



Newsletter November 2023



Interest Groups Timetable for November 2023

Please note that this timetable could be subject to change at short notice. Please check the website or the Groups' Leaders for latest news.

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 28 th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Ian Retson - "The Woodland Trust and the National Trust"
Arts and Crafts	Thu 2 nd	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Breakfast	Thu 16 th	10 am	Alpaca Café and Farm Shop at Hill Farm, Spring Lane, Packington LE65 1WU
Bridge	Mon 6 th Mon 13 th Mon 20 th Mon 27 th	7-9 pm 11 am – 1 pm 11 am – 1 pm 7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	Tue 14 th	10 am	Gill's house
Calligraphy 2	Wed 1 st	10 am	148 Woodside, Ashby.
Coffee and Chat	Wed 8 th	10 am	Garden Restaurant ant Swarkestone Nursery DE73 7GQ
Computer	Wed 1 st Mon 20 th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	-	-	We won't be meeting again until Spring
Digital Photography	Thu 2 nd	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 15 th	10 am	2 Marlborough Way. The theme is Christmas
Family History	Wed 8 th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 2 nd	6 for 6.30 pm	Pepito's Mexican Restaurant, 127 London Rd, Derby DE1 2QN
French	Mon 13 th Mon 27 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Club, Wilfred Place, Ashby
Gardening	Thu 16 th	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. 'The Joy of Gardening' - A talk by Griselda, owner of the Dower House, Melbourne. Entry £3
History	Thu 23 rd	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Sandra Moor - 'Some Mother's Son'

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Industrial Heritage	Wed 22 nd	11 am	Planning meeting for next year's trips. Venue TBA
Literature	Tue 14 th	1:30 pm	Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 9 th	12 for 12.30 pm	Wheatsheaf Harvester, Ashby Road, Loughborough LE11 4EX
Medium Walks	Mon 13 th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at the car park in Packington near to the church.
Music Appreciation	Wed 1 st	10 am	Neil's, 40 Willesley Gdns
Reading	Wed 15 th	2 pm	Annie's house
Recorder	Thu 2 nd Thu 16 th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
	Thu 30 th	10 am	At St Matthew's followed by our festive lunch
Science & Technology	Tue 14 th	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. Megan Wright "Zoos: the science behind the scenes"
Scrabble	Mon 6 th Mon 20 th	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 17 th	10 am	The car park near St Peters church, Stapenhill
Supper Club	Thu 23 rd	7 for 7.30 pm	TBA
Walking	Tue 7 th	9.45 for 10 am start	The Star Inn, Melton Lane, West Leake LE12 5RQ
	Tues 21 st	9.45 for 10 am start	TBA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 15 th	7:00 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early December 2023

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Scrabble	Mon 4 th	11 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Bridge	Mon 4 th	11 am – 1 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 5 th	9.45 for 10 am start	TBA
Calligraphy 2	Wed 6 th	10 am	148 Woodside, Ashby
Music Appreciation	Wed 6 th	10 am	Mike's at 91 Woodside
Computer	Wed 6 th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 7 th	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Digital Photography	Thu 7 th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Recorder	Thu 7 th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 7 th	6 for 6.30 pm	TBA

Another Change to Our Committee

Last month we told you that Yogi Godwin would be taking on the role of Groups Co-ordinator. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, Yogi has had to withdraw from the role. David Spiers has fortunately agreed to step in and Yogi has said that he will continue to help David with the transition. We wish Yogi well and thank David for stepping into the role.

Ashby u3a Group Holiday to Bournemouth - June 1st – 5th 2024

This is a new venture for Ashby u3a, so initially we would like to know if anyone is interested in this.

The intention is to have a 5 day/ 4 night half-board stay in the Norfolk Royale Hotel in Bournemouth with 2 full day excursions including a cruise to Swanage. Cost from £399 all-inclusive. No single suppt.

If we can get over 30 of us then we can have a coach to ourselves. If you are interested, please get us know as soon as possible, so that we can decide if this is viable.

