



## Newsletter March 2022

### Interest Groups Timetable for April 2022

Please note that this timetable could be subject to change at any time.

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 26th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Roger Bisgrove: Leicestershire industrialists and their legacies.
Arts and Crafts	Thu 7th	10 am	2 Marlborough Way
Bridge	Mon 4th	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
	Mon 11th	7 pm	Ivanhoe Club
	Tue 18th	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
	Tue 25th	7 pm	Ivanhoe Club
Calligraphy	Tue 12th	10 am	At Ann's. EOSTRE - Goddess of Spring - Repeated word
Computer	Wed 6th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
	Mon 18th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 7th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 20th	10 am	Venue TBA. Theme of 'Easter'
Family History	Wed 13th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 21st	9 am	Coach trip to Ashwood Nurseries and Johns Garden. Leaving from Royal Hotel at 9 am. Coach fare and entry £21.
History	Thu 28th	2:15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Jed Jaggard - "Dad's Army"
Industrial Heritage	Wed 27th	9.45 am	The Framework Knitters Museum, Ruddington
Italian			TBA
Literature	Tue 12th	1:30 pm	Meeting at Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 14th	12 for 12.30 pm	The Riftswood, Comberford Rd, Tamworth B79 8PB

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Medium Walks	Mon 11th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Ticknall Village Hall CP on Ingleby Lane
Music Appreciation	Wed 6th	10 am	At Sallie's
Recorder	Thu 7th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
	Thu 21st	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Science & Technology	Mon 11th	2 pm	Ashby Alliance Evangelical Church. Dr Julian Onions - Crazy Interstellar Rockets
Short Walks	Fri 15th		NOTE We are not meeting as this is Good Friday
Supper Club	Thu 28th	7 for 7.30 pm	The Mill Wheel, Hartshorne, DE11 7AS
Walking	Tue 5th	9.45 for 10 am start	Bull & Lion, Packington
	Tue 15th	9.45 for 10 am start	High Peak Junction Car Park, Lea Rd, Matlock DE4 5AA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 20th	7 pm	Annie's house

### **Interest Groups Timetable for early May**

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Bridge	Mon 2nd	2 pm	Hood Park Leisure Centre
Walking	Tue 3rd	9.45 for 10 am start	TBA
Music Appreciation	Wed 4th	10 am	TBA
Computer	Wed 4th	2 pm	TBA
Arts and Crafts	Thu 5th	10 am	2 Marlborough Way
Digital Photography	Thu 5th	10 am	TBA
Recorder	Thu 5th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal

## A REMINDER ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

### Your membership renewal is due on 1st April.

The fee this year is £20.00, or £16.00 if you are the 2nd member at one address or a fully paid up member at another U3A.

There is a small increase from before as the bank now charges us for every transaction, the Third Age Trust has increased its levy and the Congregational Church has raised its fees for us to meet there.

We haven't raised our fees for at least 7 years.

Renewal forms are downloadable by clicking on the "Information" tab on the website or from the Membership Sec., Iain Banns. **Please don't just send money, we need the completed form to comply with Data Protection legislation.**

If you have renewed recently, thank you, and you may have noticed that the latest renewal form asks you to provide emergency contact details should anything untoward happen either at a meeting or out on a visit or coach trip.

There is also now a tick box to allow us to apply for Gift-Aid. This will allow us to claim back an extra 25% of your membership fee from the taxman. I'm sure you'll agree that we can think of a better way to spend it than him!

If you were quick of the mark and filled in an earlier membership form which didn't have either of those boxes on it, we shall get back to you later to ask if you would like to give that info to us.

## 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](mailto: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.

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING

### March 22nd - "The Battle of Britain's Unsung Heros and Heroines" by David Skillen

David explained that whilst we probably all knew of the famous names and of the 'Few' there were many others behind the scenes often in unexpected places who did much to help win the Battle of Britain.

First of these was Air Chief Marshall Sir Hugh Dowding who commanded RAF Fighter Command during the battle. He was probably the only important person who did not believe Stanley Baldwin's declaration that 'The bomber will always get through'. Dowding invented an integrated air defence system which included radar, human observers of the Royal observer Corps, plotting of all the incoming aircraft and an integrated radio/phone network with all the airfields. He was also responsible for introducing the Hurricane and Spitfire with their 8 guns.

