



Newsletter August 2024

Interest Groups Timetable for August 2024

Please note that this timetable could change at short notice. Check the website for the latest news.

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 27 th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Our AGM followed by Cream Tea
Arts and Crafts	Thu 1 st	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Breakfast	Thu 15 th	10 am	Swarkestone Nursery, Swarkestone DE73 7GQ
Bridge	Mon 5 th Mon 12 th Mon 19 th Mon 26 th	7 pm TBA 11 am 7 pm	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	-	-	No meeting this month
Coffee and Chat	Wed 14 th	10 am	Sunnyside Garden Centre, Ibstock LE67 6HL
Computer	Wed 7 th Mon 19 th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 30 th	10 am	Moira Miners Welfare
Digital Photography	Thu 1 st	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 21 st	10 am	2 Marlborough Way
Family History	-	-	No meeting this month. WhatsApp available
Food from Afar	Thu 1 st	6 for 6.30 pm	La Torre, 48 High St, Coalville LE67 3EE
French	Mon 5 th Mon 19 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 15 th	2 pm	Garden Party, 2 Fairfax Close, Ashby. Please note change of start time. Scones and drink provided. Free plant raffle. Booking required for catering purposes
History	Thu 29 th	TBA	Coach trip to the city of Bath
Industrial Heritage	-	-	No meeting this month – summer break
Literature	Tue 13 th	1:30 pm	Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 8 th	12 for 12.30	Nag's Head, Castle Donington DE74 2PR
Medium Walks	Mon 12 th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Ravenstone Almshouses, Hospital Lane, Ravenstone LE67 2AJ

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Music Appreciation	Wed 7 th	10 am	Mike's at 91 Woodside, LE65 2NU
Recorder	Thu 1 st	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal Other dates TBA
Rummikub	Tue 13 th Tue 27 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	Tue 6 th	2.30 pm at the farm	Farmer Barnes' Dairy Somerby, Melton Mowbray LE14 2PN
Scrabble	Mon 12 th Mon 26 th	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 16 th	10 am	Meet at the CP near St Peters church, Stapenhill
Singing for Fun	-	-	Date and venue TBA
Social Events	-	-	No meeting this month
Supper Club	Thu 22 nd	7 for 7.30 pm	The Queens Head, Belton LE12 9TP
Walking	Tue 6 th	9.45 for 10am	Meet High Peak junction CP, Lea Road. DE4 5AE
	Tue 20 th	9.45 for 10am	Park on side streets in centre of Hartington. Meet outside Devonshire Arms pub SK17 0AL
Wine Appreciation	Wed 21 st	7 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early September 2024

Group	Date	Time	Venue
French	Mon 2 nd	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Bridge	Mon 2 nd	TBA	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 3 rd	9.45 for 10am	Meet at Staff of Life, Ticknall
Music Appreciation	Wed 4 th	10 am	TBA
Computer	Wed 4 th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 5 th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Arts & Crafts	Thu 5 th	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Recorder	Thu 5 th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 5 th	6 for 6.30 pm	TBA

REFERENDUM RESULTS

As you will be aware we asked you to vote in June on a referendum to decide how we might move forward with the way that room hire for groups is to be paid for in future.

127 members (almost 40% of the membership) voted and the result was

41 voted A, that we should continue as before with increased membership fees

80 voted B, that the committee will cease to pay room hire for groups except for small and newly founded groups with a consequent reduction in membership fees relative to option A.

3 voted C to abstain.

3 voted for D proposing an alternative solution but did not offer the names of members who would support it.

The committee will now consider how this can best be applied and what fees will be charged as of the next membership year starting on April 1st 2025. We shall keep you all informed of progress.

AGM – 27TH AUGUST

A reminder that we shall be holding our AGM before the monthly meeting on 27th August, which will be followed by the annual Cream Tea served by the committee. Hopefully the weather will allow us to sit outside in the garden this year.

Here is a list of your current committee but there will be some changes after the AGM as both Bill and Colin are standing down from the committee.

New committee members are always welcome. Now is your chance to join us!

