



## Newsletter May 2024

### Interest Groups Timetable for May 2024

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

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 28 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Dr Martin Vaughan. A talk about wildlife or photography. (our choice!)
Arts and Crafts	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup>	-	No meeting as PMH is being used as polling station
Breakfast	Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Lil Bo's Deli, The Mews, Ashby
Bridge	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Mon 20 <sup>th</sup> Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 pm 7-9 pm 11am – 1.30 7-9 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Caryl's
Calligraphy 2	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	At Val's
Coffee and Chat	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Moment in Thyme, Ashby
Computer	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> Mon 20 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 31 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Moira Miners Welfare
Digital Photography	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 15 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Tour of Outdoor Gallery with coffee and cakes
Family History	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup>	6 for 6.30 pm	Taste of Thai, 84-86 Market St, Ashby
French	Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Coach trip to Arley Hall Gardens, Cheshire. Coach departs 9.30 am from the Royal Hotel. £31, optional garden tour £9.
History	Thu 23 <sup>rd</sup>	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Geoffrey Harris - 'The London that no one sees'
Industrial Heritage	Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup>	TBA	Guided tour of Foxton Locks and museum, Nr Market Harborough

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Literature	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup>	1:30 pm	Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 9 <sup>th</sup>	12 for 12.30	The Bull's Head, 6 Main St, Wilson DE37 8AE
Medium Walks	Mon 13 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Oakthorpe Country Park off Willesley Lane DE12 7QG. 5 miles
Music Appreciation	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Neil's at 40 Willesley Gardens
Reading	-	-	No meeting this month
Recorder	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. Stuart Naylor 'Concept Cartoons: Switching learners on to science'
Scrabble	Mon 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 17 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Meet at New Lount Nature Reserve car park
Social Events	Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 pm	Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club.
Singing for Fun	Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 pm	Ashby Library
Supper Club	Thu 23 <sup>rd</sup>	7 for 7.30 pm	The Priory, Nanpantan Rd, Lo'borough LE11 3YD
Walking	Tue 7 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at the Jacksons Bank CP on Brakenhurst Rd, Hoar Cross, Staffs DE13 8RG
	Tue 21 <sup>st</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at the public car park, Rectory Lane, Market Bosworth CV13 OLS
Wine Appreciation	Wed 15 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm	Annie's house

### Interest Groups Timetable for early June 2024

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Scrabble	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Bridge	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	TBA	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am	TBA
Calligraphy 2	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Val's
Music Appreciation	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBA
Computer	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Arts & Crafts	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Recorder	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	6 for 6.30 pm	TBA
Singing for fun	Fri 7 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Ashby Library

## **YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS NOW OVERDUE**

**Your membership for 2023/4 has now run out as of March 31<sup>st</sup>.**

As I write this 273 people have renewed their membership or are new members this year. Thank you for renewing, and welcome if you are new to us.

However that is only about 80% of last years membership. The rest have yet to renew. If you are one of those, can I please ask you to renew as soon as possible.

**Renewal forms for 2024/5 are available on the website or from our membership sec.**

Payment by BACS transfer or cheque please, and remember to add your name to the Reference Info for a bank transfer or on the back of a cheque.

The fees have been kept the same as last year despite the various venues which we use having put their charges up, due mainly to the increased cost of electricity and heating.

Hopefully we can sign up as many of you as last year or hopefully with more new recruits in 2024/5 we will have even more members this year.

## **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 some shopping or prescriptions, having a chat or just sending a card.

## **ASHBY U3A POLICY DOCUMENTS**

Some of you may be aware that we, as a registered charity, have several Policy Documents which help us to run our u3a correctly, legally and safely.

The Committee have recently reviewed and updated all these documents and the latest versions are now available on our website for anyone wishing to read them. Click on 'Information' on the black bar at the top of any page.

There you will also find such things as an accident reporting form, which I sincerely hope is never needed. There is also a copy of our Constitution and documents about Data Protection, Privacy, Copyright and many other matters.

If you are suffering from insomnia, these may help! Despite that, there are many useful documents there too. Please have a look sometime.

## **STOP PRESS: - ASHBY BOWLS NIGHT**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This Friday's Bowls Night has unfortunately had to be postponed. The Club's greenkeeper has ruled that the green is too waterlogged after the recent rain to be playable.

We will be rearranging the event for another date when hopefully the green has had a chance to dry out.

