



Newsletter January 2023

Interest Groups Timetable for January 2023

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

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 24th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Rebecca Spillane, Fraud Vulnerability Officer, Leicestershire Police "Scams etc and how to avoid them"
Arts and Crafts	TBC	TBC	TBC – see report below
Bridge	Mon 2nd	7 pm	All meetings are at the Ivanhoe Club
	Mon 9th	7 pm	
	Mon 23rd	7 pm	
Calligraphy	Tue 17th	tbc	Christmas lunch
Computers	Wed 4th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
	Mon 16th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 5th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 18th	10 am	2 Marlborough Way
Family History	Wed 11th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	Thu 19th	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Garden talk by Simon Gulliver, gardens and parks adviser to the National Trust. £4 entry
History	Thu 26th	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Yogi Godwin. "Rasputin, Saint or Sinner"
Industrial Heritage	Wed 25th	11.30 am	White Hart, Ashby to decide '23 program followed by lunch
Literature	Tue 10th	1.30 pm	Meeting at Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 12th	12.30 for 1pm	The Bull's Head, Loughborough Rd, Thringstone, LE67 8LR
Medium Walks	Mon 9th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Ferrers Arms, Lount. After the walk we shall have lunch at the pub
Music Appreciation	Wed 4th	10 am	Neil's at 40 Willesley Gardens

Interest Groups Timetable for January 2023 cont.

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Recorder	Thu 5th Thu 19th	10 am 10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Science & Technology	Mon 9th	2 pm	The Meeting Room, Packington Village Hall. Dr Julian Onions, Astrophysicist, University of Nottingham "The Dark Side of the Moon"
Short Walks	Fri 20th	10 am	Meet at the car park gates in North St, Ashby
Social Events	Thu 26th	7 for 7.30 pm	Burns Supper at Willesley Park Golf Club. All tickets are sold.
Supper Club			We shall not meet again until Feb 23rd as the Jan date clashes with Burns Supper. Venue to be decided
Walking	Tue 17th	9.45 for 10 am start	Led by Tony, 07519 975997. This will be a local walk of approx 6.5 miles. Further details to follow.
Wine Appreciation	Wed 18th	7 pm	Annie's house.

Interest Groups Timetable for early February 2023

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Music Appreciation	Wed 1st	10 am	TBC
Computer	Wed 1st	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 2nd	10 am	TBC
Digital Photography	Thu 2nd	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Recorder	Thu 2nd	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal,
Walking	7th	9.45 for 10 am start	Led by Kevin, 07470 227536. Details to follow

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and that the coming year brings us all Health and Happiness. Unfortunately I suspect Prosperity may be in short supply though.

Ashby u3a seems to be growing with several new and interesting groups starting up and other groups moving to larger venues as their present ones cannot cope with the influx of new members.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our meetings and group gatherings in the next few months,

Regards

Mike Stow,
on behalf of the Committee.

HELP & WELFARE

Do you need transport?

Have you got a hospital or Doctor appointment but haven't got transport and can't use a bus?

There is a community transport service available through the Marlene Reid Centre. This is a voluntary service where local drivers use their own cars to get people to appointments.

Contact them on **01530 512456** and please give them much notice as possible to have a better chance of them fulfilling your request

If you live in NW Leicestershire, are over 60 and retired, they should be able to help.

Typical charges are*

Ashby to Ashby - £6

Ashby to Burton return £20

Ashby to Leicester Royal return £26

Ashby to Glenfield return £22

*NB Always check the price to be charged when booking transport as they are liable to change.

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.

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.

REMEMBER WE HAVE A NEW BANK ACCOUNT

The new account is now active and so any payments to Ashby u3a whether for membership fees, trips or social events like the Burns Supper can now be made by bank transfers to:

Co-operative Bank. Sort code 08-92-99 Acc. no. 67259878.

Cheques will still be accepted. Make any cheques payable to "Ashby u3a" as before. Cash can be accepted but please try to use bank transfers or cheques if at all possible.

Please remember to add some indication to the bank transfer or the back of the cheque as to what the payment is for.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

20th December – Gresley Male Voice Choir

For our Christmas meeting we had booked Gresley Male Voice Choir to again come and entertain us. And entertain us they certainly did.

The choir, led by their Musical Director Karl Harper, moved effortlessly from carols both well known and less well known through popular Christmas songs both modern and more well-established.

We were encouraged to join in with "Once in Royal David's City" and "Come All Ye Faithful" whilst between songs baritone Tim Cox narrated excerpts from "A Christmas Carol" and the story of Scrooge's transformation from a miser into a caring benefactor.

The Choir treated us to an hour of excellent singing, finishing with "White Christmas".

After the concert, the Committee served the attendant members with tea, coffee and mince pies.

101 members came along and for the second month in a row we had to open the gallery upstairs to get everyone in.

