



## Newsletter September 2023

### Interest Groups Timetable for September 2023

Please note that this timetable could be subject to change at any time. Please check the website for latest news.

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 26th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Peter Liddle "Discovering the Rutland Roman Villa"
Arts and Crafts	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Bridge	Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> Mon 18 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Caryl's. We will plan our future projects
Calligraphy 2	Wed 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	148 Woodside, Ashby.
Coffee and Chat	Wed 13 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Eden Bistro, 1 Ashby Rd, Moira DE12 6DQ
Computer	Wed 6 <sup>th</sup> Mon 18 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10 am	Ashby Croquet Club, Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Bath Lane, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	-	-	No meeting this month
Family History	Wed 13 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
French	Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> Mon 18 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Club, Wilfred Place, Ashby
Gardening	Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>	9.30 am	Coach trip to Trentham Gardens Leaving from the Royal Hotel at 9.30 am. £25
History	Thu 28 <sup>th</sup>	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Yogi Godwin – "Ukraine"
Industrial Heritage	Wed 27 <sup>th</sup>	TBA	TBA
International Cuisine	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	6 pm	Slice of India, Mansfield Road, Derby DE21 4AW
Literature	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>	1:30 pm	At Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 14 <sup>th</sup>	12 for 12.30 pm	The Sump, Newton Rd, Burton-on-Trent DE15 0TT

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Medium Walks	Mon 11 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Ticknall Village Hall CP on Ingleby Lane
Music Appreciation	Wed 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Sid's at 23 Grange Close, LE65 2PQ
Reading	Wed 20 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Annie's house
Recorder	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup> Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Science & Technology	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. Adrian Hickson "Making the Nottingham Tram work"
Scrabble	Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Mon 25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 15 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Meet at Swadlincote Woodlands car park
Social Events	Fri 1 <sup>st</sup>	6 pm	Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club.
Supper Club	Thu 28 <sup>th</sup>	7 for 7.30 pm	The Belper Arms, Newton Burgoland LE67 2SE
Walking	Tue 5 <sup>th</sup>	9.15 for 9.30 am start	Lathkill Dale Hotel, Over Haddon DE45 1JE
	Tues 19 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10 am start	Trowell and Benwell viaduct
Wine Appreciation	Wed 20 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Annie's house

### Interest Groups Timetable for early October 2023

Group	Date	Time	Venue
French	Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club
Bridge	Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club. Date TBC
Walking	Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup>	9.45 for 10 am start	TBC
Calligraphy 2	Wed 4 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	148 Woodside, Ashby
Music Appreciation	Wed 4 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBC
Computer	Wed 4 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Digital Photography	Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Recorder	Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal

## OUR COMMITTEE FOR THIS YEAR

At last month's AGM you elected three new members on to the committee - Ronald 'Yogi' Godwin, Glenys Morrice and David Spiers. Anne Donegan, Avril Wilson and Peter Clement stood down, and Tony Smith's term as Chairman came to an end. Thank you to Anne, Avril, Peter and Tony for their sterling work in keeping our u3a running smoothly for many years.

In line with our constitution, it is up to the elected committee members to decide which posts they will undertake between them. So:

**John Pilgrim** has agreed to be our Chair for the next two years

**Tony Smith** will take over the role of Business Secretary

**Val Reed** remains as Treasurer

**Iain Banns** stays as Membership Secretary

**Colin Woodland** remains as Interest Groups Co-ordinator

**Sharon Woodland** is still in charge of Welfare

**Bill Wilson** continues as Speaker Organiser

**Mike Stow** remains in charge of Communications

**Glenys Morrice** will take over as Social Secretary

**Colin Ellis, Yogi Godwin** and **David Spiers** have no specific role on the committee at present, but I'm sure it won't stay that way for long!

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW CHAIRMAN

Ding! Ding! All change...