## THE ASHBY ARTS FESTIVAL

The Ashby Arts Festival Outdoor Gallery is this year celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the National Gallery, the founding of which was supported by Sir George Beaumont of Coleorton Hall.

The brief to contributors was to create an 8' by 4' artwork inspired by a painting in the National Gallery's collection.

Ashby u3a Drawing and Painting Group were invited to submit a contribution which we have now completed and it will be displayed in the town centre, along with the rest of the exhibition, from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 10<sup>th</sup> July.

We hope you manage to spot the u3a 'masterpiece'!

## MARCH'S MONTHLY MEETING

### Rebecca Middleton of Canine Partners

Rebecca came along to us with some of the charity's helpers, trainers and Noah the dog to explain to us just what Canine Partners do and how they go about doing it.

The charity started in 1990 in Hampshire and acquired its first centre in Heyshott, West Sussex in 2003. With a need to expand they opened a second centre at Osgathorpe which has become their National training centre.

Canine Partners' dogs are trained to help people with physical disabilities that affects their daily life and limits their independence. The dogs can help with undressing, loading the washing machine, retrieving dropped items helping with the shopping (even putting things from a basket onto the supermarket conveyor!). they can open and close doors, press lift and zebra crossing buttons and of course fetch help in an emergency.

The charity breeds its own dogs, sometimes from other retired assistance dogs, and mostly labrador/golden retriever crosses as they seem to be the most suitable for training.

The puppies live full-time with puppy parents who treat them as ordinary dogs teaching them basic house and social skills and obedience and take them to puppy classes until they are 14-16 months.

The pups then move on to advanced training at one of the centres. They learn to open doors, retrieve phones etc. Whilst honing their skills they are carefully matched with someone who is on the waiting list. Their training is then tailored to suit that person's needs. The dogs go out with their trainers visiting towns and shops so that they are confident and well-behaved in all situations.

It's not all work though. The dogs are housed together in pairs so that they have company and always have plenty of playtime with their trainers.

At the end of training, their human partner is invited to a 2 week residential course with their chosen dog so that they can get to know each other and, with the help of a trainer, learn how to work their dog.

Canine Partners offers ongoing support to ensure well-being of the dogs until their retirement.

Raising, training and looking after the dogs cost a huge £30,000 per dog throughout its lifetime.

Rebecca and Noah, and the other trainers and volunteers, gave us a great insight into just what this excellent charity is doing to help people who would otherwise be unable to manage by themselves.

If you would like to get involved with Canine Partners in any way there is much more information available at [www.caninepartners.org.uk](http://www.caninepartners.org.uk)

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### **ARTS AND CRAFTS – Leader: Sharon Woodland - [artcraft@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:artcraft@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 413867**

4<sup>th</sup> April

A big thank you to Christine Dogherty for standing in for me and leading the April meeting whilst I was away enjoying a cruise round Great Britain. The group continued their cross stitch adventure this month. Eight girls attended the meeting.

Due to local elections, the Packington hall is being used as a polling station, so there will be no craft group meeting in May.

Our next meeting will be at 10am on 6 June 2024 at the Packington Village Hall.

### **BREAKFAST – Leader: Colin Woodland - [breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 413867**

18<sup>th</sup> April - Bull's Head, Thringstone

Ten of us wended our way to the Bull's Head Thringstone. The buffet breakfast was almost excellent, slightly marred by the rather rubbery fried eggs. A better option would have been scrambled eggs as fried or poached eggs do not fare well languishing on a hot servery. The staff were excellent and all of us agreed that the sausages were of a very high standard.

Yet again, our experience was such that we will certainly be returning at some point in the future for another breakfast.

Our next breakfast will be at 10am on 16<sup>th</sup> May at Lil Bo's Deli in the Mews, Ashby de la Zouch. Only four have signed up so far and Sharon and I will be unable to attend as we are off galivanting.

If you wish to join the group for breakfast, please let Colin Woodland know at [breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk) or sign the sheet at the Monthly Meeting.

If anyone would like to have the fun of arranging these breakfasts, please let Colin Know and he will be pleased to help you take over the role.

### **BRIDGE – Leader: Neil Roberts - [bridge@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:bridge@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 455957 or 07804 743471**

The group is meeting at the Ivanhoe Club every Monday in May. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> from 7pm to 9pm and on 20<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 1.30pm.