After last month, where we struggled to get everyone seated in time for the start of the meeting, the Committee decided to try a different arrangement for signing everyone in. This entailed bringing everyone in through the side entrance of the church into the back room where tables were set up for Iain, Val and Trev to take everyone's names. People also appear to have taken heed of my plea in last month's newsletter to try to arrive a little earlier. These two measures avoided last month's large queue at the back of the church which tailed out into the courtyard and we were all seated on time.

This procedure will be discussed at the next committee meeting and, with a few tweaks, will most likely be adopted as the way of checking-in in future.

NEW GROUPS STARTING IN THE NEW YEAR

Several new groups are in the process of getting started. Details will follow both here and on the website when more information is available. Colin Woodland, as Groups Co-ordinator, is helping them get under way. If you are interested in joining any of them please contact Colin at interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk or 01530 413867. The groups are:

Scrabble

Sylvia Tuck has 6 members on her list and is organising a suitable venue and time slot.

French

This group has 15 potential members but is looking for someone with some abilities in speaking French to lead it. Can you help?

Croquet

Rupert Knapton is organising this group which is hoping to get started in March.

Calligraphy

The current Calligraphy group has a waiting list of approx 10 people and so it has been decided to start a second group. Tom and Jenny Ingham have agreed to lead it and Sue Cornell and the rest of the original group will be helping them to set it up.

Book Club

The Literature group is also fully subscribed and so Annie Scotney is starting a second group. This should be up and running soon.

GROUP REPORTS

Social Events – Christmas Lunch

It was good to have some sense of normality back again for Christmas as lunch at the Golf Club went ahead with little or no worries of pandemics. It was good to see so many new members amongst the 69 who were able to attend and the conversations were flowing along with the drink well before we all sat down to another excellent 3 course meal ably cooked and served by the staff at the club.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, although 1 or 2 couples weren't on the tables that they had hoped for. We'll try better next time to get everyone seated at the tables of their choice.

Arts & Crafts

The Craft Group has reaped its reward from the U3A Open Morning in September. We had two new members join us this month and there are at least five more promising to come to future meetings.

As a result, we are now too big to meet in a house. The group does not want to split into two so, we are trying to find another venue in which to meet. Our first choice fell through, and we were into Christmas.

So, keep your eyes on the website for our new date and location: we will post it as soon as it is settled.

Our project this month was making artificial roses which will become part of our Easter wreath which we hope to make in February and March of 2023. The ladies all seemed to really enjoy making the flowers which are remarkably realistic. They have asked to make more different varieties of flowers later in the New Year.

It just remains for me to wish all U3A members a very happy New Year. See you all in 2023.

Sharon Woodland

Calligraphy

December

The December meeting had to be cancelled at short notice as a number of the group could not make the date. The Word of the Month "Bright" has been carried over to the February meeting.

We have also arranged a late Christmas lunch for our January meeting - on the 17th.

We have a waiting list of people who would like to join us but we are obviously limited to numbers because we meet in our homes. To address this a second Calligraphy group is being started (*see details above. Ed*) and we are hoping to hold a meeting in the New Year, where we will invite those on the list and hopefully be able to help them to get started.

We would share what we have done and the resources we use and give examples of topics etc. Hopefully this would help.

Drawing and painting

21st December

The 21st December was our last Drawing and Painting session of 2022.

We did no drawing!

We did no painting!

Instead, we had a fuddle: a festive social morning at the Eden Bistro, Moira, celebrating a good productive year and looking forward to new challenges in 2023, beginning on Wednesday 18th January at 10 am at 2 Marlborough Way.

Bridge

The Bridge group now meets fortnightly on Mondays at the Ivanhoe Social Club from 7 to 9pm. Free parking is still available. The schedule may change occasionally so please check the website.

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. Or you can come along to one of our meetings in person.

19th December

There were nine today on our last meeting of the year. We discussed the resolution and capabilities of mobile phone cameras, and the coming switch to 5g services.

Pauline and Richard were still working on the fact that Pauline's phone seems to be very low on storage space. The problem was narrowed down to the fact that her phone has only 16gigabytes of storage, which is now insufficient to cope with updates etc, as it is almost all taken up by undeletable apps. Her 128Gb SD card has been taken over by the OS to supplement the main storage, so she only sees one drive.

She will now look at acquiring a new phone. A few options were discussed but she needs to decide her priorities and budget. Steve suggested she consider the Tech Exchange at Tamworth.

We meet again on January 4th

Digital Photography

1st December

Today we had seven for a rare treat: Steve's talk on Composition.

Steve took us through the various aspects of composition in a style both educational and accessible for those of us less expert. Pointing out common errors, he worked his way through the ways in which we can all get better photos.

The use of the 9 element 'grid' which most cameras and even some phones can now display on screen is a very handy guide to getting a pleasingly balanced image using the Rule of Thirds. It also helps to get the picture level so that the horizon is horizontal and verticals are upright.