Heads up Everyone! For those of us yet to hear, we have a new Ashby u3a Chair, me; John Pilgrim. Thank you to everyone I've spoken to recently, who have been so positive about my new role, this is humbling and makes me feel truly honoured, proud and accepted. I've lived in Ashby for over 25 years now, with both my wife Rosemary and I's children attending schools here - some of you may well have taught them!

As always, it's been a busy time for the Committee with assessing our presence at Jim's Tractor Run (a success, we believe), through planning and hosting our summer cream tea meeting, to arranging our Ashby Bowls Club social evening and even our Christmas meal at Willesley Park Golf Club. Alongside these local events, we've also been active with the Third Age Trust, with Tony Smith, our former Chair and newly appointed Business Secretary, holding a Q&A with Liz Thackray, the TAT Chair no less, and also active participation on the regional Leicestershire and Rutland u3a network.

As I mentioned to those at the recent monthly meeting, I'm keen to use my time as Chair to continue the great work that's been done by former Chairs and Committee Members to help grow our u3a, so that it sustains and thrives far more for all of us and our future membership. Please everybody spread the word about the things you enjoy across our u3a and encourage eligible friends, neighbours and family to join in. I look forward to meeting as many members as possible as I already attend a number of our activity groups, so please do say Hi and if there's anything you'd like to know, or think I can help with, please don't hesitate to let me know. Cheers, John.

## u3a WEEK

September 16-24<sup>th</sup> is u3a week. The idea is to promote u3a to family, friends, neighbours etc and tell them of the benefits of being a member of the organisation, particularly Ashby u3a of course.

Direct them to our website [www.ashbyu3a.co.uk](http://www.ashbyu3a.co.uk) or to come along to one of our monthly meetings.

## 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.

## AUGUST'S MONTHLY MEETING

This month was our annual Cream Tea event and so we didn't have a guest speaker. The sun shone for once this year and many members were able to sit outside to eat their scones, jam and cream whilst having time to chat to other members.

Before members were let loose on the scones, they were introduced to our committee for this year including our three new members, Yogi, David and Glenys and our new Chair John Pilgrim. Full details of the committee are listed in the section above.

## NEW GROUPS PROPOSED

Two new groups have been proposed, both are food related! One is a Breakfast Club and the other is International Cuisine.

**Breakfast Club** Little has been decided about how, when and where the group might get together, but they are gathering names of those who might be interested.

**International Cuisine** are holding their first get together at the Slice of India, Mansfield Road, Derby DE21 4AW at 6pm on Thursday 7th September.

If you think you might be interested in either of them contact Colin Woodland, our Groups Co-ordinator on [interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk) or 01530 413867

## GROUP REPORTS

### **Arts and Crafts**

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

The Craft ladies met on 3rd August at Packington Village Hall. For the third month we worked on our Crystal Art. Fortunately the ladies still seem to be enjoying it. It's not all work - we all enjoy putting the world to rights too. Our next meeting will be on 7th Sept.

### **Bridge**

The calendar for the Bridge group is all in the air at the moment because the Darts Club at Ivanhoe who they share a room with on alternate days have had all their dates changed beyond their control. As I understand, negotiations are under way. Meanwhile Neil is on holiday until September and Gary Thompson is running the group in the interim.

### **Calligraphy**

#### **August**

The group didn't meet in August due to holidays. We will meet again on Tuesday September 12th at Caryl's home to plan our future projects.

## **Calligraphy 2**

2<sup>nd</sup> August

As August is one of the main times for holidays, we decided to keep the group informal and to produce items and themes of summer.

## **Coffee and Chat**

9<sup>th</sup> August

The coffee and chat in August was at Newlands farm cafe. Only 4 people made the trek to Hatton but it was worth the effort. Drinks and cake were enjoyed in a small chalet amidst a farm with sheep and lambs munching grass in the field next door while the sun shone brightly.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10am on 13<sup>th</sup> September at the Eden Bistro in Moira. If you would like to join us, please let Colin Woodland know on [coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk) so that he can book sufficient seats at the table.