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	Estelle Sandles	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Welfare	Estelle Sandles	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	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk

WELFARE

Estelle Sandles who looks after Welfare can be contacted at welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk or 01530 234309

If you know of any member who is unwell or isolating or has a family member who is unwell, please contact Estelle 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.

JULY'S MONTHLY MEETING

23rd July. - You're never too old to Rock n Roll

This month's speaker was Roy Taylor, better known as the 50's Rock n Roll singer Vince Eager.

Vince sat on a stool on stage and talked us through his early life history as a singer and musician and the people he met along the way, whilst showing us many historical photos taken at the time.

He was born in Grantham in 1940 and knew he wanted to be a performer from a very early age. He started out aged 8 going round the houses at Christmas with friends carol singing. Realising that there was money to be made from this he soon went solo to make more money for himself! He then joined a drama theatre aged 11 and performed in panto for several years before joining two friends to form the Harmonica Vagabonds with Vince playing banjo.

His first taste of pop music was listening to Johnny Ray on Radio Luxembourg 208. He also claimed that Elvis tried to imitate Ray when he started out. Vince first heard the then new skiffle when he was 14 at a cinema and was moved to form his own Vagabonds skiffle group using the traditional tea-chest bass and a washboard belonging to one of the band members' mums. They played the local working men's clubs and within a year had made enough money to pay uniforms and to go electric. They entered a national skiffle competition and made it through to the televised final where they came second. On the strength of that they were offered a residency at the 2is Coffee Club where they played alongside many other up and coming artists and bands such as Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard and The Drifters (later to become The Shadows)

There they were signed by impresario Larry Parnes who gave Roy his stage name of Vince Eager. One of the Vagabonds was bassist Brian 'Licorice' Locking who later played with Marty Wilde before joining the Shadows. A later bandmate was a young Joe Brown before his career too took off.

Vince showed us a playbill showing Vince Eager and the Vagabonds topping the bill above Danny La Rue, Barbara Windsor and Ronnie Corbett! He explained that the other three had yet to have appeared on TV, whereas the Vagabonds had been on the skiffle competition and were "more famous".

Under Larry Parnes they had a residency at a notorious London club called the Churchill Club where he was propositioned by Burt Lancaster with an offer of a part in a movie if he came back to Lancaster's hotel room. An offer he declined!

At the same club he once told a rowdy group at the back to be quiet, only to later find out it was the Rat Pack with Frank Sinatra! Fortunately they were making so much noise that they didn't hear him telling them to shut up, else he might have found himself in some trouble!

One evening a young lad turned up at the stage door where Vince was playing, saying that he had sent some songs he'd written to Parnes but had had no reply. Feeling sorry for the lad, Vince introduced him to Parnes, who got him to sing one of his songs using a borrowed guitar and everyone was blown away and Parnes signed him immediately. The lad, Ronald Wycherley, was renamed Billy Fury by Parnes. Vince and Billy became best mates and shared a flat in Knightsbridge owned by Parnes. Billy needed a backing band and insisted they had to be Liverpudlian like himself and so auditions were arranged. One band that was turned down was the nascent Beatles, who went on to have a slightly more famous career. Vince showed us a photo of a young John Lennon asking Billy Fury for his autograph.

Vince was later a resident singer on the BBC TV show Drumbeat along with Adam Faith and the John Barry Seven. Barry went on to become one of the greatest film composers writing 12 of the James Bond themes plus Born Free and many, many others.

I can only give a taste here of Vince's life story and the many people he met and often befriended and it only takes us up to the age of twenty. Apparently parts two and three continue his very interesting life history.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

ARTS AND CRAFTS – Leader: Sharon Woodland - artcraft@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 413867

4th July

The Craft Group met at the Packington Village Hall in the usual back room despite the main hall being used as a polling station for the General Election.

BREAKFAST – Leader: Colin Woodland - breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 413867

18th July - Olive Branch Cafe

The group met at the Olive Branch_café but I have not yet received a report and they are meeting at Swarkestone Nursery, Swarkestone DE73 7GQ on August 15th.

