



## Newsletter June 2023

### Interest Groups Timetable for June 2023

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

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 27 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Rebecca Gregory "Layers of Leicestershire", Uncovering the past through place names
Arts and Crafts	Thu 1 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Bridge	Mon 5 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club. Dates to be confirmed
	Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 pm	
	Mon 19 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 pm	
	Mon 26 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 pm	
Calligraphy	Tue 13 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Sue's. The theme is 'June' using modern
Calligraphy 2	Wed 7 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	148 Woodside, Ashby.
Computer	Wed 7 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
	Mon 19 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	
Croquet	Fri 30 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Ashby Croquet Club, Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Bath Lane, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 1 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Hicks Lodge Welcome event. Meet at Hicks Lodge or 16 Winchester Way for car share
Drawing and painting	Wed 21 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Venue and topic TBA
Family History	Wed 12 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
French	Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Club, Wilfred Place, Ashby
	Mon 26 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	
Gardening	Thu 15 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Coach trip to Michael Heseltine's Thenford Arboretum and gardens. Depart Royal Hotel at 9.30. Morning stop at Stratford upon Avon until 1.15 pm. £36. This trip is FULLY BOOKED. If you wish to go on reserve list contact Paul Dean
History	Thu 22 <sup>nd</sup>	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. 'You're in the army now'
Industrial Heritage	Wed 28 <sup>th</sup>	TBA	A visit to Liverpool Docks
Literature	Tue 13 <sup>th</sup>	1:30 pm	At Sandra's house

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Lunch	Thu 8 <sup>th</sup>	12 for 12.30 pm	The Wolferstan Arms, Main Rd, Shuttington B79 0DP
Medium Walks	Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Belton parish church in the centre of the village
Music Appreciation	Wed 7 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Nev's at 26 Homecroft Drive, Packington
Reading	Wed 21 <sup>st</sup>	2 pm	79 Nottingham Rd
Recorder	Thu 1 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
	Thu 15 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	
Science & Technology	Tue 13 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. Bill Cove "Amazing Bats - what do we know about local species?"
Scrabble	Mon 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
	Mon 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	
Short Walks	Fri 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Meet at the Moira Furnace by the children's playground
Supper Club	Thu 22 <sup>nd</sup>	7 for 7.30 pm	The Smisby Arms, Nelsons Square, Smisby, LE65 2UA
Walking	Tue 6 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	The Horse and Jockey pub in Queens Street, Tideswell SK17 8JZ
	Tues 20 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Izaak Walton Hotel, Dovedale, Ashbourne DE6 2AY
Wine Appreciation	Wed 21 <sup>st</sup>	7:00 pm	Annie's house

### Interest Groups Timetable for early July 2023

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Scrabble	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.30 am	The Bull's Head, Ashby
Bridge	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club. To be confirmed
Walking	Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>9am for 9.15 start</b>	The Globe, Snarestone
Calligraphy 2	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	148 Woodside, Ashby
Music Appreciation	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Neil's at 40 Willesley Gardens
Computer	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Digital Photography	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Meet at 16 Winchester Way to drive to Elford Hall, Church Rd, Elford, Tamworth B79 9DA
Recorder	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

### **A reminder that your membership renewals are now overdue as of April 1st**

The fees for 2023-24 are:

£22 for a single member and £18 for a second member at the same address as another Ashby member, or anyone who is a fully paid up member of another u3a.

Membership forms can be downloaded from the Ashby u3a website [www.ashbyu3a.co.uk](http://www.ashbyu3a.co.uk) ; click on the Membership Forms tab. Or they can be obtained from the Membership Sec at the monthly meetings. Payments please by bank transfer if possible, or by cheque. Our bank details are on the form.

Please return signed forms to the address on the bottom of the form. We need your signed forms for Data Protection compliance.

**If you have already renewed, thank you.**

## NOTICE OF AGM – 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY

This year we shall be holding our Annual General Meeting immediately before the July 25<sup>th</sup> Monthly Meeting as usual.