If anyone requires transport or can offer a lift, please let Colin know.

## **Drawing and Painting**

16<sup>th</sup> August

The August D & P session was hosted by Sue, so we spent a very pleasant relaxing morning drawing 'The Seaside' and enjoying excellent refreshments.

There is no meeting scheduled for September, so we should regroup in October. Details to follow nearer the date.

## **Computers**

21<sup>st</sup> August

We had nine present today with a busy table of projects.

Bernice needed to be able to copy photos from camera to Chromebook, edit them on the device and then back up to an external hard drive. Steve worked with her to set it all up and take her through the process.

John H and Richard worked with Peter on choosing a new Internet Service Provider (ISP) This turned out to be a slow and tricky process.

Mike worked with Bic to move Bic's Outlook emails over to Office 365.

There was a side discussion on USB types, socket types, data transfer and power systems via these sockets.

## **Croquet**

The croquet group continues to have a small loyal group of players. We met twice in August and will have two more meetings until the lawns close at the end of British Summer Time.

The dates for your diary are Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October. New prospective members are welcome on either or both of these dates. We play at 10.00 am at Ashby Croquet Club's lawns which are at Moira Miner's Welfare.

## **Digital Photography Group**

3<sup>rd</sup> August

5 of us visited Donington Park Race Circuit to try to capture some action shots of cars practising for a race that coming weekend. Unfortunately there wasn't as much action as we had hoped and most of the cars were near identical Porsche road cars so not much action to capture. After about an hour we retired to the cafe for a break before returning home. Next month we plan to view and critique the photos we have been taking through the summer, such as it has been.

## **Family History**

9<sup>th</sup> August

We had six at table today.

Dora is still working on her paternal ancestors in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Parish records are her primary source, but she is finding it difficult to locate marriage or death records. Without the certificates from later in the 19th century, this is a bit of a handicap.

Ana is tracking her great grandma. It seems she started life, as so many girls did, in service in Durham, then went on to make a career running a dancing academy for girls. Tracking her life onwards to the 1939 Register could yield interesting results, as she seems to have been a successful entrepreneur.

Eileen gave us a real task: to 'translate' a 1634 will from the 'Secretary Hand' font of the day to modern English. Close inspection reveals that this will be a difficult and eye-straining task, but fascinating. Attached to the will is a list of goods and chattels which is a bit easier to read. There are some really amazing entries in this.

Mary has been set a task by her son-in-law to create a chart showing all the occupations in her Tree for 10 generations back: this will be very interesting as many of the older ones will be obsolete or even arcane. One such was 'Glove Factor'. After some thought we decided that this would most likely be a wholesale trader in gloves. JD has a CD with many of the definitions of 19th Century Occupations. This could well be very helpful, although 'Glove Factor' is not present!

John Howlett is now working on his father's line and has been finding very interesting things out about his grandmother. Among these is the fact that in 1918 she was taken to court over the death of a child she had left in the care of her 9-year-old son. The child was burnt to death when her dress caught the fire. Sadly, this happened all too often as open fires were the norm. Even in schools, with closed stoves, these accidents did happen.

John D is currently working on assembling the facts around his great grandfather's rise from the son of a poor carpet weaver in Durham to a wealthy General Secretary of a major Building Society in Newcastle. In the course of it other strange but true facts are emerging about great grandpa's family connections.

We meet again on Wednesday, 13th September..

## **French**

7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> August

Last session 6 members came along and we looked at the quiz we had been set to do. We had to match common English sayings eg "It's raining cats and dogs" with what the French equivalent would be. We also did revision of earlier work.

Next time we aim to talk about our plans for September and look at adjectives which can have 2 meanings depending on whether they come before or after the noun.

