



Newsletter January 2022

Interest Groups Timetable for February 2022

Please note that this timetable could be subject to change at any time due to the ongoing pandemic.

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 22nd	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby Fool's Gold. Acoustic music and story telling
Arts and Crafts	Thu 3rd	10:00 am	2 Marlborough Way
Bridge	Mon 7th	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
	Mon 14th	7 pm	Ivanhoe Club
	Tue 21st	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
	Tue 28th	7 pm	Ivanhoe Club
Calligraphy	Tue 8th	10:00 am	At Jenny's. A Valentine message/words inside a heart shape.
Computer	Wed 2nd	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
	Mon 21st	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 3rd	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 16th	10 am	Venue and topic TBC
Family History	Wed 9th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 17th	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Colour through the seasons. A talk by Simon Gulliver, gardens and parks consultant for the National Trust. Also plants for sale. £4 entry
History	Thu 24th	2:15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Bill Devitt - '4 Fiddlers'
Industrial Heritage	Wed 23rd	TBA	The ACME Whistle factory and jewellery quarter, Birmingham
Italian			TBA
Literature	Tue 8th	1:30 pm	Meeting at Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 10th	12 for 12.30 pm	Greyhound Inn, 149 Ashby Rd, Boundary, Swadlincote DE11 7BU

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Medium Walks	Mon 14th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Hospital Lane, Ravenstone LE67 2AJ
Music Appreciation	Wed 2nd	10 am	Nev's at 26 Homecroft Drive, Packington
Recorder	Thu 3rd	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
	Thu 17th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Science & Technology	Mon 14th	2 pm	Ashby Alliance Evangelical Church. Adrian Hickson - "Transmitton - a local company's technical story"
Short Walks	Fri 18th	10 am	Meet at Ticknall Car Park
Supper Club	Thu 24th	7.30 for 8 pm	NOTE the later time. The George Inn, Loughborough Rd, Coleorton, LE67 8HF.
Walking	Tue 1st	9.45 for 10 am start	Angel Inn, Coleorton Moor, LE67 8GB
	Tue 15th	9.45 for 10 am start	TBA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 16th	7 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early March

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Walking	Tue 1st	9.45 for 10 am start	TBA
Music Appreciation	Wed 2nd	10 am	TBA
Computer	Wed 2nd	2 pm	16 Winchester Way.
Arts and Crafts	Thu 3rd	10 am	2 Marlborough Way
Digital Photography	Thu 3rd	10 am	16 Winchester Way.
Recorder	Thu 3rd	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Bridge	Mon 7th	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre

HELP & WELFARE

Covid

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. Especially as the new variant seems to be much more transmissible.

Group leaders may also wish to remind participants that they may wish to wear face masks in crowded spaces including homes, although since Jan 27th it is no longer a legal requirement.

Again, it is no longer a legal requirement to wear face masks in places of worship which includes the Congregational Church where we hold our monthly meetings and also the Ashby Alliance Evangelical Church where the Science Group meets, but feel free to wear one if you prefer.

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-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.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

January 25th - Kath Reynolds - "Goose grease and brown paper (old cures and remedies)

Ms Reynolds gave us a very interesting talk and reminiscence about all the old remedies that our mums and grannies used to use to "heal" us before the National Health came along and everyone had access to free medicines (though they are not so free nowadays). There were ointments and foul-smelling linctuses and homemade concoctions often based on vinegar. Vic rubs and goose grease were common for chest ailments. For sore throats it was honey and lemon (along with whisky if you were lucky). That was most likely reserved for Dad!

Cod liver oil, syrup of figs, milk of magnesia, tincture of violet and menthol. Friars' Balsam steam inhalations, Carter's Little Liver Pills and other proprietary potions were inflicted on us.

An apple a day may have kept the doctor away, but the acids and sugars in it would have kept the dentist busy. That's if you could afford a dentist. Otherwise it would be string tied to the tooth and the other end to the door handle, and a quick slamming of the door!!