The formal notice along with the Chairman's report, last years accounts and details of committee members standing for (re)election will be sent out with next month's newsletter.

## CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In the mean time we are looking for members willing to join the Committee. The job is not onerous; we meet once a month to discuss matters arising and to plan for the future. New committee members are not expected to take on any of the major posts such as Chairman, Treasurer or Membership Sec (unless they wish to!) but will take part in discussions and vote on any proposals. If you would like to join the Committee you can download the application form from our website under the Committee tab, or contact any committee member.

## HELP & WELFARE

### Welfare

Sharon Woodland, our Welfare person, can be contacted at [welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk) or 01530 413867

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.

## BANK ACCOUNT

If you are making any payments to Ashby u3a whether for membership fees, trips or social events like the Christmas Lunch, they 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.

## MAY'S MONTHLY MEETING

### **23rd May. Fran Sandham, "Doctor Livingstone, I presume"**

Fran came to talk to us 5 years ago when he described his solo crossing of Africa from the Skeleton Coast of Namibia to the island of Zanzibar, a distance of 3000 miles, which he completed in a year. This time he came to talk about another African explorer, Dr Livingstone, and his famous encounter with Henry Morton Stanley, which is immortalised in that well known phrase "Doctor Livingstone, I presume".

David Livingstone was born in a tenement in Scotland in 1813, the son of a travelling salesman and Sunday school teacher. From an early age he felt compelled to become a missionary and despite his poor beginnings he studied to become an ordained missionary, and then a doctor of medicine, becoming fluent in Greek, Hebrew and Latin. Aged 27 he set off for the Cape of Good hope on his first trip to Africa, learning Dutch and the local Tswana language on the way. He made several expeditions into the interior of Africa and having discovered the Zambesi river followed it to the Atlantic. He then retraced his steps back up river and became the first European to discover the waterfall which he named Victoria Falls. He continued onward to the East coast.

On his return to England, he was hailed as being the first European to cross Africa at that latitude, but there was already a network of local trade routes that joined the two coasts.

He made several other expeditions into Africa and became convinced that he could find the source of the Nile. Later he became completely lost to the outside world for 6 years and was assumed by many to be dead. Henry Morton Stanley was sent by the New York Herald to find him.

Stanley claimed to be an American but he was born in Wales in 1841. His mother abandoned him as a young baby and he was bought up by other family members in very poor circumstances, ending up in the workhouse. Aged 18 he emigrated to the US, had many jobs, some of which were barely legal, and fought in the American Civil War for the South. He was captured and joined the Union Army but was discharged 18 days later because of severe illness.

After the war he became a journalist and travelled to Abyssinia to cover the war there. On return to the US he convinced Gordon Bennett, owner of the New York Herald to send him to search for Livingstone but on arrival in Zanzibar he found that Bennett had not sent him any money. With some sweet-talking he managed to borrow funds from the US Consul. With this money he was able to put together an expedition and after many false starts and 700 miles of travelling found Livingstone in Ujiji where he supposedly uttered that famous phrase. Whether he actually said it is debated to this day.

Despite being 28 years younger than Livingstone, the two men got on well and became friends. Stanley joined Livingstone on several expeditions but eventually decided to leave after 4 months in order to get his full story back to the outside world. Stanley became as famous as Livingstone himself, despite many thinking him to be a fraud. Eventually his story was believed and he received the National Geographical Society Gold Award.

Livingstone, who had been ill for years with malaria and other tropical diseases, died in 1873 just 1 year after Stanley left. His porters carried his body 1400 miles to the east coast where he was shipped back to England. He is buried in Westminster Cathedral and is admired throughout much of southern Africa, unlike many of his contemporary colonialists.

Stanley took up Livingstone's work exploring and colonising Africa for the British and was knighted for services to the British Empire in Africa. He died in 1904.

Fran's tales about the two men were fascinating, and with far more detail and colour than I can repeat here.