## **Industrial Heritage**

### **23<sup>rd</sup> August. Cromford Mill**

The group made our way up to Cromford without hold-ups and booked in for our guided tour and got our obligatory coffees before being introduced to Cliff, our guide for the morning. He started by showing us around the mill yard and explained the history of Richard Arkwright and how he started from humble beginnings in Preston as the son of a tailor. His parents couldn't afford to send him to school and so he was taught to read and write by his cousin. He was apprenticed to a barber and wig-maker and set up shop in Bolton. Despite his lack of education, he was a keen inventor and with John Kay, a clockmaker, set about designing a spinning machine.

Arkwright patented the spinning frame which replaced human fingers and was initially powered by horses. It could spin several threads of cotton at the same time. He and John Smalley of Preston initially set up a small horse-driven factory in Nottingham despite having not yet perfected the spinning frame. Before this factory was running he had started in 1771 to build another mill at Cromford but this time powered by water drained out of the local lead mines and channelled to Cromford to drive a large water wheel. This would be the world's first water powered mill which employed 200 people. He built a second mill alongside the first 4 years later. Cliff continued to astound us with stories about Arkwright the man, and his business enterprises.

After a brief visit to meet the virtual Mr Arkwright courtesy of audio visual magic, we walked the half mile up to Cromford village where Cliff again regaled us with stories about the houses that Arkwright built to attract workers to his mills. We toured the backstreets of the village and saw the ponds created to store water for the mill, the cottages and even the town jail. We returned alongside the river Derwent and the large house (Willersley Castle) Arkwright built for himself but never saw completed and we finished at the family chapel, now a Grade 1 listed parish church.

Cliff spoke to us for over 2½ hours with an endless stream of fascinating facts many of which I can't now remember, and answered all our many questions, but the whole story of Arkwright, once the richest commoner in Britain, would take many more hours to tell completely.

Arkwright was knighted, became High Sheriff of Derbyshire and died leaving a fortune of £500,000 (approx £60m in today's money) and in the process started the industrialisation of Britain and the world.

We finished the day with a nice lunch at a historic pub in Wirksworth before driving home.

## **History**

### **24<sup>th</sup> August. 'What I did on my holidays'**

This time was different. We had 27 present to listen to nine members' own accounts of memorable holidays.

The members sat in a semi-circle and each speaker stood, or sat at the laptop, depending on whether they had photos to show.

We heard some fascinating stories, showing how holidays can be exciting and colourful, despite the limited resources of our childhood. There were childhood trips to Cornwall from Jane Barnett, repeated visits to Guernsey from John D, an enthralling trip to France from Barbara Ball, Colin Woodward's trip to the Isle of Wight with John H and Margaret (in verse!), Adrian Hickson's adventures with a baulky J4 Van, Jane Harris' Rhine cruise including a visit to Oberammergau as a reminder of a childhood visit and Yogi's adventures in Russia.

The photos shown were very evocative, bringing back so many memories, whilst some of the stories were hair-raising (especially Yogi's in Russia!). A veritable feast of memories.

We must hope that there will be many more such for us to explore in the future.

## **Gardening**

### **17<sup>th</sup> August – Garden Party**

Today we held our annual garden party at Denis and Anita's beautiful garden. Luckily the weather was fabulous and we had approximately 40 members attend giving an opportunity for lots of plant discussion and social interaction.

The garden is on different levels and has a long and interesting history. The scones and cake were lovely and the fruit punch very refreshing, and our traditional free plant raffle seemed to go down well.

It was so relaxing and enjoyable that we all stayed for a long time.

## **Lunch**

### **10<sup>th</sup> August – Black Horse, Appleby Magna**

The luncheon group met in August at the Black Horse Appleby Magna. Seventeen of us filled the pub and enjoyed a wide choice, well presented and delivered by very pleasant staff. We were almost too many for them to cope with so service was slightly slower than usual but this did not detract from the enjoyment.

