



## Newsletter October 2023

### Interest Groups Timetable for October 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 24th  | 2 pm          | Congregational Church, Ashby.<br>Melody Flyte "Songs from the past"               |
| Arts and Crafts      | Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>   | 10 am         | Packington Village Hall   |
| Breakfast            | Thu 19 <sup>th</sup>  | 10 am         | Lakeside Bistro, Shortheath Rd, Moira DE12 6BW                                    |
| Bridge               | Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup>   | 7-9 pm        | Ivanhoe Social Club.  |
|                      | Mon 9 <sup>th</sup><br>Mon 16 <sup>th</sup>                         | TBA           |   |
| Calligraphy          | Tue 10 <sup>th</sup>  | 10 am         | Sue's house   |
| Calligraphy 2        | Wed 4 <sup>th</sup>   | 10 am         | 148 Woodside, Ashby.  |
| Coffee and Chat      | Wed 11 <sup>th</sup>  | 10 am         | Newlands Farm Shop and Tea Rooms, Hatton Fields, Hilton, DE65 5GQ                 |
| Computer             | Wed 4 <sup>th</sup><br>Mon 16 <sup>th</sup>                         | 2 pm          | 16 Winchester Way   |
| Croquet              | Fri 27 <sup>th</sup>  | 11 am         | Ashby Croquet Club, Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Bath Lane, Moira DE12 6BP         |
| Digital Photography  | Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>   | 10 am         | 16 Winchester Way   |
| Drawing and painting | Wed 18 <sup>th</sup>  | 10 am         | Venue and topic TBA   |
| Family History       | Wed 11 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 pm          | 2 Marlborough Way   |
| Food from Afar       | Thu 5 <sup>th</sup>   | 6 for 6.30 pm | IMGE Restaurant (Turkish and Mediterranean)<br>36 High Street, Coalville LE67 3ED |
| French               | Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup><br>Mon 16 <sup>th</sup><br>Mon 30 <sup>th</sup> | 11 am         | Ivanhoe Club, Wilfred Place, Ashby  |
| Gardening            | Thu 19 <sup>th</sup>  | 2.15 pm       | Packington Village Hall. Harvest Meal plus a demonstration by Tina.               |
| History              | Thu 26 <sup>th</sup>  | 2.15 pm       | Packington Village Hall.<br>Isobel Salt - 'A Victorian Holiday'                   |

| Group                | Date  | Time                 | Venue  |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| Industrial Heritage  | Wed 25 <sup>th</sup>                        | TBA                  | Abbey Pumping Station Museum and Wigston Framework Knitting Museum                                       |
| Literature           | Tue 10 <sup>th</sup>                        | 1:30 pm              | Sandra's house   |
| Lunch                | Thu 12 <sup>th</sup>                        | 12 for 12.30 pm      | The Holly Bush Inn, 1 Melbourne Lane, Breedon On The Hill DE73 8AT                                       |
| Medium Walks         | Mon 9 <sup>th</sup>                         | 9.45 for 10am start  | Meet at Main CP, Foremark Reservoir, Milton, Derbyshire DE65 6EG   |
| Music Appreciation   | Wed 4 <sup>th</sup>                         | 10 am                | Brenda's, 36 Willesley Gdns  |
| Reading              | Wed 18 <sup>th</sup>                        | 2 pm                 | Annie's house  |
| Recorder             | Thu 5 <sup>th</sup><br>Thu 19 <sup>th</sup> | 10 am                | St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal  |
| Science & Technology | Tue 10 <sup>th</sup>                        | 2 pm                 | Packington Village Hall. Bill Devitt<br>"If you want to create a new steam locomotive, then START HERE!" |
| Scrabble             | Mon 9 <sup>th</sup><br>Mon 23 <sup>th</sup> | 10.30 am             | The Bulls Head, Ashby  |
| Short Walks          | Fri 20 <sup>th</sup>                        | 10 am                | Meet at the car park near St Peters church, Stapenhill   |
| Supper Club          | Thu 26 <sup>th</sup>                        | 7 for 7.30 pm        | The Globe In, Snarestone DE12 7DB  |
| Walking              | Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup>                         | 9.45 for 10 am start | The Belper Arms, Main St, Newton Burgoland LE67 2SE  |
|                      | Tues 17 <sup>th</sup>                       | 9.45 for 10 am start | TBA  |
| Wine Appreciation    | Wed 18 <sup>th</sup>                        | 7:00 pm              | Annie's house  |