The eight guns were the idea of Fred Hill at the Air Ministry but he couldn't prove that they would be better than the 4 guns planned, however his 13yo daughter Hazel was a maths genius and she was able to prove it mathematically. This allowed Fred to take the data back to the Air Ministry and convince them that 8 guns were necessary. This gave our fighters greater firepower than the Luftwaffe.

Radar was crucial to our air defence but it seems that the electrical cables used then with rubber insulation could not transmit the very high frequencies needed but the newly developed polythene could be used as an insulator. It was accidentally discovered by Fawcett and Gibson at ICI in 1933, but not developed into a usable product until 1939. Without it radar would not have worked.

Lucy, Lady Houston was outraged when in 1931 the government stopped development of the Supermarine S6B to defend the Schneider Trophy for seaplanes. She gave Supermarine £100,000 to allow them to defend and win the trophy that year. That plane was the predecessor to the Spitfire and also used an early version of the Merlin engine.

Lord Beaverbrook, owner of the Daily Express, was appointed by Churchill as Minister of Aircraft Production. Despite having no expertise in manufacturing, he bullied and coerced companies and politicians to greatly boost production of planes and armaments. He appealed to the public for 'pots and pans to make Spitfires' although this was later shown to be just a propaganda exercise. He also instigated the Civil Repair scheme whereby planes were repaired in hours at sites away from airfields and without returning them to the factories.

Not all the 'Heros' were big names. Women were drafted in to the Observer Corps and as spotters for anti-aircraft gun crews. Many WRAFs worked in the plotting rooms at airfields keeping track of the incoming planes. Many men were trained in bomb disposal even though we did not initially know how best to disarm them. More George Medals were awarded to Bomb Disposal than to pilots during the Battle of Britain.

Another pioneer was Archibald McIndoe who developed facial plastic surgery for burns to pilots. His patients formed the Guinea Pig Club, a mutual support network. McIndoe was one of the first to recognise the need for rehab. He arranged for patients to go to tea with the locals of East Grinstead near his surgery. East Grinstead became known as 'the town which doesn't stare' as they became so used to seeing disfigured airmen.

There were many more interesting facts and figures in David's talk. Too many to tell here, but suffice to say it was a fascinating talk about a topic which we all think we know about, but now realise that there is so much more to know.

## **TRIP TO BERKELEY CASTLE ON WEDNESDAY 27TH JULY, 2022**

The History Group are arranging a visit by coach to Berkeley Castle, site of the death of King Edward II, and to the house of Dr Jenner, the pioneer of vaccination.

We anticipate that the coach will leave from the Royal Hotel, Ashby at 0830 returning at about 1900. On arrival at Berkeley, there should be time for coffee (subject to traffic) before a guided tour of the castle. Time will then be available for lunch, either at a local cafe or pub or a picnic in the gardens, prior to a visit to Dr Jenner's house. The cost will be a maximum of £40.00, if there are 40 participants, but may reduce slightly if more wish to go. No payment is required at present until we can confirm that the trip will proceed. We would be grateful if you would then pay a deposit of £10.00 or the full amount, if possible, to minimise bank charges. If this would be of interest to you, please contact Colin Ellis on 01530 272592 or email [colinellis1950@gmail.com](mailto:colinellis1950@gmail.com) and give him your name and e-mail (preferably) or phone number.

## **GROUP REPORTS**

### **Arts & Crafts**

#### **3rd March**

Earlier this month the Arts and Crafts group met. We completed the painting of our flowerpots. In April we will be doing a small Easter project. We had one new lady attend this month and we look forward to seeing her again.

Some of our regulars have still not returned since "lockdown" but we did have five this last month. Besides the painting, we enjoyed a lot of laughter and put the world to rights.

### **Bridge**

The Bridge Group are running their regular sessions again. Neil is back now and presumably looking after the group again.

### **Calligraphy**

#### **8th March**

Six of us met at Gill's to attempt our next project. The topic was 'Spring' and the challenge was to use Modern Calligraphy fonts to produce a piece of work reflecting this new season. Although we had previously decided to try and finish a piece at each meeting, some members felt they needed more practice before a final attempt and some thought the A5 size was too restrictive!! It is difficult to move from a more formal approach to one that is freer and more flowing. We continue to learn and hopefully improve!

Next month we are at Ann's house concentrating on Easter (Eostre) and using repeating letters and words. Should be interesting.

### **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](mailto: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. Or you can come along to one of our meetings in person.

## 2nd March

A good turnout of 8 today considered several problems.