The next luncheon is at the Sump, Newton Road, Burton DE15 0TT at 12 noon on 14<sup>th</sup> September. If you would like to join us, please email [luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk).

## **Recorder**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August**

We met as usual on the first and third Thursday mornings in August. There were rather more of us at the first session and we were able to play pieces ranging through 2 parts, three parts and 4 parts as we had a good distribution of instruments (soprano, treble, tenor and bass).

At the second session we were without our bass player, so the music was restricted to pieces without a bass part, although we have some pieces which require two soprano parts. We had a look at some new Handel pieces this month and in spite of them looking quite formidable, we found they were not as bad as we originally feared. Everyone seemed to enjoy playing them.

## **Scrabble**

### **August**

The Scrabble group continues to meet at the Bull's Head in Market Street every other Monday, except Bank Holidays.

The group is flexible in numbers, but any new members please arrive by at least 10.30 to give your details to the organiser and be added to the WhatsApp group (you must bring your current membership card with you).

We're flexible on attendance, but if you won't be coming to a particular meeting, please add a note on the WhatsApp group. We look forward to meeting new members.

## **Social events**

It was intended to hold a Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club in July but unfortunately it had to be postponed due to a shortage of members signing up for it, seemingly due to holidays and such. It is now being held on Sept 1<sup>st</sup> so too late for a report this month, but it should appear next time.

Also in the planning stage is a possible Archery evening. Keep an eye out for further details.



## **Reading**

16<sup>th</sup> August

Leicestershire Library Service have a book group collection which offers multiple copies of a wide variety of books available on three months loan to book groups. This month we took advantage of them and borrowed 'The Sea Sisters' by Lucy Clarke. The banner on the front cover says 'secrets between sisters run deep' and the narrative concerns the relationship between Katie and Mia, sisters (as you've probably guessed) who have very different personalities and life courses. Although close as children, their lives took them in different directions with Katie working in London in a high-powered role and Mia following a more bohemian life style. Following their mother's death, they combine their inheritances and buy a house together in London and move in together, which works out about as well as you might expect. With Katie pressurising her to settle down Mia decides to travel, setting off on an extended trip with her best friend Finn.

The book opens with Katie being woken by two police officers knocking on her door at two in the morning. They tell her that Mia has been found dead at the bottom of a cliff in Bali. In a bid to understand what happened Katie retraces Mia's journey using the entries in her travel journal as a guide. As the mystery surrounding Mia's death deepens Katie learns more about her sister, herself and the complexities of relationships. Threads from the distant and near past are woven with contemporary ones leading Katie to question many aspects of her life and to make significant changes. Each chapter explores an aspect of the story from one of the sister's perspective skilfully woven into a cohesive and gripping narrative.

Having talked about the book, which we all enjoyed and would recommend as a fast-paced mystery with a real human interest, we went on to discuss the nature of relationships, particularly within families. Next month we will be reading 'The Nightingale' by Kristin Hannah, meeting on Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Sept at 2:00 at Annie's house..

## **Wine Appreciation**

16<sup>th</sup> August

This month Annie had supplied a selection of alcohol free wines! Two were truly 0% whilst the others were <0.5%. Prices varied considerably from £3.25 to £9.49.

The first was McGuigan Zero, an Aussie Sauvignon Blanc for £4 from Tesco. Quite fruity and tasting of grapefruit, we thought it quite acceptable although some found it to be a bit too sharp. But at £4 very good value.

Next was a French Chardonnay from Amazon at £9.49. this was sweeter and more appley and we thought it tasted more like real wine and would go with pork or with a dessert. But it was pricey and dearer than an equivalent full alcoholic wine.

Rosé next. Tesco's Garnacha Rosé at £3.25 was Barbie pink in colour and tasted of strawberry and bubble-gum. Much too sweet and didn't taste like any sort of wine.