If you are interested and would like to know more please call Neil Roberts, details above.

### **CALLIGRAPHY – Leader: Sue Cornell - [calligraphy@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:calligraphy@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 413345**

9<sup>th</sup> April

An interesting session today as some members finished their work on Shakespeare while some moved on to the next topic of the Olympics.

The font called ' gothic italics' is one that we are practising, using thin pointed nibs instead of flat-edged/wedged nibs.

The idea is to write out the oath taken by the athletes in a style of our choice. Looking forward to seeing what we produce.

Next meeting is at Caryl's on May 14th.

**CALLIGRAPHY 2 – Leader: Val Reed - calligraphy2@ashbyu3a.co.uk - 01530 564279**

3<sup>rd</sup> April

This month we welcomed 2 new ladies to our group.

We had a back to basics session with trying out different types of pens and sizes of writing. We decided to try out Italic font as it seems a little less of a challenge than the Gothic we had originally chosen.

For practice this month we have chosen to write out a Pangram.

Next meeting 1st May 10am-12 noon at Val`s 28 Windmill Close, LE65 1EQ

**COFFEE AND CHAT – Leader: Colin Woodland - coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 413867**

10th April - Swarkestone Nursery Garden Restaurant

Seven of us enjoyed the delights of the coffee and cakes. Ten o'clock is definitely the ideal time to arrive at the restaurant as the scones are just coming out of the oven. They are large, abundantly filled with dried fruits or cherries or cheese, and they are delicious, especially while still warm. There is a fine selection of tray bakes if scones are not to your taste.

as usual, conversation flowed freely and a good time was had by all. The added bonus is the well stocked garden centre which warrants a good browsing.

Our next gathering will be at the Moment in Thyme in the Pass's Courtyard LE65 1AG at 10am on 8 May 2024.

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

**CROQUET – Leader: Rupert Knapton - croquet@ashbyu3a.co.uk**

The croquet group had it's first meeting on Friday 19th April. Poor weather and problems with car parking meant that we only had a total of four intrepid players. We did have an enjoyable morning on the lawns, honing our skills for the next meeting.

Several U3A members have already expressed an interest in attending our next meeting. This will be on 31st of May and like all future meetings this year will be on the last Friday of the month at 10 am

Further details available by contacting Rupert at the email address above

**COMPUTERS - Leader: John Howlett - computer@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 461774**

15<sup>th</sup> April

A quiet day today with 6 attending

There was a discussion on the formatting of Reports for the Website under the .csv format. It appears that the style of inverted commas is critical.

We also determined by empirical means that it is possible to access apps on a mobile phone (such as the Diary) whilst on a live call.

We next meet on Monday 1st May.

**DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY - Leader: John Howlett - digphoto@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 461774**

4<sup>th</sup> April

With five attending we had an interesting show of photos about Spring and Easter. Some unusual flowers and plants, and many familiar ones, including the beautiful magnolias out now.

We discussed the different ways to make really fast shots, when to use burst mode and when to use video, for catching just that single frame when the subject is moving quickly.

Next month on the 2nd of May, we will gather at Calke Park, in the main house car park at 10.00 am..

**DRAWING & PAINTING - Leader:Christine Dogherty - painting@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 411148**

17<sup>th</sup> April

This month's session was devoted to varnishing our 8'x 4' exhibit for the Ashby Art Festival outdoor gallery. See the news item on page 3.

Next meeting will be on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Weather permitting, we plan a walking tour of the outdoor gallery, followed by celebratory coffee and cake at one of the town's delicious cafes!!

**FOOD FROM AFAR - Leader: Colin Woodland - food from afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk - 01530 413867**

4<sup>th</sup> April – Ask Italian, Derby Rd, Ashby

Six members of the group met at the Ask Italian Restaurant in Derby Rd, Ashby. Sadly, it was not a particularly good experience. The standard of the food was certainly below par and was, in some cases, stone cold. It is very unlikely that the group will venture across that particular **threshold** again any time soon.

My thanks go to John and Margaret Howlett for keeping an eye on things for me over the past two months while I have been **galivanting** all over Great Britain celebrating a big birthday with family and friends. I am just sorry that they encountered so many problems and I am grateful for all the help they have given me.

We plan to go oriental this next month with a trip to the Taste of Thai in Market St, Ashby on 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 6pm for 6.30. Fourteen people have already signed up.