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 - phone 01530 455957 or 07804 743471

The group is meeting at the Ivanhoe Club every Monday in August. On the 5th and 26th from 7pm to 9pm and on the 19th from 11am to 1.30pm. The time for 12th has yet to be decided.

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

CALLIGRAPHY – Leader: Sue Cornell - calligraphy@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 413345

July 9th

Four Members met yesterday at Diane's house.

Some of us finished work on the Olympic Oath and others worked using a Pointed Italic font.

There will be no meeting in August due to holidays.

Our next meeting on September 10th will be at Ann's house.

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

We have taken the decision to suspend this group for a while as only two of us have been attending.

If there is further interest it may be revived.

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

10th July – Cattows Farm

The group met at the farm café but I have not yet received a report and they are meeting at Sunnyside Garden Centre, Ibstock LE67 6HL on August 14th.

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

26th July

The Croquet Group had the best weather and the best turnout of the year for our July meeting. Thirteen members attended, which meant that we had to use all three lawns, Some of our newer players have made great progress and games have become quite competitive.

Hoping for a sunny day on 30th August for our next meeting..

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

15th July

8 Attendees today

Peter was finding he could not connect his laptop to the internet, neither in his house nor anywhere else. Richard and JH rallied round and found he need to reset his internet drivers: all of them. Windows 11 has a button for that, once you find it. Problem solved.

Bix needed help with resetting passwords: Steve helped out here.

Richard looked at extra RAM capacity for his laptop. He needed to find out what the maximum chip availability was, so the advice was to google his laptop ID to check, before buying new. A second question was whether to buy the whole capacity on one chip or two. That too was a question of checking via the ID as to how many slots he has for chips.

Finally, Peter looked at replacing the battery of his wife's laptop. He needs to check if it can actually be changed, as some are sealed in.

We next meet on Wednesday 7th August at Winchester Way

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

4th July

July's meeting was moved to 1pm so that we could meet up with fellow member Brian at Calke Abbey. He was leading a group to the lime kilns which was now a wild area for a photographic walk. This included a certain amount of history. 5 of our group as well as Brian attended alongside 3 others. the route to the lime kilns included a trip through the tunnel. We heard a lot about the kilns and realised that a large part of the estate had been removed to make the lime. Further on we arrived at a flooded area which was rich in wild orchids. We returned to our cars. The weather was cloudy with much sunshine and a strong wind which was less noticeable in the limekiln area.

It was an instructive visit and I would like Brian to know how much I for one appreciated the walk.

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

17th July

Thanks to Sue for hosting this month's session, which was enjoyed by all four of those attending. The suggestion was to copy a painting you would like to own, or a gem from Sue's Garden. Coffee and cake were enjoyed in the conservatory!!

We next meet on August 21st at 10.00 am at 2 Marlborough Way.

Theme: TBA

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

8th and 22th July

Last Monday's session involved studying a picture of a busy kitchen scene and then trying to describe in French the various people in the picture, the equipment that we could see and the ingredients on the table top etc. This was taken from a book of 50 short activities designed to improve our French. A list of possible vocabulary was supplied alongside the picture. We aim to repeat this exercise again with a different scenario.

Monday sessions take place fortnightly at the Ivanhoe Club Wilfred Place Ashby at 11am and last for 2 hours On alternate weeks we meet in a member's home for conversation.

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

10th July

Because of holidays and illness, we had had a smaller than usual group of 5 at table today, although three or four more joined in a lively discussion on WhatsApp about Ancestry DNA and Traits facilities. Lots going on and plenty of interaction and members helping each other, using WhatsApp much as we did during Lockdown.

John D worked on disentangling two families on his tree that had become confused with each other.

Elizabeth is still chasing her 3x great grandmother and her interesting (if fishy) past

Sue is working on her 3 and 4x great grandparents on the Norfolk coast

Adrian is working on a project to assemble the family names he encountered in a display at a Norfolk church to see if they are in groups connected to his trees.

Eileen is struggling to connect the two Dumolo trees she has identified.