Sheila has continuing problems with file management, although has moved on from last time. This time she wanted to transfer an excel spreadsheet attachment from an email to a folder on her pendrive, but it seems unwilling to be filed! There may be a problem with her pendrive. Mike took it away, with a copy on his own pendrive, to see if he can clear the problem. (All solved now)

Michael H apparently lost all his passwords on Google. Fortunately, this was traced to a simple cookie clearance operation. This will delete passwords held for ease of re-connection.

The remedy was to re-enter his passwords and get Google to save them. Tedious, but non-fatal!

## 21st March

Today we had 4 'experts' on hand but only one person needing help! Peter has been having trouble loading some new software onto his laptop to enable him to digitise his LP collection. The software came on a CD but his laptop doesn't have a CD reader on it. After some difficulty getting John's CD reader to work with the laptop, it suddenly decided to stop working. Mike volunteered to go home and get another CD reader but when he returned and plugged it in, Peter found that the CD was broken! So we looked online and found that he could just download the software directly to the laptop without needing a CD at all. Oh well, it works now. Peter now has the unenviable job of copying all his LPs across then titling all the albums and tracks by hand.

## Drawing and painting

### 16th March

A busy month: we have two projects ongoing.

The topic for March was "Spring is in the Air", so lots of inspiration there.



This is Brenda's Bluetit. Check the gallery on the website for some more paintings.

Also the group has been invited to join in with the Ashby Outdoor Art gallery, celebrating the Queen's platinum jubilee, so we have been designing and working on the 8 foot by 4 foot board exhibit.

The gallery is scheduled to be around the town at the end of April and into May.

## **Digital Photography**

### **3rd March**

Today five of us looked at photographs of flowers.

There were plenty of crocuses and snowdrops, but a surprising plethora of other blooms.

These were mainly from other people's gardens and included hellebores, daffodils, heather and mushrooms.

There were some very nice closeups of blooms, notably Colin's orchids, and several unidentified flowers, but none from JD's pen drive which seemed to have lost all the ones he copied to it that morning.

We discussed topics for outdoor expeditions, and decided that next time, weather permitting, we would venture out to photograph the variety of interesting buildings which Ashby sports in abundance..

## **Family History**

### **9th March**

Today was a landmark for us. We had nine altogether, including three new members. Welcome Pat, Sylvia (S) and Richard! We were spread over two rooms, two tables, and the comfy chairs.

The regulars got on with their tasks quietly, whilst your leader worked with the newbies to see how they stood with their work, and what they wanted to do. It became a very lively session.

Richard searched for records of his father in the War. His father gained the Military Medal, so he spent time locating references. There are records, including the London Gazette, but he wants to think about it before taking on a free trial.

Pat's father worked in Harland and Wolff in Northern Ireland when the Titanic was under construction. She wants to know more about him and what he did there. She will go away and try approaching the archivist at H&W, and the Titanic Museum, for any information about him, and for background information on his life there.

Sylvia S has ancestors and many links in the theatre and music halls from the 19th and early 20th century. She is looking for avenues of enquiry to see if they are mentioned. She is a member of Facebook's Ancestry UK page, and already has several very helpful pointers and advice from specialists there.

Ana has built a considerable Tree in her pursuit of relatives called 'Ana'. There are many of them! To flesh this out she has been ordering birth and marriage certificates.

Dora is becalmed in the late 17th century in Scotland, so is also pursuing a cousin of her father-in-law who seems to have spent time dodging between New Zealand and the UK.

Keith (apart from providing invaluable help at teatime!) is looking for evidence around the movements of his great grandfather, who may (or may not) have emigrated to Philadelphia.

Eileen and Carolyn beavered away quietly on existing projects with no apparent problems while John D spent his time moving around the rooms.

We partook of Sylvia D's lovely birthday Belgian biscuits at teatime. A very good day all round..

## **Gardening**

### **17th March**

Our March garden event took place at Planters Garden Centre, Tamworth. We had sandwiches, scones and unlimited drinks before we were given a talk by Gerald Ingram, the owner of Planters, on his favourite plants. He had on display a large selection of plants. It was very informative and interesting, and very enjoyable. I think it will inspire us to get into the garden the next day..

## **History**

### **24th March - "Palitoy by Bob Brechin"**

Bob Brechin, ex Chief designer of Palitoy™, treated 34 of us to an exhaustive history of the famous toy company. For most of us it was a nostalgic wander down memory lane, revisiting the toys and games of our childhood. And of our children's and their children's childhoods, too.