## **GROUP REPORTS**

### **Arts and Crafts**

#### **May**

The Arts and Crafts group did not meet in May because the hall was commandeered as a polling station. Their next meeting will be at Packington Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> June from 10am to noon. By popular request, we will be starting a large Crystal Art project.

### **Calligraphy**

#### **9<sup>th</sup> May**

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May four members of the Calligraphy Group met at Caryl's home and worked on Gothic Script. Some of us practised the letters, upper and lower case, and some worked on the theme of this month which was 'Coronation'.

The next meeting will be at Sue's house on June 13<sup>th</sup>. The theme is 'June' using the Modern script.

### **Calligraphy 2**

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> May**

Today we had our monthly calligraphy 2 meeting. We had a new member Fred Fisk who is only 96 years young and he fitted in well. Gill James came again and helped a lot especially for Jenny and I as new beginners. She gave us a project to work on for the next meeting which is on Wednesday June 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Croquet**

#### **May**

The Croquet group did not play in May because of the Bank Holiday. The good news is that our next session will be in hopefully warmer weather on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Computers**

#### **15<sup>th</sup> May**

Once more we had 8.

Bernice needed help with dealing with storage in the cloud, specifically via a Chromebook. She wanted to access photos. Stephen worked with her using an external hard drive to extract and save them. More work needed.

Peter needed help in emailing videos. These are difficult as they usually exceed the maximum file size for email systems. He also wanted help moving files around between camera and computer and between folders and drives.

### **Drawing and Painting**

#### **17<sup>th</sup> May**

After all our hard work creating the Ashby Art Festival exhibit (which can be viewed in St Helen's churchyard), we treated ourselves to an outing and visited the Derby Museum and Art gallery which was showcasing the 18<sup>th</sup> Century artist William Hogarth's narrative paintings exploring the Jacobite Rebellion. (The Jacobite army reached Derby before retreating back north to Scotland !!!)

Next month's meeting is on Wednesday June 21<sup>st</sup>. Topic and venue to be notified.

## **Digital Photography Group**

4<sup>th</sup> May

Seven of us assembled at John Howlett's house to share cars to go to Fradley Junction. There is a significant Canal junction here, with associated locks and workings.

There is also a pub and two cafes, and a small lake, called Fradley Pond, equipped for bird watchers and fishermen.

The weather was fair and calm, and we had a good hour wandering around the canal and the Fradley Pond, observing and photographing the activities and machinery on show.

A few boats were going through the lock, and there is a selection of old equipment to see. There was little action at the Pond, although a family of Canada Geese with goslings made a brave showing.

We all reassembled at the café for coffee and cakes before returning after a pleasant morning.

We next meet at John's on Thursday 1st June for a visit to the Hick's Lodge Welcome event.

## **The Family History Group**

10<sup>th</sup> May

There were five at table, and one reporting in from home, today.

Ana has been busy printing off hard copies of censuses and other documents she has found and filing them away.

Keith is working through his Tree tidying it up. We discussed the comparative benefits of deleting or merging duplicate records.

Jane has started investigating English Parish Records. JD got her started on FindMyPast using a spare laptop, and Eileen provided additional advice.

Eileen herself is now reaching the furthest point she can into the past with her Parish Records, back to around 1585. This is a formidable achievement, as they started in 1538. An extract from Wikipedia telling how and why it all started is being distributed to all Fam Hist Group members for information.

Carolyn and JD discussed aspects of DNA. And the usefulness of it in research.

There was also a very useful discussion on what to do with our records when we ourselves go to join our ancestors. Provisionally we agreed that it would help our 'relicts' if we lodged our passwords to files and websites in our wills (You do all have wills, don't you?), then decide how far we can reduce the bulk of our paperwork and digital records to be useful to posterity, without abandoning key information altogether.

Some people elsewhere have suggested offering the files to local archives etc. This must be left to individuals, but it is a route some do take.