### **Interest Groups Timetable for early November 2023**

| Group               | Date                | Time                 | Venue                                  |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| Calligraphy 2       | Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> | 10 am                | 148 Woodside, Ashby                    |
| Music Appreciation  | Wed 1st             | 10 am                | Neil's, 40 Willesley Gdns              |
| Computer            | Wed 1st             | 2 pm                 | 16 Winchester Way                      |
| Arts and Crafts     | Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 10 am                | Packington Village Hall                |
| Digital Photography | Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 10 am                | 16 Winchester Way                      |
| Recorder            | Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 10 am                | St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal  |
| Scrabble            | Mon 6th             | 11 am                | The Bulls Head, Ashby                  |
| Bridge              | Mon 6th             | 7-9 pm               | Ivanhoe Social Club. Date and time TBC |
| Walking             | Tue 7th             | 9.45 for 10 am start | TBA                                    |

## **A CHANGE TO OUR COMMITTEE**

One change from the list of committee members published last month. Colin Woodland has decided to stand down as Interest Groups Coordinator and Yogi Godwin has agreed to take his place.

The Committee, and I'm sure you all, would like to thank Colin for all his hard work for the last few years and offer Yogi our best wishes in his new role.

Colin will be staying on as Group Leader for the various Groups which he currently leads, and he and Sharon will still be greeting us all outside on arrival at the church for 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.

## **SEPTEMBER'S MONTHLY MEETING**

### Peter Liddle "Rutland Roman Villa"

Today we had an excellent talk by Peter Liddle who was formally County Archaeologist for Leicestershire about the discovery and excavation of a previously unknown Roman Villa.

During lockdown, a farmer was out walking his fields when he spotted some pottery near to the river bank. Recognising it as Roman he dug a little and discovered some tesserae, i.e. some small blocks of tiled floor. Having access to a digger he scraped away some more soil to discover part of a mosaic floor. At this point he decided it was time to call in the experts and so contacted the archaeological team at Leicester County Council. At which point Peter was called in. Historic England funded urgent excavation work and subsequent investigations by archaeologists from the University of Leicester uncovered a Roman mosaic which has been described as one of the most remarkable and significant ever found in Britain.

The mosaic is not just the usual geometric pattern or even images of animals but a tryptic of panels showing the death of Hector by Achilles in the Trojan War. It measures 36 x 23 ft. The only known similar mosaic is in Sicily.

Much of the uncovering of the mosaic was shown on the TV programme Digging for Britain with Prof. Alice Roberts, where she was shown uncovering the image of Hector.

Further survey work by both Magnetometer and Ground Radar showed a large complex of buildings over a wide area. A round building was discovered which turned out to be a farm building and very unusually not a religious one. A bath house with hot warm and cold baths had hypocaust underfloor heating but the main room with the mosaic floor was not heated from below. A hearth was discovered in one corner so someone was obviously finding the British climate a bit cold for them!

Other areas uncovered appear to have been servant/slave quarters and a small square annex which was initially nicknamed "The dog kennel" actually contained the skeleton of a dog! Human remains were also found and Alice Roberts was apparently very useful in identifying their ages as she is an osteoarchaeologist amongst her other skills.

The site is inaccessible for visitors, and has now been covered back up, and the farmer is paid to not plough over it, so that it remains intact for future generations. Discussions are underway to create an off-site display about the villa somewhere in Rutland.



## CHRISTMAS LUNCH TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER



As usual, our Christmas lunch will be at the Willesley Golf Club on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 12.30 for 1pm. Cost is £26 each for a 3 course menu in excellent surroundings.

I shall be sending out a copy of the menu, and details of how to pay, to everyone shortly but information can also be found on our website [www.ashbyu3a.co.uk](http://www.ashbyu3a.co.uk) . Look under Social Events or the Noticeboard on the Home page.

## ASHBY MAYOR'S CHARITY COCKTAIL EVENING - FRIDAY NOVEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

As you may well know, our very own Avril Wilson is Town Mayor this year.

On Friday Nov 24<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm she is holding a Charity Cocktail evening at Willesley Golf Club in aid of Hospice Hope.