The firm came to life in Leicester just after WWI, being started by Alfred Edward Pallett. From toy windmills and baby's rattles the company grew apace, branching rapidly out into dolls. The company went through many metamorphoses and several hands, as well as new premises, continuously through the Interwar years. One ground-breaking innovation was proposed by Queen Mary: non-flammable toys. Strange it wasn't thought of until then but led to the invention of Bexoid, a non-flammable plastic.

By 1937 they had moved to Coalville, although the war called a halt to toymaking. After that little piece of nastiness new inventions and techniques, notably injection moulding, kept the flow of new products coming. Blow moulding and then rotational moulding took them into industrial processes, making plastic bottles and other containers, but also into making complex toy parts, such as doll's heads. They exhibited at the 1951 Festival of Britain.

The changes, both in products and company ownership came at a dizzying speed, but always with the company in the forefront of the market. A major change was into the area of toy systems, such as Action Man, Tiny Tears and Sindy dolls, where the basic toy was a core product with multiple other associated products that could be bought to accompany it. These brought multiple awards.

Bob joined the company in 1967 and developments and new products just kept coming. In 1975 a new warehouse was built at Ashby, just about where Wickes is today! The next venture was into merchandised products to accompany films such as Star Wars, and competition with such as Hornby, with their Mainline range of model railway items, Airfix and Meccano.

Globalisation brought another sea change with global branding and multi-lingual packaging. But the writing was on the wall as early as the 1973 oil crisis, and despite several more company changes and regroupings the Palitoy factory closed in 1995, with the last product being Play-doh.

The factory is now a business centre. The company and its ethos refuse to die however, with various commemorative events: a green plaque in 2017, a celebration in 2019 of 100 years of toy production and talk of films and a website. Watch this space.

## **Lunch**

### **10th March**

The March lunch was at the Gate Inn Osbaston, a venue we had not visited for quite some time. The staff were friendly and helpful, and the meals were served swiftly.

The venue for 14 April will be The Riftswood in Tamworth B79 8PB at 12 noon for 12.30, another new venture for the club. It is a Sizzler restaurant. If you wish to come but have not yet booked, please contact luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk to put your name on the list.

Unfortunately, like so many restaurants that are feeling the pinch, they required a deposit which the organiser has paid so, please come armed with a £5 note per person to give to the organiser on arrival. £5 will then be deducted from the bill for each person at the till.

## **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.



## Science & Technology

14th March

Mark Stretton - "The Science of Archery"

This group tries to get a real mix of talks, covering all the sciences & technology, and this one had a fine mixture of both history and medieval technology and also given by our first external speaker.

Mark Stretton is an expert with 40 years' experience in the world of Archery with nearly 25 years specialising in the English War Bow, of the type used at the Battles of Agincourt and Crecy. He is also the 17-year reigning holder of the Guinness World Record set, August 2004, for drawing to full draw and shooting a 200 lbs warbow. He is also an expert in recreating archaeological finds so they can be tested in use, often at MoD test sites.

The first written words on arrows record them piercing an oak church door during a raid. Was this actually possible? By setting up a test it was seen how far they did penetrate oak, so suggesting the reliability of this record.

Archaeological finds show up to 17 different types of metal arrowheads, shape dependant on use, for hunting or war. The images in medieval manuscripts often show hunting arrows as they look more dramatic. The iron can be treated in different ways to add carbon to make the steel stronger, but what methods were used?

The battle ones were like bodkins designed to pierce armour. Armour in museums is Tournament armour very fancy and decorated, medieval bling. A modern recreation would cost 80,000 Euros! Battle armour was often melted down and reused and so has not survived. Mark has also tested methods that could be used to make large numbers of war arrows and measured the carbon content of the resultant steel to check it matches the archaeological finds.

To test the breast plate under battle conditions it is necessary to mount it on a moving platform to simulate a cavalry charge at 20mph, stuffed behind like a chest, while firing the bodkin war arrows from different distances at their speed of 150ft/s to see what the penetration depth was, would it result in fatal injuries to vital organs? It did penetrate that deep but also the impact alone carries twice as much energy as needed to stop the heart from an impact blow. Mark also made us realise what it would be like to be an archer, on foot, facing a cavalry charge of 20 mph which gave you a mere 22 seconds to stop the charge. Terrifying. There were many images of the different tests and their results, even graphs showing how the impact speed varied with angle of projection and if the arrow was fired downhill or uphill.