Making sure that you have the right object in focus, too, can avoid disappointing results.

There was much more which we all found useful and entertaining.

Then we all showed the photos of various funguses/fungi (your choice of plural!) which we had taken in the autumn.

Some were really weird, and one person had thoughtfully added the Latin or common names help us identify them.

Our next meeting will be on January 5th, when the subject will be 'Christmas and New Year'

Supper club

December

The Supper Club didn't meet in December as Christmas got in the way! The Supper Club must have been the only group NOT having a Christmas lunch!

We won't meet again until February as our usual January date also clashes with the Burns Supper. Our February venue has yet to be decided.

Lunch

December

The Lunch group didn't meet in December as it was replaced by the Christmas lunch. See the Social Events group report for details of that.

Our first luncheon engagement for 2023 will be at the Bull's Head, Thringstone on Jan 12th at 12 noon for 12.30.

Gardening

15th December

This month it was the traditional Secret Santa event at Packington Village Hall which went really well. A great selection of food was supplied by the members attending, with drink and Christmas music provided. We drew numbers for position in the draw for collecting a present, and there was a raffle for the plants that were used for table decorations. We have had many comments that it had been very enjoyable.

Thank you to the many members who helped with tables chairs etc, and we hope to see you all in the New Year.

Science & Technology

12th December – A Christmas Special

We got off to a festive start by making decorative paper chains for the Seasonal Special meeting. Not just the ordinary chains we made as children but special Scientific Chains that had a twist, or even 2 or 3 twists in a 70 cm strip of sugar paper. Cutting the chains down the middle produces different numbers of linked chains, or Mobius Strips to use the mathematical name. There was much laughter and chat as these were constructed and sometimes fell apart.

This was followed by a Name the Scientist picture quiz and groups worked together on the clues in the images as they munched Christmas snacks with their coffee.

Books are always a popular Christmas gift, so a Science book review was next.

A Scientific Santa Quiz continued the theme. How many children does Santa visit, how fast does he travel, can Einstein's theory of relativity help him visit so many and why does he probably have diabetes? (Hint – think of all calories in mince pies and sherry and what that does to his BMI.)

The next meeting is 9th January 2 pm, with a second visit by the Astronomer Julian Onions on The Dark Side of the Moon – who wants to go there and why?

NOTE We have a change of venue to the meeting room (not the main hall) at **Packington Village Hall**, entrance down the left side of the building.

History

December

The Group didn't meet in December and it was thought that November's meeting would be its last ever and that the group would fold. But there has been good news. The reports of its demise were, it seems, greatly exaggerated and it is back up and running again with barely a missed beat. Yogi Godwin has stepped in to take over the leadership reins of the organising committee whilst the existing committee members have agreed to stay on and have been joined by Isobel as well.

A full program of events is currently being planned and the first meeting will be on Thursday 26th Jan at 2.15pm in Packington Village Hall. Admission £2.

Recorder

1st and 15th December

We met as usual at the Community Hall. On both occasions we played some Christmas carols undistracted by the temptations of mince pies or other seasonal treats.

Next meeting on 5th Jan at the usual venue.

Wine Appreciation

21st December

A record number of 9 members attended our Christmas wine tasting at Annie's. The brief was to bring a bottle of wine suitable for Christmas and also some festive food. Because everyone bought a bottle, we had a potential 9 bottles to taste but we didn't manage to taste them all!

Someone brought a Muscadet from France, and Annie provided a Late Bottled Vintage Port so they topped and tailed the session and in between we manage to taste 6 reds; 2 each from Spain and South Africa and 1 each from Argentina and S.E. Australia.

We all (mostly) agreed that the Muscadet would go really well with a fishy starter and the Port would finish the lunch off nicely with the Christmas pudding. All of the reds were good in their own different ways and any would complement whichever of turkey, goose or beef that you might chose for the main event, however the Cab Sauv/ Shiraz blend Australian "19 Crimes" was declared the unanimous winner.

We took a break half way through to enjoy the large spread of nibbles, snacks and treats provided and to agree that we had had a very good year of Wine Appreciation.

Family History

14th December

Today was a relatively relaxed day, with seven attending, including one new 'hunter': Welcome Derry!

John D worked with Derry, who already has made fair progress with her research, to start a tree on Ancestry, as she hasn't yet got a digital version. Next time we will look at downloading and uploading a gedcom file.

Keith attended to his Hints, checking and verifying them, as we all ought to do.

Jane is working on her husband's family tree, for which she has little information. She is interested in talking to Mary who has the same name, Chilver, in her family. What a coincidence!

Eileen is on the track of a first cousin once removed, who seems to have moved to Australia via Canada in the mid-1930s. She has unearthed a court case involving her in which she successfully pursued a case of underpayment of wages.