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

**FRENCH – Co-ordinator: Tony Smith - french@ashbyu3a.co.uk - 01530 831822**

15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April

The French group continue to meet fortnightly on Monday mornings at the Ivanhoe Club on the corner of Tamworth Rd and Willesley Place at 11am. It is a small group so we have gone back to basics revising the core verbs of être, avoir, aller and faire in the present, future and past tenses. We meet fortnightly even on the Bank Holiday Mondays. We try and speak as much French as possible during the sessions without leaving people behind .

We meet again Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April and the homework was to prepare sentences using the perfect tense and reflexive verbs if possible. We also meet on the Tuesday evening on the alternate weeks for French conversation at a members house.

**FAMILY HISTORY - Leader: John Dogherty - familyhistory@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 411148**

10<sup>th</sup> April

Today we numbered 11, including a new member Adrian, and his wife Sue as a guest.

In the lounge, using the TV, Adrian reprised his extremely interesting piece on his family history which he gave to the History group, with added notes on his analysis software.

He also did some work on the DNA evidence supporting the probability of Maria being his ancestor.

Elizabeth had to leave at coffee time but reported progress on her paternal great grandfather from Scotland. She will be visiting Arrochar in Scotland soon to meet her sister to advance her research.

Eileen is making steady progress based on the will she has found and Parish Records.

Ana is working on WWI military documents but is puzzled by the choice of next of kin. JD noted that his own father placed his mother as next of kin, possibly because she was most likely to be home.

Dora is also making progress with 17th century Parish Records but is struggling to locate matching death information for births noted there. Adrian helped there, with suggestions about The Phillimore Atlas & Index of Parish Registers.

Mary is working on her DNA results in conjunction with the Tithe Maps and the Genealogist.

Carolyn is researching her 3-6 times great grandmothers back to 1678.

Rhona is making steady progress with her Family Tree. She also reported that she will be meeting a 2nd-3rd cousin soon who shares her ancestors in India.

Linda is beavering away at evaluating Hints.

Another excellent session, with the added benefit of Adrian's presentation. A feature we hope to continue.

We meet again on the 8th May.

**GARDENING - Leader: Paul Dean - gardening@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01283 295987**

18<sup>th</sup> April - Meynell Langley Gardens

Our April self drive was to Meynell Langley Gardens at Kirk Langley which is a working nursery growing a lot of their own plants. However they also have to import certain plants to grow-on, as there is a protection on them to prevent them being propagated in this country.

First stop was to the restaurant for those of us who had pre-booked their meal, which the gardens asked us to do. I must say most of the food was homemade made and very tasty.

We then all gathered at the nursery area and had a tour and talk and we were also demonstrated the machine used for filling the pots ready for planting. We then went for a tour of the trials garden, some areas being prepared for planting for summer, a new pond and more alterations that have been added since we were here about 5-6 years ago.

**HISTORY – Leader: Yogi Godwin - history@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 467840**

25<sup>th</sup> April. 'Ancient mining at Lount' by Stuart Warburton

Today Yogi entertained us with some historical anniversaries followed by a feast for both the Industrial Heritage and Archaeological aficionados. A full house was treated to a tour de force from Stuart Warburton, Retired Director of the Snibston Discovery Museum, about the old Lount Colliery workings.



Stuart took us on a fascinating journey through the history of the workings, unveiling evidence from old books, and comparison with the early German mining industry, that the Lount workings date from Elizabethan times or even earlier. The current interest stems from newspaper articles reporting on the startling finds coming from emergency Archaeological excavations led by Stuart during the open cast operations to strip mine the last of the coal at New Lount in 1990. The excavations were thought to be the deepest ever undertaken in England. Deep mining had already ceased in 1968. This year is the centenary of the deep mine.

The details of the history of the mine and those in the area from Swadlincote right across to Swannington are too numerous to mention here but can be found in an interesting article by the Coleorton Heritage Group. However the mines were on land owned by the Beaumonts, who had many interests in the area including the Hough Mill.

Stuart took us quickly through the history of early mining, including the so called 'Bell pits' so called because they were constructed very much like the neolithic chalk pits as single chambers excavated from the base of a single shaft. In profile they're said to look bell shaped, but to this observer they look like thin necked wide bottomed jars. As time went on the chambers were joined together, and the results were clearly visible in the photos of the strip mining which showed long parallel galleries joining up the bases of the shafts.