Ana, by WhatsApp, reported that she is busy with sorting out her files and folders, and trying to track the owners of the 'Ana' name of whom there are several!

Mary reported via WhatsApp that she has received back a book on Hearth Taxes she lent out. She is offering it for the perusal of the Group if anyone is interested.

After the meeting closed there was a lively discussion on the allocation in Ancestry of DNA to parents 1 and 2, and which actual parent this referred to.

The majority concurred that Parent 1 is the female side, but JD and CD reported the opposite. Also discussed was the 'Traits' feature of Ancestry.

It seems unclear whether it is of real use, but it is certainly interesting to know, for instance, if one is liable to an allergy to certain herbs.

The August meeting at 2 Marlborough Way will not take place because of holidays, although WhatsApp will be open if people wish to discuss things.

We next meet on Wednesday 11th September at 2 Marlborough Way at 2.00 pm.

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

4th July – Pepitos, Derby

The group returned to this Mexican restaurant that they last visited in November '23 but I have not yet received a report but they are meeting at La Torre, 48 High St, Coalville LE67 3EE on August 1st.

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

18th July – David Austin Roses

Today we had a coach trip to David Austin Roses, with thirty two people attending. It was a good journey which took only one hour and ten minutes. On arrival, we were greeted on the coach and provided with some information regarding our visit.

Fifteen minutes after arrival some of us had a pre booked tour of the gardens. We were given a short history of how Mr Austin started from scratch with two greenhouses and a shed. At the time people didn't understand his ideas for breeding a new generation of roses. Apparently it takes about twelve years for a new rose to be allowed to be sold to the general public. During his lifetime Mr Austin bred over two hundred English roses.

Following the tour we were free to amble around the gardens, visit the shop, restaurant and tea room. The staff were helpful, friendly and efficient. The weather was hot and sunny, fabulous!

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

25th July. 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' by Paul Barrass

After Yogi's interesting 'anniversary' notes which included the Berlin Airlift from June 24th 1948 to April 1949 (during which some members may remember the fleets of aircraft assembling overhead, before droning away to Germany) our guest presenter Paul Barrass, aided by his wife Janet and using many fascinating slides, entertained us with the ultimately tragic story of Charles Edward Stuart's (Bonnie Prince Charlie's) attempt to regain the Throne in 1745.

He was the son of the self-proclaimed James III (sometimes called 'The Old Pretender') and would have been Charles III had he succeeded. James III fled when William of Orange/William III (King Billy to the Irishmen who invited him in) ascended to the British Throne jointly with his wife, and James's sister, Mary II. William and Mary were succeeded first by George I then George II, at which point Charles determined to oust him. The attempt is known as The Jacobite Rebellion and was only the last of a series of attempts to regain the Throne.

Charles and his supporters (seven in all) seized their opportunity whilst the Army was away in Flanders fighting the French. He had tried to get help from the French but they were otherwise engaged, as he should have known. He landed at Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides but was met with a cool reception from clans who had taken a beating in 1715.

He raised the standard at Glenfinnan on Loch Shiel and managed to get Edinburgh to surrender, then defeated the British Army at Prestonpans. Continuing, the Scots pushed on through England and took Carlisle, and came eventually to Derby. Here things went completely wrong as the Scottish commanders, who had heard wrongly that three English armies were descending on them, turned against him and took the army back north. The furthest south the Scots managed was the north side of the Swarkestone Viaduct, where a small monument resides in the garden of the Crewe and Harpur pub. However Charles stayed in Derby and didn't actually visit the site himself.

However, in a battle at Falkirk, he and his army again beat the English and took Inverness the capital of the Highlands. Sadly, for him, the loss of the ship carrying funds provided by the French was a bad blow. The upshot was a final battle at Culloden in which he was beaten by the Duke of Cumberland (sometimes called Butcher Cumberland).

Charles escaped, eventually returning to France and died in Rome in 1788, but the aftermath for the Highlands was dreadful, with enclosures, transportations and wholesale dispossession. It is in this time that the long running feud between the Campbells and the MacDonalds began.