Contact Val Reed treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk or 01530 564279 who can give you more details.

Attending Nearby u3as

We have updated our arrangements with nearby u3as which allow our members to attend some or all of their interest groups without having to pay membership to each u3a. Likewise they can attend ours.

Burton, Melbourne and Whitwick & District all have arrangements with us. Details vary for each u3a and full details are available on our website at [www.ashbyu3a.co.uk/links/visiting other u3as.pdf](http://www.ashbyu3a.co.uk/links/visiting%20other%20u3as.pdf)

Starting an Ashby u3a Facebook Page

We are considering starting a Facebook page for Ashby u3a. if anyone has any experience at creating a Facebook page, particularly one for a club or group or business, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Mike Stow at webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk



Christmas Lunch - Tuesday 14th December



As usual, our Christmas lunch will be at the Willesley Golf Club on Tuesday 14th December at 12.30 for 1pm.

THIS IS NOW SOLD OUT, so if you haven't notified Glenys that you wish to attend, I'm afraid you are too late! We have had a record number of applications and the Golf Club cannot accommodate any more people in their clubhouse!

Ashby Mayor's Charity Cocktail Evening - Friday November 24th

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

On Friday Nov 24th 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 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

October's Monthly Meeting

Melody Flyte "Forces' Sweethearts"

Melody appeared on stage in the uniform of ENSA (the Entertainments National Service Association) and sang and talked her way through the history of ENSA and the female singers who became known as the Forces' Sweethearts.

ENSA was formed by Basil Dean who was an actor and stage director and had served in WWI and taken part in unofficial concert performances to entertain the troops. With WWII looming, he persuaded the government to appoint him director of what was to become ENSA. He recruited many entertainers from the very famous to the lesser known to tour both in Britain and abroad. It is estimated that by the end of the war they had given over 2.5 million performances.

Melody sang several songs in the style of Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn and Joyce Grenfell and recounted the adventures of each of them as they toured at home, throughout Europe, North Africa and in the Far East.

We all knew about Vera Lynn and Gracie Fields of course, but Joyce Grenfell's role in ENSA was less well known to us. She was apparently a good singer as well as an actor and performer of monologues for which she later became famous.

The Forces' Sweethearts were known for their sentimental songs aimed at cheering up the troops and reminding them that there was something back home worth fighting for.

Although very glamorous on stage, many of them had a much more basic life on the road. Gracie fields recounted sleeping on a board between two chairs and having to watch out for snakes in the bedroom! I don't think today's Stars would put up with those conditions.

However it seems that Joyce Grenfell didn't always have to rough it either as her maternal aunt was Nancy Aster and so with those connections she was often able to stay with the local ambassadors and other wealthy socialites of the countries she toured.

Melody recounted all these stories with many anecdotes and sang beautifully so many of the well-known songs of the era whilst encouraging us to sing along. A very entertaining afternoon.

Group Reports

Breakfast

19th October – Lakeside Bistro, Moira

Nine early risers assembled at the Lakeside Bistro, Moira for a hearty breakfast. As usual, we were efficiently and warmly served by the excellent staff.

The Lakeside Bistro is well named as it stands right at the edge of an idyllic fishing lake with a tranquil atmosphere.

Our next breakfast will be at 9.30 for 10am on 16th November at the Alpaca Café and Farm Shop at Hill Farm, Spring Lane, Packington LE65 1WU, Nine people have already signed up to go.

If you wish to join them, please let Colin Woodland know at breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Bridge

The Bridge Group have got their dates sorted out now, at least until the end of the year, and so will be meeting at the Ivanhoe Club every Monday until Dec 18th. Times vary so check the timetable above for individual dates.

Calligraphy

10th October

So four of us met on Tuesday and discussed topics for the year:
For Christmas - a carol, a poem or an excerpt from a Xmas book.
Spring Term - a Shakespearean speech.

Summer Term - an Olympic theme (eg the quote from Baron Coubertin) Will explain that one later!!!