Stuart showed us many photos of artefacts recovered from the excavations, including what were deduced to be pit props and the formers for the shafts. These were constructed in ways very similar to those used in mediaeval German mines. Included were tools, the remains of sledges used to haul the coal to the shaft bottom, and clothing: notably many single shoes. These latter were a puzzle as there were no matching pairs. Speculation suggests they were placed in the workings to ward off evil spirits, or similar superstitions, based on the known practice of placing shoes behind fireplaces or at doorways. Dendro-dating of the wooden structures suggests a date for felling the trees for them of around 1450.

What was not found, mainly because the strip mining was underway before the archaeologists were called in, is any pithead equipment or gear, nor how the pits were drained. Reasonable speculation suggests simple rope hauled platforms and buckets using simple winch systems at the pit head.

A major find was the remains of a garment, which, on forensic examination, turned out to be a cast-off garment from some well-to-do person. The materials were good quality and bound together with cotton, a rarity in the mediaeval period. Stuart showed us a representation of what it might have looked like, with blouson type top and a skirt composed of several parallel strips of cloth in alternating colours of yellow and blue. Definitely a male garment, and probably from a Dandy. There is a reconstruction of this, and of a shaft at Leicestershire Museum

Curiously there were no organic remains other than those mentioned. No bodies, no animal bones. It is suggested that this was from health grounds: you do not want decomposing bodies or other remains close by underground. However, engravings from a book on mining in the Forest of Dean at the time showed a miner with a candle in a pipe in his mouth. He could work on and still have light.

Wages were not too bad for the time, probably because the work was dangerous, and the riskier jobs got most. In a time when £6 was a good yearly wage the fire-stoppers were paid £2 a time to quench fires. They bundled up in water-soaked clothes and went in to burn off dangerous gasses. Likewise, the watermen, who went in to open up seams believed to be subject to water ingress.

However, the evidence is strong that children were extensively employed underground and skeletal deformities (deduced in part from the shoes left behind) were very common.

There was a great deal more data, which can also be found in the Coleorton Heritage article, and a visit to the Museum is highly recommended.

A feast both for the historian and the archaeologist. And a very entertaining afternoon.

**INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE – Leader: Mike Stow - [indhist@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:indhist@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 469152**

**24<sup>th</sup> April – Morgan Motor Company**

This month we travelled to Malvern in Gloucestershire to visit the famous old motor company Morgan Motors. Morgan were formed in 1909 by HFS Morgan after he had left the Great Western Railway at Swindon in 1904 and set up his own motor garage. In 1909 he started making his own design 3-wheeled car, formed the Morgan Motor Co in 1912 and moved to their present site on Pickersleigh Rd in 1914. They have used the same buildings, and several more alongside, ever since.

We arrived, after a very easy trip down the M42 and M5, at their visitor centre in time for coffees in their lovely café. We were introduced to our guide for the day, Julian, who equipped us with earpieces so that we could hear his commentary as we walked through the factory.

Morgan are famous for making cars which look like they are pre-war but have very modern engines from BMW and Ford and their bonnets and modern running gear. However the cars are still very largely hand made both in their bodywork and leather interiors. In each section of the production, chassis and engine assembly, body making, painting and trimming, one person is responsible for each car.

The chassis are now made outside to Morgan's design from aluminium sheets glued together, but all the components are bolted in on site. It is often thought, wrongly, that the cars have wooden frames but that is not quite true. The bodies are formed over ash frames which support the aluminium panels but they are not structural. There has been some concern about ash dieback leading to a shortage of wood frames but we were assured that Morgan have guaranteed supplies for the next 100 years!

The body panels themselves are formed by hand and fitted to the car by one person with cutouts and fixtures hand-welded in place. True craftsmanship. The cars are painted by hand with about 15 coats of primer, paint and clearcoat. The leather interiors are hand cut and stitched on site. The choice of colours for both paint and leather is almost infinite. If Morgan don't do a colour, it can be mixed to any colour the customer chooses but the most popular is still British Racing Green!

Morgan made just 845 cars last year. By comparison Mini can make 1000 cars a day!

After watching the assembly progress we were taken to their Archive which is also a small museum of important cars, including a replica of the very first 3-wheeler, some of which are unique and apparently worth millions.