Pauline (offline) is tied up in sorting out the task of identifying which of two fathers (brothers?) was the correct one for an ancestor. This involves two women called Elizabeth, and seems tangled up with just who is the correct one when both seem to be the only one!

John D is making excellent progress to finally pinning down when and where his parents met. The next step is to go to Wakefield to view the last in a series of school logs which have only this year emerged, the local Electoral registers, and trades directories. A visit to his father's last school as a CofE Head may also be on the cards.

We also had the pleasure of Mrs. Dogherty's mince pies and a box of lovely biscuits donated by Carole, Keith's wife, and we had a very pleasant time just chatting, to round off an excellent year for the Group.

Thank you all for your friendship and support! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

See you all on the other side on January 11th.

Music Appreciation

7th December

This month we had a record turn-out of 10 members despite Yogi not being able to make it so we only got to choose 2 pieces each, but they were all good'uns. We had a selection of classics new and old:

Michael Ball and "Love Changes Everything" from Aspects of Love,
Fred Astaire and "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails".

The Beatles track "I'm Only Sleeping" from Revolver.

Ray Charles's "Your Cheating Heart".

Christine McVie of Fleetwood Mac and the classic "Songbird".

Bruce Springsteen's "I Wish I Was Blind"

Ella Fitzgerald, singing "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered"

The Beach Boys "In My Room"

and "Morning" from Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite,

We then went into full Christmas mode including several John Rutter arrangements: "A Candlelight Carol", "Joy to the World" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" all sung by his own group, the Cambridge Singers. And also:

The Ronettes and "Frosty The Snowman"

Pavarotti's "Oh Holy Night"

The Salvation Army's instrumental version of "Amazing Grace"

Bing Crosby and "White Christmas"

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" by an unnamed choir

Tom Jones and Cerys Matthews singing "Baby it's Cold Outside"

Bobby Sox and the Blue Jeans with "Bells of St Mary's"

Mud were "Lonely This Christmas"

Elaine Paige singing the "Coventry Carol"

and finally Slade's "Merry Christmas Everybody"

Industrial Heritage

The group didn't meet in December as the calendar was getting quite busy with other things. We will meet on Wed Jan 25th at 11.30am at the White Hart in Ashby to decide where to visit in 2023. After sorting the program we will have a seasonal lunch at the pub.

Thank you to all the members who have helped me to organise trips this year. It was not easy at the start as many factories and museums were not yet open for visitors, and during the summer various attempts to get on a steam train ride were thwarted by the extremely hot and dry weather (remember that!) preventing steam locomotives from running because of the fire risk to adjacent fields.

Hopefully next year it will be easier to arrange some interesting trips.

Longer Walks

6th December. Foremark, led by David and Lilian

Fifteen members gathered for the start of the walk at The Staff of Life, Ticknall to go to Foremark reservoir and then return via the National Forest Way. Many admiring glances were made towards a farmhouse along the way to Foremark reservoir which had an impressive glass fronted extension towards open countryside. The walk continued through the woods and alongside Foremark reservoir passing Carvers Rocks (Millstone Grit) and we had a coffee stop with mince pies. On our return, the pub was busy with other diners but we were able to be served with our meals without a long wait and the food quality was good.

It was an easy and enjoyable six mile walk for us all before Christmas.

Medium walks

12th December. From Ibstock, led by Val and Trev

On a cold and foggy morning, with a touch of light snow on the ground and in the air, 7 intrepid walkers set off from Ibstock Church.

Having carefully negotiated the very slippery concrete track leading to a sewage works, we then crossed several fields before arriving in Odstone village. After a short section of road we walked across fields before crossing the Hinkley road, and upon reaching Nailstone, turned north back towards Ibstock.

At one point in the walk, we came across a number of very inquisitive Alpacas, in a small paddock. They seemed to think we were going to feed them. We continued up to the ridge above Ibstock Church, then walked out to join the road and retract our steps back to the church.

Short Walks

16th December. Oakthorpe colliery picnic site to Hicks Lodge and back

It was a crisp cold day when 5 people met at the Oakthorpe colliery picnic site. We set off through the woods walking parallel to the access road as far as possible before leaving the site via the car entrance.

Having crossed the road we entered the Hicks Lodge site and started on the path to the circuit around the lake. We took the longer route to the lodge stopping to admire the frozen lake. It was a sunny day so perfect for bird watching and photography, except for the cold. Arriving at the cafe we bought our drinks and nibbles and sat down for a natter. We were joined by Sandra and Brenda who were long-time members of the group although no longer walking with us anymore.

After the break it was back to the picnic site and home. The walk was about 2.5 miles long.

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	membercolin@ashbyu3a.co.uk	01530 272592
John Pilgrim	Member	memberjohn@ashbyu3a.co.uk	-