On to the reds. Again £3.25 from Tesco, this Cabernet Sauvignon/Tempranillo at least looked like wine! It was dark and full-bodied and even left "tears" down the glass when swirled. It tasted of cherry and was a bit too sweet again, but otherwise quite good.

Lastly came Domaine de la Prade, a Merlot/Shiraz blend at £9.49 from Amazon. We just didn't like this. It was bitter-sweet and with a strange after-taste. If offered in a restaurant, we'd send it back!

So would we buy any of these again. Maybe the Tesco white and red. You could reasonably offer these to someone who was staying off alcohol for some reason, but realistically you'd be better off with a cordial or something that wasn't pretending to be wine!

## **Music Appreciation**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> August at Sallie's**

There were just five of us this month but it meant that we each got a chance to play more tunes.

Mike kicked off with his new favourite singer Irishman Christy Moore with a live recording of a lovely song, "Beeswing", written by Richard Thompson.

Entirely different was Sallie's choice, Pavarotti in wonderful voice singing "Ave Maria". Different again was Brenda's first selection, Dean Martin and "Everybody loves somebody sometime" sung in his usual relaxed style.

Dorothy changed direction yet again. This time with Jean Pierre Rampal playing Vivaldi's flute concerto "La Notte", a piece unknown to most of us but typically Vivaldi and very entertaining.

Nev reminded us that amongst many singers and artists that we lost last month was lovely Jane Birkin and so we played her most (in)famous song "Je t'aime" which was banned by the BBC at the time. Difficult to see now what all the fuss was about then.

Mike's second choice was Linda Ronstadt singing "Tracks of my tears", the song made famous by Smokey Robinson but Linda put her own interpretation on it.

Sallie had chosen the Royal Philharmonic playing Rossini's "William Tell Overture" and we all remembered the words to "The Lone Ranger"!

Brenda offered another tune by one of her favourites, the Modern Gustin Trio, this time with their jazz interpretation of The Beatles "Can't buy me love". Great.

Dorothy's next choice was that excellent Glen Campbell, who we lost to Alzheimers back in 2017, with the wonderful "Galveston", one of many of Glen's hits written by Jimmy Webb.

Mike had chosen Elbow and "One day like this", a perennial anthem of all rock festivals.

Sallie's last track was Dinah Washington singing Noel Coward's "Mad about the boy".

Brenda then played us The Carpenters and "Solitaire" with Karen C's beautiful mellow singing.

Nev closed the session with some classic rock and roll, Chuck Berry and "No particular place to go"

Another great morning's listening to a wide range of wonderful music.

## **Supper Club**

### **24<sup>th</sup> August – The Mill Wheel, Hartshorne**

17 made it out to Hartshorne, where we had a large room to ourselves although it connected to another area which was occupied. We had pre-ordered our food and the starters for the few that had ordered them came up quite quickly. When the mains came out, there was a little confusion as they had gotten two orders wrong and missed one entirely. This was sorted quickly but would cause problems later. Desserts were no problem and all the food tasted good and came in reasonably large quantities.

When we came to pay all seemed to go ok but at the end there appeared to be a main and a dessert unpaid for. Colin settled up before leaving and the next day emailed everyone to check what they had paid for. In the end it seems the pub had charged two people too little, one person £11 too much and the two extra plates had not been ordered at all. Reimbursement is being sought.

A great shame as generally speaking it was a good evening.

## **Science & Technology**

### **11th August. – A bat walk led by Bill Cove from the Derbyshire Bat Group.**

On a fine evening in August an intrepid group met in the car park near Dimminsdale Nature Reserve for our first ever bat walk.

Our guide Bill Cove from the Derbyshire Bat Group had given us a fascinating talk about UK bats a few months ago, and this bat walk was our field experience.

He showed us the bat detectors, about the size of a modern phone and explained their functions. They detect different frequencies, above our audible range and showed us how to tune them to hear the different species of bats we were likely to find. We then tried to tune them ourselves before setting off.