An excellent tour with a very knowledgeable guide who was able to give us several snippets of interesting stories about Morgan, its cars and its people.

From Morgan we drove a few minutes to a lovely pub overlooking a park and had an excellent lunch, with some great beer, served well by great friendly staff. A great end to a day out in a nice part of the world.

**LUNCH – Leaders: Colin and Sharon Woodland - [luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 413867**

**11<sup>th</sup> April – The Gate Inn, Osbaston**

Twenty-four people turned up for lunch at the Gate Inn, Osbaston. We have become accustomed to the efficient and friendly service we receive from the staff. The Manageress likes to portray a stern and foreboding persona but she has a heart of gold and always works like a demon to make sure we get the best of experiences. The pub offers the standard Marsden's menu but the chef does a superb job of sending out each dish well cooked and neatly presented.

The next lunch will be on 9th May at The Bull's Head, 6 Main St, Wilson DE73 8AE at 12pm for 12.30. Twenty-one people have already indicated they will be there but there is still room for more.

If you wish to join us, please let Colin Woodland know ASAP at [luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk).

**LITERATURE – Leader: Sandra Harris - literature@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 416653**

The literature Group gets together once a month to discuss books which they have read in the weeks before. They discuss the plot, the style of writing, the start and finish of the storyline, the meaning (if any) of the story and of course whether they liked it or not. Discussions can be quite lively. A full list of the books we are going to read this year are on our webpage.

**MUSIC APPRECIATION - Leader: Mike Stow - musicapp@ashbyu3a.co.uk - 01530 469152**

3<sup>rd</sup> April

There were just 6 of us this month due various people being on holiday. How dare they go abroad in the sunshine when there is a Music App meeting!! However this gave the rest of us a chance to play some longer pieces. We were at Mike's house this time.

Brenda started us off with an interesting piano-led piece "The Darktown Strutters Ball" by Meade Lux Lewis, very much in the ragtime style.

Nev had returned to the duo he discovered last month - the amazing Bygones consisting of beautiful singer Allison Young and the very talented guitarist Josh Turner. This young couple sang and played "Stardust" by Hoagy Carmichael stunningly. The YouTube video is excellent

Neil followed that with our own lovely singer Joan Armatrading with one of her lesser known tunes "The Shouting Stage" about a relationship break-up. Very poignant.

Sarah's choice of Delta Goodrem and "Disoriented" is a haunting ballad of desolate times.

Sid had chosen one of Robert Plant's lesser known bands "The Band of Joy" which has existed in various forms since before Led Zeppelin and is still going? The track "Angel Dance" dates from 2010 and is an album to look out for.

One of Mike's favourite singers is Christie Moore. A track he'd wanted to play for a long time but which is too long at 9+ minutes for a normal session was ideal for today. Moore was in a band called Planxty and this track "Little Musgrave" is about a young knight's night of passion with his Lordship's wife and the terrible consequences.

Bren returned us to a much lighter mood with the evergreen Glenn Miller and "Rhapsody in Blue". A classic. Another classic, this time from Nev, was Ella and Louis singing "April in Paris"

Neil gave us one of Britain's finest divas – Shirley Bassey and her autobiographical "The Girl from Tiger Bay". Then Sarah's CD by John Barrowman wouldn't play for some reason but YouTube came to the rescue to give us the wanted track "Feeling Good"

Sid chose one of his favourite bands The Red Hot Chilli Peppers and "Californication" while Mike turned to YouTube again for a live performance from Madison Sq Gardens of Simon and Garfunkel and "The Boxer"

Brenda took us into the fifties with Little Richard's classic "Tutti Frutti" and Nev took us to Belfast for Van Morrison and "Brown Eyed Girl"

Neil's last choice was The Crystals and "I Wonder", a great Phil Spector "Wall of Sound" production.

Sid closed the show with another YouTube video this time of the Irish ensemble Celtic Woman singing "Amazing Grace". Although I'd never heard of them, they have sold over 10 million CDs and DVDs worldwide and been going for 20 years with various lineups.

In May we are at Neil's on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

**RUMMIKUB – Leader: Betty Vos – rummikub@ashbyu3a.co.uk**

The group is settling down now and meeting at the Ivanhoe Club on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 11 am. Next meeting will be on the 14th May

### **READING – Leader: Annie Scotney - [reading@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:reading@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

The group is suspended until the autumn due to low attendance.