We also chatted about fonts and we decided we wanted to choose our own font to practice and use, which will fit with the piece we'll produce.

Next meeting - Nov 14th at Gill's

Calligraphy 2

The next Calligraphy 2 group will meet on Wednesday 1st November when we plan to have the theme of fireworks or Autumn. The December meeting will be on Wednesday 6th December

Computers

16th October

There was not a lot for the experts to do today, although six had gathered.

Peter was helped through the process of taking and uploading photos of things he wanted to place on an auction site, while some of us looked at LED night lights and their uses.

We meet again on Wednesday, November the 1st.

Crafts

5th October

Eight ladies from the Craft Group met this month.

We tried to complete the Crystal Art pictures which we have been working on all summer. We will begin a new "one off" project in November using crystal beads.

We now have the maximum number of people that can fit into the room, so if anyone else is interested in the craft group they will either need to go on a waiting list or begin a second Craft Group.

This is a lovely problem to have!



Coffee and Chat

11th October - Newlands Farm Cafe, Hilton

Four intrepid explorers found their way to Newlands Farm Shop and Tea Rooms on 11th October for Coffee and Chat.

The proprietor has been very creative and erected small but well decorated cabins in which small groups can enjoy the available coffee, tea and cakes while watching a small flock of sheep enjoying the lush grass in an adjacent field.

On this occasion the conversation turned to things of yore and many fond memories were enjoyed together.

Our next meeting will be at 10am on 8th November in the Garden Restaurant at Swarkestone Nursery DE73 7GQ. Six people have already indicated they will be there.

If you plan to join us, please let Colin Woodland know ASAP at coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Croquet

This was the group's last meeting of the year as the croquet season officially finishes with the end of Summer Time. We ended the year with a record turnout of 12 players, of which it was said that many of them may prove to be first-class croquet players. We were also blessed with fine weather for a change, something that has been frequently missing this year. We shall start again in the Spring when the clocks go forward for BST.

Digital Photography

5th October

There were seven of us today, with not many problems. We reviewed photos from Steve and Mike to complete the set from last time as neither were available last month.

JD had a question about selecting just one video from a set on a phone to upload to the PC. It was not possible to email it as it was too big, but when connecting the phone for a direct transfer, all photos came up, without the option to select one. Also, the upload seemed to hang because of the video. No obvious answer transpired, unfortunately. Working through the Cloud, or Dropbox ran into the same problem: when connecting to the PC, the software goes straight to upload and the hangs.

This month we will each go 'on safari' to try to find some autumnal shots and then review them next time we meet.

Drawing and Painting

18th October

Just three of us met together in October as coughs and colds restricted some to 'working from home'. The theme was 'Trees', and we enjoyed a pleasant morning developing our compositions.

Next month will be the last active session of the year, so we will get into the coming festive season and take 'Christmas' as our theme. We'll meet on November 15th at 2 Marlborough Way at 10 am.

French

2nd, 16th and 30th October

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.

Food From Afar a.k.a. International Cuisine

5th October – IMGE Turkish restaurant, Coalville

Some say that 13 is unlucky but the Food from afar group proved that wrong on the 5th October when that number met together at IMGE Restaurant in Coalville.

A convivial evening was enjoyed by all over Turkish and other Mediterranean dishes. The staff were very attentive and efficient. Conversation flowed freely.

Those who came as strangers left as friends and empty stomachs were made replete.

The next soiree will be to Pepito's Mexican Restaurant, London Road, Derby DE1 2QN on 2 November 2023 at 6pm for 6.30. Eight people have already signed up.

If you wish to attend, please let Colin Woodland know ASAP at [food from afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:food_from_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

Family History

11th October

We had 5 at table today with some very interesting problems and reports to make.

Eileen has managed to get her 17th century Will transcribed and translated. There is a plethora of fascinating information, and a host of names to chase down, many of them direct ancestors or close cognate relatives.

Mary is still working on the document she is preparing on generational occupations.