We next meet on Wednesday June 14th

## **Gardening**

18<sup>th</sup> May

Today we had a self drive to a Leicestershire Yellow Book garden, Barracca, at Earl Shilton. It is a one acre garden with lots of different areas; a silver birch walk, a wildlife pond with seating around, a Mediterranean planted area and lawns surrounded with herbaceous plants and shrubs. Very nice for a relaxing stroll around with birds singing, before retiring for refreshments with home made cake and scones. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable time.

## **French**

### **1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May**

Despite the fact that there have been rather a lot of Bank Holidays in May, the French group continued to meet on every other Monday morning at the Ivanhoe Club on the corner of Wilfred Place and Tamworth Rd, Ashby.

The last but one session concentrated on practising the use of both the perfect tense and the imperfect tense in relation to events that took place in the past.

This week we have been revising the French names for the various parts of the human body and practising how to make an appointment to see a doctor in France and then how to describe to that doctor your particular ailment. Next time we are going to concentrate on numbers and how to rapidly understand them when in say a shop or at a railway station.

## **History**

### **25th May. – A coach trip to York**

On the 25th our History group, led by Colin Ellis, hosted an Ashby u3a day trip to York.

At 8.30 am our coach, with 46 eager passengers left the Royal Hotel car park for the Yorkist capital. On arrival, we were each to self-determine our own destinations:- Minster, Shambles, Castle Museum, Railway Museum etc.

The weather was very kind and York was very friendly. Our 'happy band' reconvened at 4.00 p m for the journey home, each with positive personal experiences. For me, the best was the new statue of the late but much-loved Queen Elizabeth on the Minster.

At 6.45 p m we left our coach back at the Royal Hotel, weary but happy.

An excellent day!

## **Industrial Heritage**

### **24<sup>th</sup> May – Crich Tramway Museum**

Your correspondent, and trip co-ordinator, was unable to attend this month but Bob B lead the troops to Crich and got them all signed in and paid for on a group discount.

Apparently everyone had a good time, the weather was kind being particularly warm and dry for this time of year. Crich stands on a high plateau and can often be very chilly when everywhere around is warm, but not this time. I heard that as well as much travelling on the trams, touring the museums and walking of the woodland trails, the onsite vintage pub and tea rooms were well patronised!

## **Recorder**

### **4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May**

The recorder group met twice in May, on the 4th and 18th. On the first occasion there were 8 of us, but only 5 on the second.

We began by playing trios; madrigals, followed by modern pieces for descant and treble (and possibly tenor). We moved on to quartets, with the music ranging from Purcell, through Bach, Praetorius, to Vaughn Williams. Plenty of variety.

The next two meetings will be on 1st and 15th June. We'll try to decide which weeks we'll be able to get enough members to play during July and August.

## **Lunch**

### **11<sup>th</sup> May - Holly Bush Inn at Breedon**

For the third month in a row, our leaders Colin and Sharon had to excuse themselves from attending and so Mike again co-ordinated with the pub and checked that all members had arrived. This month we were at the Holly Bush Inn at Breedon.

The pub had set up a large square table in the dining room at the back for us. Twenty of us sat 5 to a side around the table making it quite easy to talk to everyone else. Drinks were collected from the bar before sitting and then the food orders were taken at the table.

Nobody had a starter this time! so it was straight into main courses. The food was a little slow arriving since we hadn't pre-ordered but it was well worth the wait. Generous portions of tasty food were enjoyed by all. Quite a few indulged in dessert to the point that the pub ran out of one choice and a little confusion followed as to who had changed their order to something else, but again it was all enjoyed. The pub staff worked hard to please us all and looked after us very well.

Next month we shall be at the Wolferstan Arms in Shuttington..

## **Reading**

### **17<sup>th</sup> May**

The Reading Group had our monthly meeting on Wednesday, 17 May at 2pm. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month, at Annie's house. This month we discussed a book by Amor Towles, an American author, the book title was "A Gentleman in Moscow".