The next scheduled meeting was due to be on 15th May at 2pm at Annie's house, and the book for discussion was to be 'A Man Called Ove' by Fredrick Backman. However only one group member replied to the invite, and they would be away on holiday that date, so I shall postpone any restart until the autumn and make a real push to recruit more people then.

### **RECORDER - Leader: Joan Gibson - [recorder@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:recorder@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

We've had an eventful month. We had 2 visitors in our meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and a guest conductor on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> April**

There were 7 members and 2 visitors present this morning. The visitors, Sue and Paul, were recorder players spotted playing on Swadlincote High Street on Good Friday morning during the pop-up hymn-playing and singing. They play at a chapel in Newhall, and were accosted by Joan. They said they enjoyed playing with us; it's a different situation for them, as they could concentrate more on the music, rather than also joining in worship.

We played some of our usual pieces, although we were a little short of treble players. Luckily, Sue plays treble, so she was able to step in, and one of our tenor section, which was well represented, moved over briefly. We rediscovered an arrangement of Scarborough Fair (SSAT/B) by Alyson Lewin. We also had a go at "Wallace and Gromit", which has its tricky bits. We are hoping to be joined by a visiting aspiring conductor, Nick Epton, next time. He needs to find groups to practise on, so I volunteered us! We hope that he will help us to overcome of the problems we have with some of the pieces, such as "The Planets' Feet". He sent us a recording he made of one of the movements, where he played all 5 parts, and stuck them together: clever chap!

Naturally, we finished off with "The Goroum", repeating it at breakneck speed.

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

Nick duly turned up, after 3 hours on the road, although he said he had taken it easy, and made a couple of stops on the way. All 9 active members of the group were there. It was good to have a conductor: it made playing together much easier. Nick introduced a few changes to our playing: ideas of interpretation, which we hadn't made much of. He also helped us to deal with tricky rhythms, using word phrases to feel the note lengths. "Hello, how are you" will never be the same again!

Nick is a professional musician, singing and playing oboe and violin (and recorder). He is also very kind and encouraging.

We played Linstead Market, "Wallace and Gromit", The Planets' Feet, Razzjazz for 3, 5 fine Scottish Songs, and The Goroum. We also had a tea/coffee break, which is unheard of, but we needed to look after Nick!

### **SCRABBLE - Leader: Sylvia Tuck - [scrabble@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:scrabble@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

We are continuing to meet fortnightly at the Bull's Head, Market St, 10.30 on a Monday for fun sessions of Scrabble. Send me an email to the address above if you'd like to try us out. It's fun and sociable.

### **SINGING FOR FUN – Leader: Sarah Riley – [singing@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:singing@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

This new group are having their first get together on Fri 3rd at 2pm in Ashby Library. We wish them good luck and hope it all goes well.

**SOCIAL EVENTS - Contact: Glenys Morrice - [socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

**STOP PRESS: - BOWLS EVENING – Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup> – POSTPONED – see note on page 3**

There were no Social Events this month, but our annual Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club is now booked for Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm. You don't need to have any skill or previous experience to have fun as many who have been before will testify.

Members of the Bowls Club will be on hand to help you try to get it right and the bar will be open afterwards for socialising.

There may be some places available if you wish to join in, contact Glenys at [socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY - Tanya Dempster, Paul McKay, Bill Devitt, Kurt and Lynda Kovach - [science@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:science@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

**9<sup>th</sup> April. 'Tales of a dairy farmer's wife' by Jane Barnes**

What exactly is scientific about dairy farming you might wonder? Most of know only what we hear on the Archers, or when perusing supermarket shelves we never even give it a thought. Well Janes Barnes is a dairy farmer's wife and gave us a lively and amusing talk about the ups and downs of this career and the farm she helps run with husband Mark and son Harry near Melton Mowbray. Their herd produces the milk for the world famous Blue Stilton cheese made at Long Clawson dairy. Jane is fifth generation farmer and talked about how farming has changed and responded to government demands over the years.

Mark was committed to the welfare of his cows and indeed when they met, Jane was introduced to them well before she met his parents. His first daughter was even named after his favourite cow.