Ana is struggling to sort out the relationships (if any) between 7 'Anas' she has found in the same part of Yorkshire, going back into the 17th century. The Team rallied round to try and help her disentangle the list, and JD undertook to assemble a set of individual trees offline on Family Tree Maker as a prelude to seeing where the links, if any, show up. Ana is also keen to see if there is any reason for the choice of her Christian name by such families.

Pauline has received a puzzling email that came out of the blue, seemingly from the States, referencing her DNA results posted to My Heritage DNA. At first sight this is an incomprehensible assemblage of emails and names, running to several very wordy but somewhat incoherent texts. On inspection it seems to have been a broadcast email addressed to several recipients, the main body of which looks suspiciously like a straight file dump of information in My Heritage. The immediate accompanying text has among other cryptic, one-line notes, the line: 'Bancroft? UK?' No text other than this seems relevant to Pauline. JD and Pauline reviewed all the emails, which seem to have buried in them some useful 'Tree' type information. The email does not appear to be a scam, or phishing attempt, but, as Pauline has already sent a reply requesting more information as to what is being asked, it seems best for her to wait for a more coherent contact. Meanwhile she will 'excavate' the texts to see what useful information she can extract and report back.

We next meet on November 8th

Gardening

19th October – Harvest Celebrations

The Gardening Group held our annual Harvest celebration on Thursday at Packington village hall. As usual our members each brought food to share for a Harvest buffet; there was a delightful mix of both savoury and sweet dishes which were eaten with gusto.

We had a short talk and demonstration from Tina from the Toolbox about more environmentally friendly cleaning solutions.

This was followed by a very good free plant raffle where advice was given by our group leader Paul to winners about the care, habit etc of the plant they had chosen. It was a very good afternoon where members could socialise, discuss various subjects and relax.

Industrial Heritage

25th October – Abbey Pumping Station and Wigston Framework Knitting Museum

We had a full house of 20 members for this trip which was as many as Wigston could cope with. The pumping station has no car park but you can use the CP at the National Space Centre next door. On arrival it was obvious that it was still half-term somewhere as the CP was almost full and there were kids everywhere! But it was a lot quieter in the pumping station itself which had much more to offer than just the big steam beam engines. There were displays and exhibits of old and even ancient water pipes going back to Roman times plus descriptions of how water is stored in reservoirs and delivered to the towns. And of course how the sewage is pumped out of town to the treatment works. More unexpected was the display of many of the products manufactured in Leicester from Clyde cars, motorcycles, bikes, along with displays of Victorian bathware and similar objects as well as many details about the trams of Leicester Corporation which ran until 1949.

Of course the beam engines and the whole room built around them are the stars of the show, except that they are only in steam 3 or 4 times a year. Today was not one of them! Nonetheless the massive engines, built by local firm Gimson in 1891 and in use until 1964, are a wonderful sight to see, with the elaborate Victorian decoration so unlike anything that would be done nowadays. An excellent, free, museum that deserved more than the 1hr we had before moving on.

Getting across town to Wigston proved a lot easier than expected but on arrival at the pub they announced that they had no record of our booking! Despite that they managed to accommodate us all and served up some rather nice food, however it understandably took them a little longer than if they had known we were coming, which put us about 20 mins late for our next stop, the Framework Knitting museum.

Wigston Framework Knitters Museum is a Master Hosier's house with a two story Victorian frameshop in the garden. The house dates from the last years of the seventeenth century and shows signs of various alterations. At the rear is a cobbled yard and a water pump. A two storey workshop extension has been added to the rear of the house. The museum is unique, because when the last master hosier, Edgar Carter died in 1952, the workshop was locked and left. The family would let no-one inside. Edgar's last surviving daughter was living in the house until she died, aged 88, in the late 1960's. The house was due to be demolished to make way for road widening but a preservation order saved it and the workshop behind. The museum was set up in the late 80's to preserve the buildings and to open it to the public. Our 3 guides showed us around the house, workshop and outside explaining the many unique features and remarkable level of preservation, and describing their future plans. A fascinating glimpse into a Victorian era which lasted barely unchanged until the 1960's.