Eleanor Mattley will sing songs from 40s, 60s and onwards. Dress Smart Casual.

**Tickets £15 inc. 1st cocktail** (or another drink) from:

Avril Wilson via Ashby Town Council - email [admin@ashbytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@ashbytowncouncil.gov.uk) or call 01530 416 961

Payment for tickets can be made by cheque, cash or BACS to:

Ashby de la Zouch Town Council Mayors Charity. Sort code 30-92-15 14631368

## GROUP REPORTS

### **Arts and Crafts**

7<sup>th</sup> September

Once again the Craft Ladies were working on their summer project of Crystal Art. The projects were taken home at the end of our session to be worked on throughout the month. Hopefully we will complete them this month then move on to some Christmas projects.

### **Bridge**

Because the Darts Club at Ivanhoe are club members they get priority for dates over the Bridge Group and seem to often clash. The Bridge Group are going to try morning sessions later this month, and hopefully can arrange to alternate between mornings and evenings in future.

### **Coffee and Chat**

13<sup>th</sup> October

Nine of us met together at the Lakeside Bistro on the 13<sup>th</sup> for Coffee and Chat. The place is in a lovely setting, true to its name, right beside a tranquil lake.

As is so often the case, we were tempted beyond mere coffee and included some delicious cake. The staff were pleasant, attentive and helped make the occasion that much more enjoyable.

Our next meeting will be at Newlands Farm Shop and tea Rooms, Hatton Fields, Hilton, DE65 5GQ at 10am on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

So far 7 have signed up to go but there is room for more so, if you wish to be there, please let me know on [coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## **Breakfast**

### **23rd September**

The Breakfast Group met at the Lakeside Bistro for their first get together. Just four were able to make it on this occasion but it made for a nice cosy time together.

The Lakeside offers a good variety for breakfast, but the Full English proved the most popular. It made a welcome change from a slice of toast and marmalade.

The staff were very welcoming and attended to our every need. It was a very pleasant way to while away a couple of hours with good company and interesting conversation.

We will be at the Lakeside Bistro again on 19<sup>th</sup> October for breakfast, why not come and join us? Thus far, five have already signed up to be there.

If you would like to join us please email me, Colin W, at [breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk) and I will add you to the list.

## **Calligraphy**

### **September**

We had to cancel our Sept meeting as holidays, appointments and child care duties meant there weren't enough people available to make a planning meeting viable.

Our next meeting is at Sue's on Oct 10th when, hopefully, there will be enough of us there to come up with a programme of activities.

## **Computers**

### **18<sup>th</sup> September**

Only one person needed help today and that was how to get photos onto a particular web site. The problem was resolved by moving the picture rather than copy and paste. This was probably because the website controlled the file size and rejected a paste of too large a file.

## **Croquet**

We had seven members this month playing in fine weather for the penultimate meeting of the croquet group.

Next month, for our last meeting of the year on the 27th October, the start time has been put back to 11 am, giving the lawns a little extra time to clear the dew.

We play at Ashby Croquet Club's lawns which are at Moira Miners' Welfare, DE12 6BP

## **Digital Photography Group**

### **7<sup>th</sup> September**

5 of us met to review the photos we had taken over the last 5 months.

We will submit a selection to John H for adding to the Gallery and meet again on October 5th.

## **Drawing and Painting**

### **September**

We didn't meet in September but will regroup in October

## **Family History**

### **13<sup>th</sup> September**

An excellent turnout of 10 today, with both tables occupied.

Welcome back Keith, in rude (!) health.

Eileen has made progress in getting her 17th century Will transcribed and this has provided useful leads to descendants of the writer which she will be chasing down through Parish Records.

Ana spent her time inputting data from various certificates recently ordered.

Carolyn is in full chase of her husband's ancestors in Ireland in the early 1800s.

Keith was a very welcome returnee and spent his time sorting out a bunch of Hints from Ancestry. Dora is still working on her paternal ancestors in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Mary and JD talked about DNA and the ways it can be both useful and misleading, and its limitations in tracing named ancestors beyond the tenth generation or so. She is continuing with her chart showing all the occupations in her Tree for 10 generations back.

John Howlett is still working on his father's line.