Removing warts seemed to generate a vast number of remedies that were little more than old wives tales or witchcraft. Most involved rubbing the offending wart with something which you then threw away and waited. Of course warts usually disappear of their own accord if you wait long enough!

However most remedies, regardless of what was wrong with you, seemed to involve eating, smelling or rubbing on an onion!

A very funny trip back into the not-so-good old days.

BURNS SUPPER 27th JAN

After having to miss out last year, 58 people sat down to the traditional 3 course supper of Scotch broth, Haggis and Cranachan, although not all were brave enough to eat the Haggis and so chickened out (pun intended).

The evening was nearly a disaster when our piper was taken ill, but a replacement piper, Don Jarram, stepped in at very short notice and did a wonderful job of entertaining us throughout the evening. After the haggis was piped around the room, Bill Wilson gave the Address to the Haggis before ritually cutting it open and with the Toast to the Haggis followed by The Selkirk Grace.

After an excellent meal, Colin Woodland gave the Address to the Lassies with one of his inimitable poems. Bill and Chairman Tony Smith did their now traditional double-act of a recital in Scots dialect followed by the English translation.

The evening closed of course with Auld Lang Syne with us all standing in one large circle around the room. Some of us even knew the words to the second verse!

GROUP REPORTS

Bridge

The Bridge Group meetings are back under way. Whilst Neil is still away, Alison and Gary are continuing to look after the group.

Craft

13th January

The group met to discuss the programme for the start of this year before starting on their first project which will be to decorate flower pots before going on to create macramé pot hangers for them.

Calligraphy

11th January

Six of us met for a planning meeting for this year. It was very productive with lots of ideas. We are going to concentrate on a "Modern Calligraphy" font until July. The plan is to practise the font at home so that at each meeting we will complete a new and different task.

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.

January

The Computer Group didn't meet in January with concerns over meeting indoors, but we are resuming in February.

Digital Photography

The January meeting was cancelled but we will resume in February. Hopefully some better weather will allow us to get out to take some photographs.

Drawing and painting

19th January

The theme for the January session was the new year.....the Chinese New Year!

2022 is the year of the tiger. The Chinese zodiac has a twelve year cycle, and some of us found our individual zodiac sign.



This is Megan's Chinese Dragon. Check the gallery on the website for some more paintings.

Family History

12th January

For our first session in 2022 we had six at the table, with one contribution via WhatsApp.

We concentrated on the 1921 Census, with the Leader working just one lesson ahead of the team.

Topics covered were:

Access to the Census and search techniques, including access for those without a full subscription to FindMyPast:

The access to search for and view images is the same, but those with a subscription, in addition to having normal access to all the other parts of FindMyPast, get a discount when viewing 1921 images.

Searching by street address is different with this Census from previous ones.

We also covered downloading and uploading gedcoms and searching 'downstream' for children. That is, children born more recently than the latest in one's files, and after 1939.

In this case the first line of attack is first to search the Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages for a likely marriage, then search after that for births with the father's surname and mother's maiden surname.

John D had an additional thread to follow, trying to pin down where and when his father met his mother. He has helpful conversations going with both Wakefield and Birmingham Archives and will report further on planned visits to do hands-on research.

It was a very useful and lively session, with lots of clues to follow up.

Gardening

20th January

This month's meeting was a talk by Francesca Sinclair on Garden Design. Francesca is a well known Garden Designer and she has a regular column in the Ashby Life. She was very informative, showing pictures and explaining the different styles. It was very enjoyable and well attended.

History

For our first meeting in 2022 we were privileged to have Julie Edes, a popular and very professional presenter. 41 members turned out to hear her speak about the iconic and charismatic French singer, Edith Piaf (which is French slang for Sparrow).

Edith's life was chaotic, but Julie navigated us through it superbly.

Born in December 1915, some say on the street, and some in hospital, her family background was as chaotic as her life and goes a long way to explain what happened.