There were six of us at our meeting and we enjoyed discussing the book, and also found it interesting that we had such mixed reviews. We chat about the book, and the length of time that takes depends on how much we enjoyed the book (perhaps even longer if we didn't like it very much!). We are then happy for our chat to divert onto other subjects, which often come about because of the content of the book, or even just about reading in general.

We would welcome other members, so please contact Annie Scotney, for details of our venue. The book for June is "Ordinary Thunderstorms" by William Boyd.

## **Scrabble**

### **22<sup>nd</sup> May**

Just 5 members made it to the Scrabble meeting this month, with several being on holiday. Two very enjoyable games were played and the competitive spirit still burns bright.

We agreed that we shall not have a summer recess as the companionship offered at our meetings is valuable and the opportunity to meet other members in friendly combat is appreciated by all.

Consequently we shall continue throughout the summer months, our next meeting being on 5th June. There is parking behind the Bull with your ticket redeemable for a coffee. Please do come along.



## Music Appreciation

3<sup>rd</sup> May

There were just 6 of us this month as several members were on holiday or had other appointments and we met at Mike's house.

We have taken to watching some YouTube videos where we have the facilities to do so and this month we had Mike's computer linked up to the big TV, so Nev started us off with a video of a group we'd not heard of before called Postmodern Jukebox playing a cover of "It's all about that bass". A great find of a wonderful eight-piece band with three female singers that play in a vintage style.

Dorothy's first choice was quite different; Harry Belafonte singing "Island in the sun" which we also found on YouTube as a live performance. Mr Belafonte died just a couple of weeks earlier. A great performer and activist who will be sorely missed.

Brenda had chosen Muddy Waters and "Hoogie coochie man". a fine blues classic. Heather had chosen "Morning" from the Peer Gynt suite by Grieg. A lovely relaxing piece which truly evokes early morning.

Neil's choice was Pink Floyd and "High Hopes" from their Division Bell album, a tune I had forgotten about.

Mike also had selected a video, this being a flashmob version of "Ode to joy" performed in the town square of Sabadell in Spain by the local orchestra and choir. A truly moving rendition.

Second round. Nev played us that perennial tune "Summertime" but this time sung by Peggy Lee. Not a version many of us had heard before, and very good it was too.

Dorothy had chosen another video. Very topical again, as it was just two days after May Day, "The Maypole dance" to the tune of Ralph Vaughn Williams "Seventeen come Sunday" danced by the children of The School in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania. Great fun and very old-school traditional (literally).

Brenda had chosen Judy Garland and "Somewhere over the rainbow". We had the Eva Cassidy version a few months back. This is the original.

Heather went for "Chiquitta" from the cast of the stage show "Mama Mia", so not the Abba original version, but very good nonetheless.

Neil had intended to play the CD of The Bangles and "Walk like an Egyptian" but we found it on YouTube and so we got the full video version. Good to see an 80's girl band who play all the instruments.

Mike offered something very different. Another video, this time from the Royal Albert Hall of probably the best two drum bands in the world; the Swiss band Top Secret and the Royal Marines in a drum battle. Not exactly a tune, but truly stunning virtuoso drumming.

Nev then gave us a piece which none of the others had heard before, namely "Mountains of Mourne" by Don McLean. A beautiful, wistful song sung beautifully.

Dorothy's next piece was the classic "Pearl fishers duet" sung by Jussi Björling and Robert Merrill. This recording from 1950 is considered to be the gold standard. Excellent.

Brenda had chosen "Oklahoma" from the musical of the same name. A great tune from a great musical.

Heather's next choice was slightly unusual being a panpipes version of Fleetwood Mac's "Albatros". Interesting.

Neil chose a lesser known Beatles track "She said, she said" from the album "Revolver" and then Mike closed the session with a video of "Swad song" sung, and written, by Five in Harmony who entertained us with this song and many others back in February's monthly meeting. The video contains many interesting images of old Swad. Great fun to watch.