John D has been on the trail of a mysterious figure in his great grandfather's school logs. He appears first in an oblique reference in the note of great grandfather's visit to the school he is to take over, then from time to time as an assistant in time of need when James is short-handed. This has not been helped by the fact that his surname was 'Smith'! John also spent some time with our new recruit, Linda, walking her through the Ancestry website, and demonstrating the Family Tree Maker stand-alone software. She already has considerable experience, so this should give her extra arrows to her bow.

John D floated the idea that members might wish occasionally to make a mini-presentation to the whole group of a topic or event they are pursuing. This has been well received.

We meet again on Wednesday, 11th October.

## **Scrabble**

### **11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September**

With many people on holiday there were only 6 at Scrabble this week. It's very difficult playing with just two on a table!

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.

## **Industrial Heritage**

### **September**

We didn't meet this month as Mike was busy with many other duties and distractions.

Next month on the 25<sup>th</sup> we intend to fit in two shorter local visits in one day. Abbey Pumping Station in Leicester in the morning and in the afternoon a guided tour of Wigston Framework Knitters Museum in, of all places, Wigston! Details will follow soon. That will be our last trip of the year, with our annual planning meeting taking place in November. Suggestions for next years trips will be very welcome.

## **Food From Afar a.k.a. International Cuisine**

### **7<sup>th</sup> September**

The International Cuisine Group, which has now decided to call itself Food from Afar, met for the first time at the Slice of India in Derby. There were 9 of us in attendance with a number sending apologies because they were not available to attend on that date.

The all you can eat Indian Buffet was excellent and offered a very wide variety of Indian, Asian and European dishes. Conversation flowed easily and most made several visits to the extensive servery.

We had Planned to visit the Wing Wah in Burton for our next outing but, unfortunately it is not open on Thursdays.

Instead, we have booked the IMGE Turkish and Mediterranean restaurant on the High Street in Coalville at 6pm on 5<sup>th</sup> October for our next venture.

So far, 15 have booked to attend but there is plenty of room for more. If you wish to be added to the list, just email me at [food\\_from\\_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:food_from_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## **Gardening**

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

The sun came out again for our garden trip to Trentham Gardens. A lot of the gardens have an Italian theme with lots of grasses and ponds with fountains. There were lots of metallic sculptures of dandelions and fairies etc, and there is the very large lake at Trentham. One part of the garden was called the labyrinth area. Also at Trentham are the many shops and eating areas within the wooden buildings. Asking around, it appeared we all had an excellent day out.

## **Lunch**

### **14<sup>th</sup> September – The Sump near Burton**

Despite its rather strange name, which apparently is named after the weir on the River Trent which it sits alongside, the Sump pub was a rather pleasant place.

The food was fine, as was the service and there were no complications with settling the bill, so a good time was had by all.

The next luncheon is at the Holly Bush Inn at Breedon at 12 noon on 12<sup>th</sup> October. If you would like to join us, please email [luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## **Recorder**

### **7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September**

Most of us are back from our summer holidays, so we had a better turnout last week. As usual, we started with some 3-part music, and moved on to quartets later. We are enjoying playing "Variations on Greensleeves" by Andrew Challinger. We also play Two Bulgarian Folk Songs, but we have no idea what the titles are, as they are printed in the Cyrillic alphabet. We are starting to play "3 Cats" by Marg Hall. Her music is always interesting, and sometimes quite tricky. This was no exception. The "Cantique de Jean Racine" is nice, and we like "Fun Folk". There is quite a variety of music to play.

Some of us also travel to other recorder groups, which gives us more ideas of different music and how to play it.

We have 9 members now, but could do with a few more, especially people who play alto and bass.

## History

### 28<sup>th</sup> September. 'Ukraine' by Yogi Godwin

Once more Yogi has given us something think about.

42 turned out to hear him recount the history and social conditions in Ukraine.

First, he covered the historical background of the relationship between Ukraine and the rest of the world. Sitting, as it does, on a great corridor from the Pontic/Caspian Steppes which connects Central Russia to the Great North European Plain, it has been a conduit for migrations and invasions for thousands of years, with the only significant barrier to mass movement being the wide Dnieper River. This very important river divides the country in two and, running from the border of Belarus with Russia in the north, to the Black Sea in the south, must seem like an obvious boundary for Russia to expand to, as it offers an excellent opening to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Russia has always wanted a warm water port of its own.