Brought up by her street performer father (with at least 19 children by various women to his 'credit') after being weaned from wine at four, and having been 'cured' of failing sight, she was on the streets until aged 16, when she was discovered and started singing in nightclubs. She had an extraordinary capacity for drink, reputedly visiting up to 15 bars in a day! As soon as she made any money, it went on alcohol.

She became a star at age 20 in Gerny's Cabaret but was dogged by scandals and possible involvement in a murder, which for a time had her blacklisted in Paris.

Her genius brought her renewed fame and success and enabled her to keep going during the War. Apparently uncultured, unprincipled, and an incurable romantic, a string of boyfriends and affairs had no impact on her continued success with both French and Germans alike.

She maintained her success and momentum after the War, being introduced to Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip and the list of her famous contacts reads like a Who's Who of Society at the time: Raymond Russo, Yves Montand, Maurice Chevalier, Charles Aznavour and Jean Cocteau to mention just a few.

She toured in America to rave reviews and had several romantic encounters which eventually ended in tragedy, with first Marcel Cerdan, and near the end another boyfriend, both dying in air crashes. Following a series of accidents, she became addicted to morphine, on top of the alcohol.

She married Jaques Pils in 1952 but divorced in 1956. Nothing seemed to halt her success, notching up 300 million French francs of royalty sales in 1958 alone (about £600,000 today). However her health started to deteriorate and she was in and out of hospital. Despite this, she continued with a string of boyfriends.

She married for the last time in 1962, to a hairdresser called Theo Lambouskas, but she passed away in October 1963 aged just 48, on the verge of going to America to sing for John F Kennedy, who himself had just one month left to live.

Julie played us out with a haunting recording of Piaf herself, signing 'Non, je ne regrette rien'.

A life more different than any of us could have contemplated, but somehow lighting up ours. A strange but engaging experience for us all.

Science & Technology

January

It was decided not to meet this month due to Covid. However some members of the group joined the Industrial Heritage group on a trip to the National Space Centre on the 26th. See the Industrial Heritage report below for details.

Industrial History

The Industrial Heritage group visited the National Space Museum in Leicester. Despite trying to choose a day when there would be few children, it seems that schools are still visiting in large numbers and about 6 groups were milling about. However they were considerably quieter and better behaved than last time we visited. Despite that we had a very enjoyable time looking at all the exhibits and even pressing a few buttons just like the kids!

The film shown in the planetarium was very up to date with a computer animation of the James Webb telescope which went into orbit on Christmas Day. The facts about it are amazing. The mirror which unfolds from 18 segments is 6.5m (21ft) across and it is orbiting 1 million miles from Earth. No chance of sending a repair team out that far, unlike the Hubble telescope which is only a little over 300 miles up.

Lunch

13th January

Our first lunch meeting of the year was at the Copt Oak Inn, Markfield. 15 members sat down to lunch served by a very personable waitress who was keen to help. After sorting through the vast and complicated menu, we all managed to find something that we wanted and it all seemed to be very good. At least no complaints were heard. Unfortunately one or two of the puddings had run out by the time we got to them but the few that wanted them all got something suitable in the end. It was good to be back eating out with friends and with good food.

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.

Music Appreciation

January

Unfortunately with Neil away, and most others not able to attend, only two were available this month. So reluctantly we decided to cancel the January listening. Hopefully things will be back to normal next month.

Supper club

The supper club stood aside to be replaced by the Burns Supper on Jan 27th. See above for the report on that.

We shall be out and about next month with a visit to the George Inn at Coleorton on Thursday 24th Feb, but note that the time is a little later (7.30 for 8pm) as the George has a party in before us. I don't think they have the table before us, just that the pub wants to space things out in the kitchen.

Wine Appreciation

19th January

We at last had a chance to taste the wines that Ken had bought for our cancelled November meeting. The two white and two red wines were all from different regions of Chile. Some from the higher vineyards near the Andes, some from nearer the coast. 3 wines were from Concha y Toro which is the largest producer in Latin America, but these were mostly some of their lesser known brands.