Next month we shall get together to try and sort out a programme for next year.

History

26th October. 'Victorian Christmas' by Danny Wells

Today, 31 of us were entertained by Danny Wells, a popular presenter of illustrated talks on historical matters, to a fascinating insight into the way the Victorians dealt with Christmas.

Who invented Christmas? Midwinter festivals and practices can be traced back into pre-history in most parts of the world, but the version we have today seems to be a mainly Victorian assemblage of pre-Christian practices, Christian overlays, and invented social engineering, with added whimsies borrowed from many other parts of the world.

Before the 19th century, Christmas was a much simpler affair, but by 1849 most of the elements we recognise today were in place. In Roman times the festival of Saturnalia had some elements of gift giving, celebrations of the turning of the year, and the odd practice of role reversal, with slaves treated by their masters and elements of, shall we say, overindulgence. Mediaeval autumn and winter practices, such as Samhain and Hallowe'en, were all related to the rural need to be aware of the changing seasons and their influence on the well-being of the community.

With the coming of greater wealth, Tudor England developed practices which combined these older, rural, observances and thanksgiving celebrations, with displays of wealth and power, and a growing culture of celebrating the past. Part of this was a tendency by the powers that be to encourage the aristocratic and high born to return to their estates as a gesture of solidarity with the common man and to help them celebrate the midwinter rites. Such a move would also serve to consolidate the links between those who ruled and those who were ruled, something no wearer of the Crown ever lost sight of if they valued that crown.

As the 19th century dawned, and the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum, great social changes were on the move. Populations were moving into the towns and cities, and living conditions were degenerating for millions. Writers like Charles Dickens were becoming aware of the rapid descent of whole populations into poverty, and the authorities were beginning to struggle with the ensuing problems. Alongside the growing move to widen mass education to as many as possible, was the increasing attention being paid by religious groups to social conditions.

In amongst all this there was a growing popularity for ghost stories, fairy stories and other non-religious, but unworldly matters.

Then, as Victoria's reign opened, the place of the family came to the fore. Whereas before, children were regarded as little adults, by now they were beginning to be seen as a group requiring their own special attention. Toys and gift giving, Christmas cards, Christmas trees, charity for the poor and less fortunate, absent friends and lonely people, all were swiftly woven into an increasingly colourful and fanciful accretion of features.

The goose was not displaced from its place as the main meal until Victoria introduced the Turkey in 1851. Perhaps the Great Exhibition of 1851 and Prince Albert had a lot to do with opening up English society to many more features. Religious services became less austere, and the singing of carols became acceptable.

Danny went through a cornucopia of features such as Holly and Ivy, Mistletoe, Father Christmas and his origins from all over Europe, different foods, and finally Pantomime. This latter, it seems, is a very British thing, although there seem to be echoes in it of much older European entertainments which have long disappeared.

There was much more in Danny's talk, but all seem to underline the essential 'Englishness' of this, our very own Christmas.

Thank you, Danny: Christmas will never look the same again!

Music Appreciation

4th October at Brenda's

Only six of us met at Brenda's: Janet, Heather, Nev, Sallie, Yogi and, of course, Brenda. As a result we were all able to play 3 tracks.

Janet kicked off with the Tina Turner track "I Don't Want to Lose You". Her second choice also featured Tina Turner this time accompanied by Rod Stewart with the appropriate title "It Takes Two". Her third choice took us back to early 1960s with "I'm Telling You Now" by Freddie and the Dreamers.

Heather's first track was a tune that we all remembered from our childhood but didn't know the title of. It was "In a Party Mood" better known as the introductory theme to the radio programme "Housewives' Choice". This was followed in a very relaxed style by Dean Martin with "When you're Smiling". Her final choice was the instrumental from the film "Deliverance" - "Duelling Banjos" by Earl Scruggs.