Then he went on to compare the relative sizes, populations and income of UK, Germany, Ukraine and Russia. We here have around 280 people per square kilometre, whereas Ukraine has about 63 and Russia 9. Russia's population, of course, is very asymmetrically spread out. Whilst we in Europe have an income per month of something around £3,000 to £4,500 per head, Russia has £700+ and Ukraine just £300+. These have to be related to the standard of living, of course, but are still a stark reminder of the differences, and are reflected in the life expectancy, which is about 81 for Western Europe and 71 for Ukraine and Russia. Interestingly, the four countries of Russia, Moldova, Chechnya and Ukraine share the distinction of being the fourth heaviest alcohol drinkers. A look at the map shows how closely clustered they are one to another.

Historically, the status of Ukraine, socially, politically and in religion has been poised between the east and the west. Generally, though Ukrainians seem overwhelmingly loyal to Ukraine and to be mostly Orthodox in religion.

As Ukraine is very rich in resources and engineering skills, it has been coveted by its neighbours down the millennia. It provides 40% of the world's grain and has been the powerhouse of engineering for the old USSR.

Historically it has been claimed by one or other of its neighbours (notably, though by Russia) and, like Poland, been subject to political tug-o-wars, which it vigorously resists. Ever since 1917 and the cruel and essentially genocidal behaviour, first of Stalin, then of the Nazis, its sense of national identity has been reinforced. After the disintegration of the USSR, it has been establishing its own character and sense of nationhood, gained by an overwhelming vote for independence in a referendum.

Yogi gave us a fascinating look inside the social culture and mores of the Ukrainian people. Essentially still rural in flavour, despite increasing modernisation and Westernisation, the people are friendly but with a tendency to what we might see as old-fashioned ways towards the status of men and women. Oddly Yorkshire-like with a 'no-touch', 'don't point/ stare' style. Very hospitable, to the point where you should go hungry to an invitation! There were many of their practices that Yogi outlined for us, with handicrafts, singing, parties and wedding conventions, which paint a picture of a warm and hospitable people.

But a people who take their freedom and individuality seriously, with a dedicated drive to put a troubled and turbulent history behind them.



## **French**

4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September

The French group continues to meet at the Ivanhoe Club in Ashby fortnightly on a Monday morning . We have tried talking in French to the group about our individual working lives and continue to practice and revise the topics previously covered.

## **Social events**

1<sup>st</sup> September

There was a great turnout for the bowls night which was postponed from July. The 17 members who attended enjoyed the evening and our great hosts showed lots of patience with the novices. Many of us stayed for a drink afterwards chatting to the bowls members who I think enjoyed our company and the weather behaved itself.

The Bowls Club Committee appeared to be especially pleased that there were so many u3a members joining in and who took the time to stay afterwards since the bar takings, and our participation in the cash prize games, contributed to their nominated charity STEPS.

All in all a good evening.

## **Reading**

20<sup>th</sup> September - The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah.

A French family is devastated following the death of the mother (which happens before the story begins) leaving the father and two daughters to cope in their own ways. The father withdraws from family life after ensuring the girls are safely brought up by other members of the family and a variety of schools. The eldest, Vianne, marries and builds a happy life as a teacher with her husband and child. Isabelle 'acts out' and is perpetually in trouble developing a history of unhappiness and truancy. In a last ditch attempt at reconciliation with her father, Isabelle travels to Paris arriving as the Germans invade. Her desire to do something meaningful - like Edith Cavell - is thwarted when her Father sends her to live in the country with her sister but she is caught up in the mass exodus from the capital. The banner on the front of the book says 'In love we find out who we want to be. In war we find out who we are.'

The main narrative of the book concerns the nature of bravery in the face of living in an occupied country: the big bold actions versus the small domestic ones. Inspired by the radio broadcasts of De Gaulle, Isabelle takes the more overt route of working with the resistance. Starting in a small way, distributing leaflets, she moves up through more dangerous direct actions that lead eventually to arrest and a concentration camp. After her husband is called up, Vianne takes a more conciliatory approach, being taken in by Petan's propaganda, just trying to get through the war until her husband returns, with her daughter's and friends' safety her primary focus. This position becomes increasingly untenable as the reality of living under an occupying force gradually erodes life down to subsistence levels. Circumstances force her to widen her focus and she becomes involved in wider survival issues. Along the way are love stories and an exploration of the relationships between the sisters as their lives entwine and their father, who begins to play a more active role.

