Appreciation

Wednesday 6th October

5 of us met at Neil's house and brought along a varied selection of music. Nev started by playing us 2 versions of the same song, "Words of love" first by Buddy Holly and then by the Beatles. Noticeable how similar the arrangements are but the Beatles vocals are harmonised. We then had 2 tracks by Neil Sedaka, "The hungry years" & "Betty Grable".

Ann went back to the 50s with Elvis's "Jailhouse rock" & 1961 with Bobby Vee's "Rubber ball" followed by the very different Caro Emerald and the tango inspired "Tangled up". Mike was in a classical mood and gave us John Williams (the guitarist not the composer) playing "Suite Espanola" and violinist Ann-Sophie Mutter with a virtuoso performance of "Zigeunerwiesen" and when asked to choose from Neil's personal top 20 Mike chose the very different Joe Walsh and "Rocky mountain way"

Sid gave us the second Beatles track of the day "If I fell" followed by "Forever autumn" from Jeff Wayne's War of the Worlds complete with Richard Burton's narration and then Justin Hayward's "Wind of heaven". Neil gave us John Martyn's "Jonny too bad", Joni Mitchell's very rocky and un-folksy "Raised on robbery" and the 2nd Elvis track "Blue moon".

Nev closed the session with the 3rd Beatles track "8 days a week".

As ever a very varied selection and particularly good one.

Wine Appreciation

Wednesday 20th October

For our second meeting we again had 5 members attend but as Colin and Sharon couldn't make it we had 2 new members - Colin E and Pat.

As we did last month, we each brought a bottle of wine which we thought others would like and which cost less than £10. Most bottles were well under that. We tasted, not glugged!, each wine in turn. Unlike last time, we recorded our tasting notes and scored each wine out of 10. Whilst we all had similar views on most of the wines, it was surprising how different opinions were of one or two. I think as we get to know each other, we are getting braver in our criticisms without upsetting the wine's provider!

The wine with the highest score at the end of the evening, and which most of us though was the best, was a red wine from Germany's Mosel valley brought by Colin.

Next month Ken will provide 4 bottles for us to taste. We will be interested to see what wines we get to taste.

IF YOU WANT TO GET IN TOUCH, OUR NEW COMMITTEE ARE:

Tony Smith	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 831822
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
Sharon Woodland	Welfare	welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 413867
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
Colin Ellis	Member	member_wo@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 272592