One member found the whites too dry for his taste but were liked by the other 4. The reds were universally liked and both scored 9/10 on average. An interesting tasting session with some new discoveries for most of us.

Recorder Group

20th January

The recorder group met this morning, all 8 of us, for the first time ever.

We also have an extended range of instruments, from sopranino down to great bass, and they were all in action today. The sopranino (smaller than the familiar descant) featured in the Bantry Girls' Lament and both it and the great bass took part in the Capriol Suite by Peter Warlock and the Royal Wind Music by Bassano.

Changing from playing descant to sopranino requires a change of fingering, and holes closer together, no small challenge! Changing from descant and tenor to great bass keeps the same fingering, but means reading bass clef, and handling a much larger and heavier instrument.

We are an intrepid lot and we have fun, too! We even had a go at swung quavers while playing two spirituals.

We're getting better at "The Entertainer", but the theme from "Wallace and Gromit" is still a challenge. We'll get there in a bit.

Next meetings in February: 3rd and 17th, same place.

Walking

Tuesday 4th January. Snarestone led by Kevin

The first walk of the New Year was a lovely sunny day. 14 of us set off from Snarestone. We followed paths and over fields to Newton Burgoland before making our way along a rather treacherous, deep, trenched muddy path. We eventually got to the canal to join the Ivanhoe Way back to The Globe, which unfortunately was closed for food despite us having pre-booked! By the end of the walk there were some very muddy boots and trousers!

Tuesday 18th January. Calke Estate walk led by Kevin

It was beautiful day as seventeen of us gathered for our pre walk photograph in glorious sunshine outside the Staff of Life. We turned left out of the pub back towards Ashby for 100m before taking another left onto a footpath across fields to join the Calke Limeyards trail. We set off at a good place along the well maintained path before entering the Calke Estate parkland and heading towards the NT café for a coffee break.

On leaving our picnic tables we set off on the path above the lakes before turning left though a hole in wall at the corner of the Deer Park. Here we encountered the first mud of the walk as we crossed the fields overlooking Staunton Harold reservoir before entering the old Lime Kilns workings. Tracks with more mud led us though the tunnel under the main access road to the Calke Estate and back to the Staff of Life for lunch.

Medium walks

Monday 10th January. Bradgate and Swithland, led by Alison

The 1st walk of the New Year was met by a dry but overcast weather forecast, which proved to be very accurate.

10 of us set off from the Hunts Hill Car Park end of Bradgate Park and walked to Woodhouse Eaves via Newtown Plantation and Lingdale Golf Course. Then into Swithland Wood, up the bridal path into Bradgate Park with fine views of Old John. 5 miles in total.

The walk leader had said something rash about 'not much mud', but in her defence she is an optimist and possibly not a very good judge of acceptable mud levels (her own words!). No losses en route and all 10 of us made it back to the cars 2 hours later.

Short Walks

Friday 21st January. Around Ashby

The day broke dry but overcast and 13 members of the u3a set off from Hood Park gates into Hood Park along the main track before turning left onto a footpath up to Smisby Road by the corner shop. We crossed the road into Rotherwood Drive and along the footpath into the Bovis estate, then followed Canterbury Drive to Marlborough Way and on to Oakham Grove taking the footpath across into the new Davidson estate. Here we turned left down to the traffic lights on Burton Road where we turned right and crossed the road to take the footpath just beyond the lights into the new Bellway estate. We continued down the road when the footpath finished until we reached the main footpath between Ashby and Blackfordby. We took the footpath back into town past the Westfields recreation ground and Highfields Close onto Kilwardby Street and down into the town centre. Total distance 2 1/4 miles.

Unfortunately our planned coffee house stop, the new Mmacaron (yes that's how they spell it!), was full up so we split up to take our coffees and cakes at Dolce Café and at Poppy's.

IF YOU WANT TO GET IN TOUCH, OUR 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 Organiser	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