The discussion that reading this book sparked inevitably included an acknowledgement that we really didn't have an understanding of the horrors of war - for which we were very grateful but also brought us to consider the nature of bravery and the reality of living through many different aspects of adversity, some of which are part of 'normal' everyday life eg death, and how we have coped with our personal experiences. This is a very powerfully written novel and, due to the subject matter is not always an easy read, but well worth the time and effort. It is not often that a book moves me to actual tears, but this one did.

## **Supper Club**

### **28<sup>th</sup> September – The Belper Arms, Newton Burgoland**

12 of us arrived at the Belper Arms to find the car park almost full suggesting that the pub was busy, and we were right. The bar area and the eating areas were full except for the table laid for us. The landlord made us welcome and after we had settled down with our drinks the pre-ordered food arrived quite quickly. Only 3 or 4 had starters, and delicious they were too. Main courses followed, with a slight delay for some, but everything was freshly cooked and hadn't been hanging about for ages. Again lovely food, served by friendly staff, for whom nothing was too much trouble. There seemed to be a slight shortage of desserts due to the pubs popularity, for which the landlord came to apologise personally but there was still enough to go round for all those who wanted them. The landlord and his wife have come from the Bull and Lion in Packington, where they were very successful, and they seem to have brought many of their staff with them. We had a very good evening, for once without the complications of staff not knowing how to price up a bill! Good to see the Belper Arms up and running again and better than ever.

We next meet at The Globe Inn, Snarestone on Oct 26<sup>th</sup>. Email [supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk) if you wish to join us. We will have to pre-order our choices once they send me their new menu.

## **Music Appreciation**

### **6<sup>th</sup> September at Sid's**

Due to holidays and commitments it was only possible for 5 members to attend this month: Sid, Nev, Brenda, Yogi and Janet, but it meant we were able to choose 3 or 4 tracks each this time.

Yogi started proceedings with "Vespers. Bless the Lord, O my Soul" by Rachmaninov. This was written to commemorate the first 2 million dead in WW1. Yogi's second choice was Rachmaninov again, this time a piano piece - "Rhapsody on a theme by Paganini: Opus 43". His third choice was a lovely rendition of "The Cobblers Song" by Paul Robeson.

Janet's first choice was also by Paul Robeson singing "Drink to me only with thine eyes" as we enjoyed tea and biscuits. Janet's second choice was Elaine Paige singing "Windmills of your mind" whilst her third choice was the lovely Platters singing "The Great Pretender".

Brenda kicked her set off with Glen Miller's "String of Pearls" followed by "I got Rythm by Red Nicholls". Janet was asked to demonstrate the Charlston as she was foot tapping along but she declined unfortunately. Brenda's third choice was Aretha Franklin singing "I Never loved a man ( The way I loved you)" There was time for a 4th from Brenda who upped the tempo with Bill Haley and "Jailhouse Rock".

Nev's turn started with "Blue Moon" by Ella Fitzgerald from the Rogers and Hart songbook. His next track was one we certainly had not heard before - Paul Weller featuring Jools Holland performing "September in the Rain". Nev's third song was again themed on September, this time by Brian Ferry and "September Song". As we had time for a 4th from Nev, he chose "Bicycle" by Queen. 'Cos he likes bikes!

Sid chose to start with a Michael Ball classic "Love changes everything" from Aspects of Love. His second was a personal favourite performed by Gerry Rafferty and the immortal "Baker Street", with that magic saxophone. Sid's third choice was a Paul Simon song called "Father and Daughter". As we had a few minutes left Sid asked if we could hear another Paul Robeson song that he was sure was made into a pop song. The song was "It ain't necessarily so" later recorded by the Buzzcocks we thought. (We checked later, and it was actually Bronski Beat)

A lovely morning with some really different choices by all.

The next meeting will be at Brenda's House on the 4th October.