Nev had been inspired by a documentary on BBC 4 featuring Hank Williams. His first choice was the Hank Williams song "I'm So Lonesome I could Cry" sung by Johnny Cash on his very last album. This was followed by an upbeat version of the Everly Brothers song "When Will I Be Loved" sung by John Fogerty and Bruce Springsteen. The Beatles song "Girl" was his final choice.

Sallie's first choice was the very powerful piece "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor" by Bach. Sallie followed this with "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" the opening song from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma" sung by Gordon MacRea. "Green Door" by Frankie Vaughn was Sallie's final choice.

Yogi recalled his time with the Ashby Operatic Society with his first choice, the sea shanty "Hall Away Joe" by the Cornish group the Fisherman's Friends. His second choice highlighted his love of Ireland with the Dubliners "Dublin in the Rare Old Times". And it was the Dubliners again for "Dirty Old Town", a song about Salford written by Ewan MacColl.

Our hostess's first choice was "Close to You" a peaceful and warm ballad by the brother and Sister duo the Carpenters. We were then treated to the 14 year old Helen Shapiro singing "Walkin' Back to Happiness". Brenda's final choice was Billie Holiday's version of "What a Little Moonlight Can Do".

Another pleasant morning listening to a wide variety of music.

The next meeting will be at Neil's house on 1st November.

Reading

18th October - The Vanishing Half by Britt Bennett.

We met at Annie's house to discuss our latest book "The Vanishing Half" by Britt Bennett, a story that mainly follows the very different lives of twin sisters in America's Deep South between the 1950's and the 1990's.

The book particularly deals with how the racism of the day affected their lives, their families and others of similar ethnicity...the various limits and expectations that were placed on people relating to who they were. It also deals with other issues of the day, mainly people's various attitudes to race, sexism and anyone generally anyone who didn't tick the white "normal" box!!

We all had enjoyed reading the book if mainly from an informative aspect, but also decided that the characters were beautifully drawn and so we wanted to find out more about their life journeys! We then had a lively discussion about these issues in today's society. Have we really progressed or have these sentiments just gone "underground"!

Our November book is "Animal Dreams" by Barbara Kingsolver and we will be meeting at Annie's house at 2pm on Wednesday 15th if you would like to join us.

Lunch

12th October – The Hollybush at Breedon

Amid the low beams of the Hollybush at Breedon on the Hill, 10 diners enjoyed typical pub grub together on the 12th October. It was a bit of a tight squeeze in the bar but it made for good conversation and pleasant company.

The next lunch will be on 9th November at the Wheatsheaf Harvester, Ashby Road, Loughborough LE11 4EX at 12 noon. Sixteen people have already indicated they will be there but there is plenty of room for more.

If you wish to join us, please let Colin Woodland know ASAP at luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Recorder

5th and 19th October

The group met twice this month and although they have 9 members now, they are still looking for a few more to join them, especially those who play alto and bass. This would allow the group to play the whole range of music even when some members are absent on other duties.

Scrabble

9th and 23rd October

Members come as and when they can to fit in with holidays, other groups, grandparent duties and so on, but we generally have at least two tables, and we can expect this will be three tables from now on. Last month we had 4 people join. If anyone has a spare turntable, or lazy Susan, that they could donate to us so that we can swivel the extra board around, that would be most welcome.

Social events

The Christmas lunch, and later, Burns Supper are being organised as we speak. As you may have seen above, the **Christmas lunch is now sold out** with a record of nearly 100 tickets sold. This is as much as the kitchen at the golf club can cope with.

Tickets for Burns Supper, on 25th January, will go on sale shortly.

Supper Club

26th October – The Globe Inn at Snarestone

We have visited the Globe a few times now but this time it was under new management since last time, so we weren't sure what to expect. Generally we weren't disappointed. 14 of us were sat around a large squarish table in an upstairs room all to ourselves where we could easily talk across and end to end of the table.

We had pre-ordered and as soon as the last of us had arrived and drinks delivered, the first course arrived. Whilst some were eating their starters others chatted and got even more hungry. Fortunately they didn't have to wait too long for the main course to arrive. Most were very happy with their food but one or two said that their steak pie was cold. At least the gravy was hot, but a shame nonetheless.