Paul regaled us with information on how the British Army fought, both at 'long' range (muskets were effective at up to 200 yards. Not until the coming of the Baker rifle was the Army equipped with a longer-range weapon) and at short range. This was hand to hand fighting at its most brutal, in which the wicked long bayonets on the rifles were used to stab, and the butts used to beat brains out. Meanwhile the few field guns were used to plough bloody furrows through the opposing troops.

A very interesting and informative presentation about a period we usually know little about. But one which has an oddly piquant link to us here just south of Derby.

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.

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE – Leader: Mike Stow - indhist@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 469152

24th July. Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

We've been lucky with the weather on our trips out this year, and this was no exception. On a gloriously warm sunny day 13 members car-shared the drive to Wirksworth. After clearing Derby, the drive up country lanes to Wirksworth is lovely and parallels the route of the railway.

On arriving at the station we bought a string of tickets at a good discount rate and were shown to our carriage by the station master. As the train was quite long and the platform quite short, we had to get on in the middle of the train and walk through to our carriage at the front of the train. Armed with coffees from the station buffet we sat and waited for the depart which was bang on time.

The route is quite scenic on one side but somewhat obscured by trees on the other which is a bit disappointing but nonetheless we all enjoyed the smoke and smell and nostalgia as we chugged down to Duffield stopping at a couple of halts on the way.

Arriving at Duffield we disembarked to watch the loco being shunted round to the other end of the train, giving everyone time to take photos and enjoy the sunshine. Twenty minutes later we were off again on our way back to Wirksworth. Not perhaps the most exciting or scenic railway in the country but we all had a good time wallowing in memories of steam when we were younger.

Leaving the cars in the free station car park, we walked the third of a mile up the hill to the interesting town centre and our lunch at the Hope & Anchor pub.

The pub was pretty quiet for a Friday lunchtime, in fact we were practically the only ones there, but at least that brought up the pre-ordered food pretty quickly. And very good it was too. Everyone commented on the quality and quantity of everything and how well it was cooked.

A few people went to look around the town whilst others browsed the station bookshop before returning to the now scorching hot cars. My car said it was 30 deg outside in the sun!

An uneventful journey back finished a lovely day out.

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

3rd July

Only three people were available this month to attend the meeting but we still had a good variety of music, and we were back at Nev's house.

Heather started proceedings with the Glen Miller Band performing "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree" and then Yogi slowed things down somewhat with Enya singing "How Can I Keep From Singing". Nev's first choice was a seasonal song which didn't reflect the weather outside. It was, of course, "Summertime" sung by Peggy Lee.

Heather's second choice was North Sea Gas, a Scottish folk group playing a medley of tunes "Crammond Island/The Big Canoe/The Cowshed". Yogi then chose James Galway and Phil Coulter with "Thousands Are Sailing". Nev stuck to his seasonal choice with Jimmy Buckley playing a rockabilly version of the Eddie Cochran hit "Summertime Blues".

Heather then continued proceedings with the James Last Orchestra playing "Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana". Yogi's next choice was the BBC Symphony Orchestra playing Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance March No 4" followed by an unnamed band playing the Irish Jig "The Wind that Shakes the Bushes". Nev's third choice was Green Carnation, a Norwegian group, playing the Jim Croce song "Time in a Bottle".

Heather's last choice was another Glen Miller number "Girl from Kalamazoo". Yogi finished with the Choir of New College Oxford singing Tavener's "The Lamb" and Nev wound up proceedings with Josh Lee Turner playing a remarkable version of The Beatles "Strawberry Fields Forever" on solo guitar.

LUNCH – Leaders: Colin and Sharon Woodland - luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 01530 413867

11th July – The Unicorn, Orton on the Hill

The group returned to this favourite pub in July but I have not yet received a report and they are meeting at the Nag's Head, Castle Donington DE74 2PR on August 8th.