Mark also brought his recreation of the warbows found in chests on the Mary Rose. Made from one piece of Italian yew, but cut from an area of the tree so that the outside of the bow is of sapwood which is strong in tension and the inside of the bow, facing the archer, is of heartwood which is strong in compression. This gives the bow its great strength. However to be able to draw the bow required practice from an early age for the archers to develop the physique and strength needed to pull the bow. The Archers were valued members of their troops and had a good diet.

Mark is a Master Arrowsmith and Past Warden of the Craft Guild of Traditional Bowyers and Fletchers Company, and he travels throughout Europe and the UK delivering Seminars, Talks and Demonstrations and has appeared on many TV programs as an expert of the Warbow so we were fortunate indeed to have such a knowledgeable visitor to the group.

Future talks include "Crazy interstellar rockets", "People of the Mary Rose" and "Breathing at Altitude" - a full list is on our website..

## **Industrial Heritage**

### **23rd March - The Great British Car Journey**

We had one new member, Rupert, and his friend Bob, a potential new member, join us this month for our trip to the recently opened car museum at Ambergate. This museum covers the era of the British car industry from the early 1920s to the present day, but mostly concentrating on the post-war era from the 50s to 90s. i.e. all the sorts of cars we remember. Either we had one, our friends had one or our Dad did. So it was a great reminiscence by all as we wandered around the exhibits. The museum cleverly give you each a tablet-like handset with earphones that give you the history of the period, of the men who designed and built the cars and of the individual cars themselves, some of which had interesting histories such as the Bently owned by Elton John which was Britain's most expensive production car when made. There were Jags and Jensens, Healeys and a DeLorean, Rolls-Royces and Bentleys. But there were also Minis and Metros, Allegros and Maestros, Hillman Imps and Hunters, Vauxhalls and Sunbeams and any manner of ordinary but still interesting cars. A most enjoyable trip down memory lane.

## **Music Appreciation**

### **2nd March**

We had two new members join us for the first time this month, welcome Janet and Yogi, whilst Dorothy rejoined us and Neil was back from Australia. Altogether there were nine of us at Brenda's house.

The music was, as ever, varied and excellent ranging from Rachmaninoff to Dolly Parton via Elgar, Procol Harum and the Beatles.

Janet started us off with Neil Diamond, a favourite of hers, with "Red, Red Wine" whilst Yogi introduced us to Rachmaninoff's "Vespers".

Sid brought us the Beatles "With love from me to you" which shows off John and Paul's harmonisation. Nev gave us Dave Edmunds "I knew the bride"

Dorothy brought us back to the classics with Niklas Eklund playing Hummel's "Trumpet concerto in E# major" which Neil followed with Procol Harum's "Salty Dog" in memory of Gary Brooker who died this month.

Sallie played us Elgar's "Pomp and circumstance #4" to get us all waving metaphorical flags in the air while Brenda produced one of her lucky dips which turned out to be Jools Holland playing "Tuxedo Junction"

Mike brought the soundtrack album of "O brother, where art thou?" and Dan Tyminski, dubbing George Clooney, singing "Man of constant sorrow" and then Yogi played "Deportees" a song by Woody Guthrie sung by Paddy Reilly, ex of the Dubliners.

Janet gave us another Neil Diamond track "You don't bring me flowers" whilst Sid introduced us to Robert Plant & Alison Kraus' version of the Everley Bros "Price of love".

Nev brought some humour with Fats Waller's rendition of "Your feet's too big". Another icon who died recently was Ronnie Spector and so Neil played one of her hits "Don't worry baby".

Dorothy had an interesting piece by the French actor, Yves Montand, who was discovered by Edith Piaf, singing "Les feuilles mort" better known in English as "Autumn leaves". We all agreed that the French version was better.

Sallie produced the incomparable Ella & Louis singing "Dream a little dream of me". Brenda's second pot luck was the excellent Santana playing "Maria, Maria".

Mike returned to bluegrass with Dolly Parton singing "The grass is blue" and then Neil closed the session with the rip-roaring Sandy Nelson and "Let there be drums".

Another excellent session with something for everyone.

## **Recorder group**

### **17th March**

The Recorder Group had another good meeting on 17th (there's a long wait until our next meeting: 7th, then 21st April). There were 8 of us.