## Science & Technology

### 12<sup>th</sup> September. – Making the Nottingham Tram System Work by Adrian Hickson.

Adrian worked from 2001 to 2004 as a consultant to Arrow, the consortium building Phase 1 of the scheme. Nottingham's first tram system was installed in 1910 and lasted till 1930. Phase 1 was expected to cost £180m and finally came in at £200m. His initial role was to get all the suppliers talking to each other, so that components worked properly.

Phase 1 was a 14km section with 23 tram stops with Bombardier building the technical bits. They also made the trams which were the most expensive in the world, with the middle cars suspended between the other cars.

The first section was laying the track. This involved moving all the services that were underneath, so that if repairs had to be made, they did not have to dig up the track. The rails were encased in rubber and to reduce wear from the car and lorry traffic going over it, stones were embedded in the rubber by hand – by a man with a bucket of stones and a hammer!

Adrian described the main construction offices, two storey portacabins, which were erected next to the Goose Fair. It was so noisy, most of the construction staff preferred to work from home where possible.

Initial problems included underestimating the swept path of the trams as they went round the bends in the track, so that they would collide with objects placed close to the track. Everything had to be tested before use and much of this was done at nighttime. One test involved shorting the current to the rail which blew a sub-station but fortunately did not upset the railway power supply which had been the big worry.

A big issue was educating the public in their interaction with the trams. They could not park close to the tram lines as trams needed clearance round bends. Also, people carrying metal ladders or scaffolding poles had to avoid the overhead cables which carried 750v DC. Trams had their own set of traffic signals and were equipped with lights, brake lights and indicators. While the tram had no choice in which way it turned, the driver still had to indicate to let traffic behind know what he was doing.

They had to liaise with the fire station as they needed to know which way to exit the fire station in the event of an alarm and the procedure near the David Lane railway level crossing was especially complicated as the barriers were raised after the train passed, but not if a tram was due. Other signals were needed for the tram.

The Wilkinson Depot was built on the site of a former soap factory which caused several problems.

The only problem involving HSE was caused by the initial practice of spot welding the poles carrying the current. They tended to snap off. Later they were fully welded at the base and fitted with guy ropes.

Otherwise, Phase 1 was a huge success. The growth in car use was limited to 1% instead of the normal 4% and tram journeys were 8.4m in 2004 - 5 and 9.7m in 2006 – 7.

Phase 2 linked up to the Clifton South Park and Ride which opened in August 2015.

A fascinating talk on the many problems linking rail, tram and road users along with pedestrians and the fire service.

### Bill Devitt on "Sods Law"

Bill followed up with an amusing talk on the problems on the East Coast Mainline. He was responsible for getting to the bottom of the many different problems he experienced.

He found that wheels on one side of the carriage were not round. They were wearing away on one side. Eventually a wheel broke up and caused a train to crash off the track. They eventually found the cause was chefs pouring their fat at the end of cooking down a drain onto the track, which emptied onto one rail. So, the wheels on that side were skidding and wearing.

They had problems with bogies that had been built in Switzerland. Bits would keep dropping off. This was because cotter pins were made from mild steel. They had to change these to stainless steel to cure that problem.

They also had problems with the wrong sort of snow, which turned out to be caused by water drain holes being at the top, instead of the bottom, of the engine compartment air intakes.

John Prescott MP highlighted a major problem with the toilets when he travelled home from Leeds. He later raised this in the House of Commons. The problem was that an increase in outside pressure when entering a tunnel caused the holding tanks to compress with the toilet deposits coming back up with disastrous results for Mr Prescott. Bill and his team had to raid B&Q stores for pressure valves to fix this.

They even had fires on trains. This was when people could still smoke on trains but was caused by the seat reservation system. At the end of a journey staff would just push the old ticket down into the seat and put the new one in. Somehow this linked to the ashtray and when people put hot cigarette butts in the ashtray, they could set fire to these old seat reservations.

There were problems with doors that would not open and doors that would not close as well as problems with air conditioning systems.

Trains would travel smoothly at 140mph but be unstable at 125mph. What a lot of challenges. It's a wonder anything works. Now I know why Bill did not choose to use the computer projector.

The next meeting will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday 10th October in Packington Memorial Hall when Bill Devitt will give a talk on "If you want to create a new steam locomotive, then START HERE!"