So into the woods at Dimminsdale and in a few minutes we could hear the sound of bats starting to emerge from their sleep, stretching their wings and hunting for food. More and more emerged and soon everyone's detector was beeping away as they pointed in different directions at different bats.

"What frequency are you on" was said as we shared the best spots. Some bats could be seen silhouetted against the sky but the detectors were showing us there were actually ten times the number we could see. It became darker we moved to other area to find more bats and the familiar woods become quite strange in the dark and we were grateful for the lights we could switch on to safely find our way along the rough paths towards the lake.

Then back to the road, and standing on each side of the bridge, we could see some bats but hear many more swooping under the bridge and hear their characteristic buzz as they honed on a flying meal. Bill passed round an infra red detector then we saw even more bats showing as white shapes flying round in total darkness under the trees, just as in nature programs on TV, but for real. Modern technology was enabling us to hear and see a world normally hidden and concealed in darkness.

Over the couple of hours we were there we detected between us a steady stream of six different species, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Daubentons bat, Noctule, and some Serotines.

A big thank you to the Derbyshire bat group for the loan of their equipment and to Bill Cove for his expertise and engaging commentary on all things bats and for a fascinating and productive evening.

## **Short Walking**

### **18th August. Snibston Colliery country park**

Six stalwart walkers met at the Snibston Country Park car park. There was a very light drizzle so we set off on the yellow route which effectively goes around the edge of the country park. We took the clockwise route and the first item of interest was the Coalville Town football ground which gives you a birds eye view of the match. There was no activity on this Friday morning. The drizzle stopped and the path was good with little sign of mud. We came to a road which goes to the fishing lakes. We turned left off the road onto a path by the lake and took the path just before the gate taking you out of the country park. This takes you down to the other road which goes to the golf centre.

Just beyond this we entered the country park and climbed up for a while before we levelled out and ended up on the road to the fishing lake. After a short distance we come to the path leading back to the car park and hence to the cafe which took the rest of the morning.

As we left we met someone from the Century theatre who offered to show us around but some of us had to go home for lunch however he did point out there was no charge for the car park.

Distance just under 1.5 miles.

## **Medium Walking**

### **14<sup>th</sup> August - Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Park, led by Alison**

Our group of 6 set off from the car park at the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Park in Heather. After walking through the park, past the lakes - where there was a large family of swans - towards Ravenstone, we crossed some fields and entered Ravenstone on the Ashby Road.

We walked through the village exiting on Heather Lane to walk across fields to Sense Valley and back through Heather to the car park.

For the 2nd month in a row rain was forecast but we were lucky and it didn't materialise. 5.6 miles covered.

## **Longer Walking**

### **15<sup>th</sup> August - Thornton Reservoir led by Val and Trev**

After a wet Monday, Tuesday dawned fine and dry and 11 of us set off to walk around part of Thornton Reservoir.

We then headed west, across fields and through farms and a track through woodland and a golf course, returning back towards Thornton, with lovely views across the reservoir with the water glinting in the sunlight.

After 8 miles it was nice to return to the Bricklayers Arms for a well earned meal and drink.

### **1<sup>st</sup> August Blackfordby, Hartshorne and Smisby, led by Iain**

This walk started and finished at the Taphouse, Annwell Lane, Ashby. 16 walkers set off, heading back to the town until reaching Bishop Hall Road, from where a footpath was picked up, taking us to Blackfordby. Unfortunately, before reaching the village, we met a spell of drizzle and then had to lose one of our members.

The walk then continued to Woodville, where an alternative route had to be taken through the village, due to an unused footpath being too overgrown for safe access. Leaving Woodville, we stopped for a coffee break and then carried on to Hartshorne.

From there, we followed the path to Smisby, including one long, and steep, hill at which point we walked back to the Taphouse along the road, missing out the planned section through Ingles Farm Wood. There were 14 walkers dining and we were provided with excellent food and service.