We had another new player, who is deciding whether to join: she knows 2 of the existing members, who told her about us. There was some joking that, at this rate, we may need a larger hall soon!

We had a good mixed session, playing music in from 2 to 5 parts, including the sopranino (smaller than the school descant) and, at the other extreme, the Great Bass. The music covered the Renaissance, Elizabethan madrigals, popular songs (Tiptoe through the Tulips), folk songs, ragtime (The Entertainer), some easy modern music written for recorder groups, including a bit of swing. All good fun, some easier than others.

## **Supper club**

### **24th March**

This month we met at the Tap House at Annwell where they are well known for their carvery as well as a wider menu. The place was quite full when we arrived but it seems others eat earlier than us and by the time we received our main course we were the only ones in the restaurant area. There was more activity in the bar area.

The food was mostly OK but Covid restrictions meant that the carvery meals were served to the table without people being able to choose exactly how much of each item they wanted on their plates. However we all had a good time and the conversations flowed.

## **Wine Appreciation**

### **16th March**

We welcomed 2 new members to the group this month, Kurt & Lynda. They, like many of us, are starting to learn about the different varieties of wines, the range of grapes used and the flavours due to those grapes and also the area where they are made.

This month Annie had supplied 3 very different wines all made from the Zinfandel grape. This grape is called Primitivo in Italy. The first wine was a light red from Puglia in Southern Italy, the second a darker, heavier red from California and the third was a so-called White Zinfandel which was actually a dark rosé. For some reason the Californians call that white!

The wines couldn't be more different. The Italian was light and refreshing, the Californian was much heavier and rich whilst the rosé was quite sweet with a very different aroma. The reds were generally liked but the rosé divided opinions! A very interesting tasting session.

## **Short Walks**

### **18th March. Ticknall to Calke and back**

This was the planned walk for February but as there was a storm due and we were told not to travel unless essential and avoid woods, we cancelled the walk and this month we could not have had better weather blue skies next to no wind and 7 people wanting to walk. We set off into Calke and took the path to the new children's area where we met up with 2 more U3A members. As the outdoor cafe was closed as expected we decided to extend the walk and walk to the main cafe as a group of 9. This was open so we stopped and had a leisurely drink before saying goodbye to the extra 2 and set off back to Ticknall arriving at 12.15. The walk was slightly longer than usual at 3.6 miles but worth it as the weather was so good.

## Medium walks

### 14th March. Moira Furnace to Gresley, led by Iain

Twelve individuals set off on a lovely sunny March day, including two new members to the group. All went very well until passing through Swainspark and Gresley Woods, when we found not one, but two, footpaths closed off, disrupting our route plan. Unfortunately, our attempt at a diversion resulted in extending the walk distance, combined with some wet and muddy paths in our way. Fortunately, we were able to escape, to continue alongside Albert Village Lake to Conkers and then along the canal to Moira Furnace, our starting point.

## Longer Walks

### 1st March. Ticknall led by Trev and Val

On a sunny crisp spring morning, 9 members met at the Staff of Life at Ticknall, for an eight mile circular walk via Milton. We headed out along main street, then on towards Foremark reservoir and Carvers rocks, before reaching the highest point then heading downwards on a farm track, with lovely views across the Trent Valley. After a drink stop, we continued on via numerous fields to Milton, from there we started the return section of our walk, along the ridge of the hill, finally seeing the fine spire of Ticknall Church, then returning to the pub for welcome refreshments

### 15th March. Hartshorne led by Paul

The weather was warm and calm for our walk from the Bulls Head in Hartshorne. We passed the Dethick Hall, then into Church Street where we stopped next to an old cast iron bollard bearing the letters HWW to hear how this marked the route of an old water supply from Hartshorne Water Works. Proceeding through St Peters church yard, we arrived at Limehouse Dams, known locally as Hartshorne Dams, the official name derived from the use of lime by HWW to treat the water. After a short climb, we stopped to look at a plaque describing how evidence of an ancient Mesolithic settlement was found nearby at Daniel Hayes farm. Passing through a large open field, we climbed steeply to the start of a level byway that led to the entrance to Daniel Hayes farm. After passing two small lakes we arrived at a narrow lane leading to the centre of Smisby where we had our drinks stop. We returned via Smisby Church, crossed a road and a ploughed field, thankfully quite dry, to a large open field where several thousand broad-leaved and conifer saplings had recently been planted. A short walk along a narrow track brought back to the Bulls Head for refreshments.

## **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
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