## **Supper Club**

### **25<sup>th</sup> May - The Ferrers Arms, Lount**

We were due to go to the Belper Arms at Newton Burgoland this month and had duly chosen our food in advance as requested but when Colin tried to contact them with our orders just a few days before we were due to go, he could get no reply. It seems that the management had walked away and closed the pub at the last minute without telling us. The pub trade is struggling to make a profit at the moment and this is the third or fourth pub that we have used that has closed, or changed management, at short notice that we have heard of. However it does seem more than a bit rude to walk away without notifying those who have booked.

Luckily the Ferrers Arms were able to take our booking for 17 at short notice and made us welcome on arrival. Those members who had been on the coach trip to York arrived back in time to join us too. The pub was very quiet for a Thursday evening with only a small handful of other customers all evening. Obviously yet another pub suffering from a lack of business. We ordered and paid at the bar and the food arrived quite promptly, some having starters and many having puddings. We all had a very pleasant evening.

## **Science & Technology**

### **9<sup>th</sup> May - Tudor Food and Nutrition by Yogi Godwin**

Yogi started by defining when the Tudor times started. This was in 1485 when Henry VII emerged victorious at the Battle of Bosworth where he defeated Richard III. Food and the raw ingredients for meals in those times were many times more expensive than it is today, even when based on today's minimum wage. To give context to the talk, many fascinating facets of life in Tudor times were recalled. For instance, the quality of the diet of the rich was inferior that of the poor provided the crops had not failed. This was because the diet of the rich was based on excessive amounts of meat (6 pounds a day!), whereas the poor ate mostly vegetables, which provided plenty of 'roughage'. Little wonder that rhubarb was favoured by Henry VIII for its laxative effects.

Meals tended to be taken twice a day for both rich and poor. The poor would have a metal pot of vegetables stewing all day with maybe a few pieces of meat, and it would be 'pot luck' who found these. For the more wealthy, the quantity depended heavily on their ranking in the strict 'class' system, the top table could have 12 courses, the lower tables only 2.

Tomatoes, often called love or poison apples were also available. Plates were often made from pewter which contained lead in Tudor times, and the acid juices of the tomato would leach out this toxic element poisoning the unfortunate diner! Tables were simple 'boards' resting on trestles which could be upturned if elbows were rested on it, the origin of forbidding such a habit even today. The Tudor 'board' is the origin of today's phrases 'bed and board' and chairman of the 'board'.

Utensils included only a sharp knife and a spoon, the fork being an Italian invention, was not used. We can trace our liking for oranges and pomegranates back to Tudor times when Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon brought them over from Spain. Unlike today, chicken was not a source of cheap meat for the Tudors as the hen supplied fresh eggs, a food rich in protein and vitamin A.

For drink, Tudor peasants would have beer, even at breakfast. This provided nutrition and calories for a day spent labouring in the fields or at the forge. For richer folk, wine would be available. Both drinks were probably safer than plain water, as the boiling and fermentation process probably killed some of the bacteria. Overall, the Tudors enjoyed their food and drink and the poor probably ate more healthily than we think. As always, excessive consumption is bad for your health. After a lifetime of excess Henry VIII weighed 30 stone and could not walk due to his weight and leg wounds, and suffered severe constipation.

Thanks Yogi for a fascinating insight into Tudor life..

## **Wine Appreciation**

17<sup>th</sup> May

It was a slightly unusual tasting this month. We had been approached by a u3a member who had some wine which had been in store for some time and wanting to know if they were still drinkable, they asked if we would be prepared to taste them and give our opinion. Always willing to help a fellow member we naturally said 'yes'. The wines were Hungarian - a 2010 Mundana Kunsag and a 2012 Bor Forras Kunsag - and were both sweet reds.

To compliment them I ordered two dry reds and two dry whites from a specialist Hungarian wine house to give us six wines that are very typical Hungarian grapes and representative of the regions they come from but uncommon in the UK. In the end we only tasted the two sweet reds and one of the whites - a 2018 Tokaji Furmint - as there were only four of us.