Puddings followed, and there everything was back to normal. Service was excellent throughout and the conversation was good. On leaving the bill was settled promptly and unlike some recent places there was absolutely no disputes over the amount due! A good evening.

Science & Technology

10th October - 'How to create a new steam loco' by Bill Devitt.

In these days of green energy, it might be interesting to know what design issues in the past went into the creation of a new steam loco.

Bill drew upon his many years of experience and expertise to tell us about the design and manufacture of steam locomotives. While most of us can remember steam trains from our youth and had a vague idea of how they worked, we gave no thought to the large number of technical issues that had to be considered.

Firstly before you begin designing the train consider the geography, what hills and inclines must it be able to tackle, how straight or curved is the track. Then how long must it run each day, does it need to interface with other rolling stock and what maintenance will be needed.

Credit must go to a French man, Henri Giffard, who designed the steam injector which makes it all possible, but from then on thought needed to be given to all the components necessary to produce motion. The boiler, firebox, brakes, regulators and many controls. Bill described being a skinny lad having to climb into a firebox to remove the ash, it was still so hot his shoes were smouldering!

At first there was not even a cab for the driver and they were standing for up to 17 hours at work. Safety and comfort improved, as did efficiency over the years. But at each point there was a choice about which material or alloy to use, depending of strength needed and its cost. What type of gears or valve should be used. Because of economies of scale the US trains could be designed differently to ones in the UK.

Bill started as an apprentice in Derby, so personal anecdotes were scattered throughout the talk, including his work for the Railway Museum in York supervising the sectioning of a full sized loco to show the working parts. (Very good if you haven't visited.)

The talk concluded with a humorous look at some early designs, all very Heath Robinson.

After Bill's talk, Paul McKay gave a brief presentation on his visit to Birr Castle in Ireland to see Lord Rosse's giant telescope, a 2 metre diameter by 16.5 metre long 'Leviathan' that for 70 years was the World's largest telescope. The telescope is set in the beautiful and idyllic grounds of the castle, but the awful Irish weather created harsh conditions for using the telescope. There were also difficult practical challenges; casting a large mirror in brittle 'speculum' metal and operating the crude control system to precisely guide the telescope to its target, to name just two.

Despite the challenges, the telescope resolved, for the first time, the fuzzy nebulae in the night sky into a densely packed spiral structure of stars, very similar to our galaxy the Milky Way.

Next meeting Tuesday 14th November - 'Zoos: The Science behind them' by Megan Wright of Twycross Zoo.

In recent years zoos have contributed a lot to animal welfare, veterinary understanding, international breeding programs and reintroducing endangered species. Here Megan will talk about the technology that monitors the health of their animals, and the international role that Twycross Zoo plays in conservation.

Wine Appreciation

October

The October meeting had to be cancelled as only two people were available, Annie and Mike, who was due to present this month's wines. I hope my choice of wines didn't put them off!

We will try again on Nov 15th with a selection of classic French wines.

Short Walking

October

This month's walk across the Trent Washlands at Burton was scheduled to be on the same day as storm Babet was due to strike the Midlands so it was thought prudent to cancel it. A decision that proved right considering the considerable damage and flooding that occurred.

Medium Walking

9th October. Foremark Reservoir, led by Alison

Our group of 7 set off from the car park at Foremark Reservoir in Milton in Derbyshire. The walk set off along the designated path which runs alongside the reservoir, up to the old access parking area, down to pass Carvers Rocks and up the hill (which Trevor never stopped moaning about) and back to the carpark via the boundary path. There was evidence of work that the National Trust have started and intend to do in the future now that they have taken over the grounds of the reservoir site. The final 'cherry on the cake' was a go on the zip wire in the children's play area – which just goes to show we are still 'big kids' at heart. 4.7 miles and an elevation of 240 ft.

Longer Walking

17th October. Orton on the Hill led by Tony

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.



Welfare

Sharon Woodland, our Welfare person, can be contacted at 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.

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

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