## **Wine Appreciation**

### **20<sup>th</sup> September**

The theme this month was "Aussie Reds" presented by Ken. 4 wines each of £10-12 from wineries in South Australia and within an area 300 miles long near to Adelaide.

Starting with Coonawara in the south, we tried a Cab Sauv/Merlot blend bought in Lidl. This was initially thought to be ok with a fairly sweet taste on the lips but it soon developed a tannic aftertaste which we didn't find very pleasant. It scored just under 6/10. It might have been acceptable at half the price but not at 10 quid.

Next was from McLaren Vale on the coast just south of Adelaide. This "Footbolt" Shiraz costing £12 from Tesco was a favourite of Ken's. Very dark, this was a much better wine; drier, tannic in a good way, tasting of dark berries and liquorice. A grown-up wine that would be great with food as well as on its own. 8/10

The next two wines were also made from the Shiraz grape but from the Barossa Valley just north of Adelaide and about 30 miles inland. Both cost £10

The first "Cellar 98" from Aldi was even darker, smooth, rich and chocolatey. We all thought this was lovely. Just over 8/10

Lastly came "Grant Burge" from Tesco. Another Shiraz, inky black. Even smoother than the last one, rich with berries and all agreed it was delicious. It scored 9/10. Unfortunately a look in Tesco while they had 25% off showed it to be out of stock. A great shame.

## **Short Walking**

### **15th September. Swadlincote Woodlands woodland park**

Five members met on a lovely September day for a walk around the woodland park. As a change we climbed to the highest point in the park just above the viewpoint but very little of Swadlincote can be seen apart from the nearby trees. We continued on the path down to the road which you have to cross to get to the wetlands. We were intrigued by the regular metal displays like a giant horseshoe stuck in the ground with pictures by local schools. There was little bird life noticeable. We returned back to the carpark by the shortest route with a slight diversion by the climbing rock in the children's play area. Total distance 1.6 miles.

## **Medium Walking**

### **11<sup>th</sup> September. Ticknall, led by Val and Trev**

10 of us started our walk from Ticknall village hall car park. We walked through the village before heading across fields and through the middle of an immaculate private garden. Then onwards towards Daniel Hayes farm, before crossing the road and heading for Pistern Hill.

After a short steep downhill slope through trees, we were rewarded with a lovely view back towards Ticknall. After crossing several fields we joined the Calke Tramway trail and followed it back to Ticknall.

It was a 6 mile walk on a lovely day.

## **Longer Walking**

### **5<sup>th</sup> September. Lathkill Dale led by Kevin**

On a lovely sunny day we arrived at Lathkill Dale slightly earlier than normal to avoid the heat of the day.

10 of us set off down through the village of Over Haddon to the bottom of the Dale. We followed the river for about 2 miles before ascending 165 steps to be rewarded with lovely views across the Valley. We walked through a quiet lane along the Limestone Way towards Youlgrave where we could see the pub in the distance. After a few more hills we then descended down a slippery slope back to the river and a final hill climb back to the village of Over Haddon.

We finished our day sitting in the shade with clear views across the valley.

Here is a list of your committee members and how to contact them:

| <b>Role</b>                 | <b>Name</b>     | <b>Contact email</b>   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Chairman                    | John Pilgrim    | <a href="mailto:chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk">chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>       |
| Business Secretary          | Tony Smith      | <a href="mailto:secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk">secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>     |
| Treasurer                   | Val Reed        | <a href="mailto:treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk">treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>     |
| Membership Secretary        | Iain Banns      | <a href="mailto:members@ashbyu3a.co.uk">members@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>         |
| Interest Group Co-ordinator | Yogi Godwin     | <a href="mailto:interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk">interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>     |
| Welfare                     | Sharon Woodland | <a href="mailto:welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk">welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>         |
| Speaker seeker              | Bill Wilson     | <a href="mailto:speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk">speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>       |
| Communications              | Mike Stow       | <a href="mailto:webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk">webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>     |
| Social Secretary            | Glenys Morrice  | <a href="mailto:socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk">socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>         |
| Member                      | Colin Ellis     | <a href="mailto:membercolin@ashbyu3a.co.uk">membercolin@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a> |
| Member                      | David Spiers    | <a href="mailto:memberdavid@ashbyu3a.co.uk">memberdavid@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a> |