Our opinion on the sweet reds was that one, the Mundana Kunsag, had gone past its best. The colour was brownish and there was not much in the way of taste or smell. Overall, we all agreed it was drinkable but disappointing. On the other hand, Bor Forras was had a lovely deep red colour with plenty of taste and smell and we all enjoyed it. The Furmint was not to everyone's taste with three out of the four of us not liking it. The unopened wines will be put into a tasting at another date.

The next session will be on Wed 21st June when Ken will be presenting the wines.

## **Short Walking**

19<sup>th</sup> May. From the car park next to St Peters church, Stapenhill, for a walk around Burton Washlands.

The weather was fine and not too hot as the three walkers set off from Stapenhill for Burton Library walking over the washlands. We walked over the bridge to cross the new bridge road and onto the ferry bridge and causeway. This time we walked to the far side of the causeway before dropping down onto the washlands following the path to the Library and Bookuccinos cafe. After the break we headed towards the river and followed the path running parallel to the river and up to the causeway. Here we parted our ways I went to Tesco's while the other two walked back to the cars.

## **Medium Walking**

1<sup>st</sup> May. Grace Dieu Priory and Cademan Woods, led by Alison

The walk this month was brought forward by a week due to our normal scheduled date clashing with the Coronation Bank Holiday.

15 of us met at the car park for Grace Dieu Priory. We entered the Grace Dieu woods and turned right along the Grace Dieu trail, eventually exiting the woods and crossing Turlough Road and into Cademan Woods. This section involved a few uphill sections among the very old rocks that feature in this area and we saw evidence of 'Bouldering' (a form of rock climbing). We came out onto Warren Lane and re-entered the GD woods, onwards to the viaduct and the ruins and back to the car park.

The woods were beautiful, the walk was interesting and eventful. We had a plentiful supply of bluebells, Trev enjoyed himself on the rope swing and one of our walkers decided to go for an involuntary paddle.

4.4 miles in total and an elevation of approx 300ft.

We will revert to our normal schedule of the 2nd Monday in the month going forward, so the next will be 12th June..

## Longer Walking

### 16<sup>th</sup> May. From Alrewas, led by Mike Gibson

With a glorious day in prospect, a lucky 13 turned up at the George & Dragon, Alrewas, for an early 9.30am start on this 8.2 mile circular walk in and around the Trent Valley, last undertaken in July 2015 but with a different starting point.

The initial route took us along the Trent Valley Way on the south side of the River Trent, which featured a succession of fields, a couple offering some very heavy going through thick grass. Reaching Yoxall Bridge, we crossed this Grade II listed 18th-century structure, which was replaced in 1998 by a new bridge carrying the A515, and then looped round through woodlands and more fields to enter Yoxall from the west.

Once through the village, we headed down Brown's Lane and along a section of The Way for the Millennium (part of the National Forest Way), a mainly grassy track through fields and woodlands above the River Swarbourn, noting that an extremely dodgy stile encountered on the 'test run' 3 weeks earlier had been repaired! On past the Wychnor Park Country Club, then dropping down through a riverside wood before trekking across more fields back to Alrewas, where an intrepid foursome braved some serious mud to view where the River Trent 'crosses' the Trent & Mersey Canal. (The two waterways essentially merge for a short distance.)

All repaired to the George & Dragon for a pleasant lunch and a well-deserved pint.

### 2nd May. From Heather, led by Trev and Val

The group met at the Queens Head in Heather, for a 7.5 mile walk. Having left the pub, we passed the church and crossed the Measham road, then set off in the direction of Newton Burgoland. Arriving in the village, we turned down the lane by the primary school and after a number of stiles and fields we had our drink stop near Shackerstone. We then joined part of the Leicestershire Round footpath, continuing on to Odstone. From there it was farm tracks and paths, being careful not to touch the electric fence! before arriving back in Heather for well earned meal and drink.

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

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