The cow's nutrition is carefully managed to optimise their welfare, the output, and we were given the energy requirement for the cows walking each 100m between the field and milking parlour twice a day. The need extra if the ground is hilly, or they are pregnant or lactating. So the feed and grazing are constantly monitored to ensure a healthy diet. Cows are fussy and wont graze if the grass is too long and with the recent heavy rain some fields are now too long for grazing and must be used for silage. The milk is also regularly checked for protein and other nutrients and to monitor the health of the cows. The quantity of data collected amazed people and it is obvious that dairy farmers need good computer skills as well as knowledge of animal management.

Most cows are artificially inseminated and the semen can be selected from a catalogue, and one can have the straws containing the semen sexed to ensure a high percentage of heifers are born. They try to breed all their own stock to reduce the chance of infection being imported.

Dairy farmers are now themselves a rare breed. There are only 7,500 left and one farm closes every day. Having heard about the life one can understand why.

A visit to the farm is organised for the 6th August.

**SUPPER CLUB – Co-ordinators: Colin Ellis and Mike Stow - [supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

**25<sup>th</sup> April – The Bulls Head, Wilson**

One of our favourite pubs to visit for Supper Club, the Bulls Head accommodated 10 of us this month. The service is always friendly and helpful and this time was no exception. We had pre-ordered our food, as is increasingly common nowadays, and so the first course for those few who had ordered it, came up swiftly.

The menu this time was a little bit more restricted than it has been, but I think the economic climate and rising cost of ingredients is forcing more venues to be even more careful not to waste food nowadays. However the food on the menu was as well cooked and as tasty as ever. A good evening.

**WINE APPRECIATION - Leader: Annie Scotney - wine@ashbyu3a.co.uk**

April

The group did not meet in April as Annie was not available to host the session. We meet again on May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

**SHORT WALKS - Leader: John Howlett - ShortWalk@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 461774**

19<sup>th</sup> April. From Moira Furnace.

This time we were walking to Donisthorpe and only 8 people formed the group. We set off for the canal and walked to the edge of the Donisthorpe Woodland Park and followed the route in a counter clockwise direction. This involved a bit of the old railway, a path by a collection of containers we know not what they are used for, and on by the Woodland Centre but we did not enter. Instead we carried on to the canal and followed its towpath back to the Furnace and to the Hub cafe. Total distance about 2.5 miles.

**MEDIUM WALKS - Co-ordinator: Alison Thompson - mediumwalk@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07930 557432**

8<sup>th</sup> April. Milton, led by Val and Trev

On an overcast morning 11 walkers left from Milton and walked toward Seven Spouts Farm, on the way passing by the impressive buildings and grounds of Repton Prep School, onwards through the woods, which was showing many signs of spring, including several drifts of bluebells.

At the top of the hill we stopped for coffee on the ridge with good views before heading on past Hangman`s Stone following the ridge path back towards Milton, where we encountered a muddy section of path near a stream, before ending our nearly 5 mile walk.

**LONGER WALKS - Leader: Kevin Green - walks@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07470 227536**

2<sup>nd</sup> April. East Leake, led by Tony

Members of the group met at the Bulls Head in East Leake on a fine and sunny morning for a 7 mile walk around the area. We set off across fields and over a stream in the direction of Gotham. We stopped to look down at the neat and tidy station on the Great Central heritage railway line called Rushcliffe Halt before walking up towards the golf club. The path took us alongside the golf course and up onto a ridge from where we had views over the valley and Nottingham could be seen in the distance. After stopping for a coffee/tea break we went through a muddy wood and onto the picturesque village of West Leake. The return path to East Leake was well defined and quite dry - surprisingly given the recent heavy rain. Lunch was taken in the pub and we were joined by 4 members of the group who were unable to walk today.

16<sup>th</sup> April. Cannock Chase, led by Kevin

Despite recent wet weather we were greeted with a sunny morning as thirteen of us gathered for our pre walk picture outside NT Shugborough Hall estate entrance. We started with a climb from Milford Common, before descending to the to the Staffordshire Way path on the edge of the NT estate. It wasn't long before we crossed a rather nice 17th century Essex bridge across the River Trent and joined the Trent and Mersey canal for a short distance. On leaving the canal we had a short walk up a quiet road and entered the Seven Sister's car park in Cannock Chase for coffee break. On finishing our break, we begin a steady climb up a good forestry path and then a decent to fourteen stepping stones which fortunately were not flooded. After several more miles on good unmuddy paths through lovely woodland and moorland, we arrived back at Milford Common for lunch.