READING – Leader: Annie Scotney - reading@ashbyu3a.co.uk

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

RECORDER - Leader: Joan Gibson - recorder@ashbyu3a.co.uk

July

We had two meetings as usual this month. The first was well-attended (10 members), but the second was less so (5). We still managed to play a variety of music, with up to 5 parts. It was good that at least 3 of those present can play different sizes of recorder, so could swap between them as we worked through the playlist.

In our first meeting, we played Sellenger's Round, by Byrd, I think, followed by "Since First I Saw Your Face", followed by two Italian madrigals by Ghibel. We followed this by 6 airs by Handel from the Water Music, before having another go at "Wallace and Gromit", which has tricky rhythms. We played 2 spirituals, arranged by Alyson Lewin, who leads the South Staffordshire SRP group, before moving on to pieces involving the larger instruments: Bassano's Pavan and Galliard, Pie Jesu by Fauré, "Planets' Feet", a modern suite by Lance Eccles (Australian), the "Cantique de Jean Racine" by Fauré (again), finishing with "Moon River".

In the second meeting, we started with the same pieces, changing the Spirituals to Alyson's second selection "Two More Spirituals". We missed out the Pie Jesu, as we were short of Great Bases, but we added a new piece, one of a set of dances, "Frog Dance", by Nicholas Wynne. We decided that we like it, so hope to continue to work at it, and the other 2 dances in the set. Some of the pieces had two descant parts, and others two tenor parts, and one player had to swap from descant to treble, and another treble to bass. What a flexible lot we are!

During the school holidays, we will make a pragmatic decision about which Thursdays we will meet, as we don't want to hire the hall for 3 people! If you plan to join us, please check on the website to see when we will be meeting.

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

11th & 25th June

Our friendly and relaxed Rummikub group continues to grow. We now have around a dozen players.

SCRABBLE - Leader: Usha Sood

Group contact: Estelle Sandles - scrabble@ashbyu3a.co.uk - 01530 234309

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

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY - Tanya Dempster, Paul McKay, Bill Devitt, Kurt and Lynda Kovach - science@ashbyu3a.co.uk

July

We didn't meet in July as we were having our summer break. The next meeting will be a week earlier than usual on August 6th and will be visiting the dairy farm of Jane Barnes who gave us a talk back in April on the science behind modern farming.

SOCIAL EVENTS - Contact: Glenys Morrice - socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk

14th June

As you may know, the annual Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club had to be postponed in April at the last minute due to the greens being unplayable after heavy rain and it was rescheduled for Friday 14th June.

Unfortunately this summer's weather defeated us again as the event was off, on and finally off again all through Friday as the prepared greens took another downpour that afternoon! Hopefully the weather will settle down shortly and we can reschedule for later in the year.

The evening has now been arranged for Friday Sept 6th. Glenys will be circulating a sign-up list for those wishing to go along, or contact her at socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

SINGING FOR FUN – Leader: TBA – singing@ashbyu3a.co.uk

July

Sarah has volunteered her services to a cause dear to her, Coalville Community Fridge project, which unfortunately clashes with the dates for Singing for Fun, so she has decided to step down from leading the group. Estelle, our Groups Co-ordinator is actively trying to find someone or some group of people to lead the group so that it can keep running. If you are able to help in any way please email singing@ashbyu3a.co.uk and Estelle will receive your email.

SUPPER CLUB – Co-ordinators: Colin Ellis and Mike Stow - supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk

25th July – Meynell Ingram Arms, Hoar Cross

Yet another new pub for many of us, recommended, like last month, by the Walking group who had lunch here recently.

The pub is the far side of Burton, near to England Football's training ground at St Georges Park. It sits at a crossroads miles from any houses yet has a large carpark which was almost full. On entering the pub, it was packed out even at the bar, for reasons that became apparent later, and as we had all arrived early had to wait for our table to become vacant and be relaid. I say all, but there were just 6 of us tonight. Possibly the distance from Ashby had put people off.

The menu was interesting and different from the usual pub-grub which seems to pervade so many menus lately. We ordered and the starters arrived quite promptly and were very nice. There was then a rather long wait for our main courses to arrive as the place was so busy, but when they did arrive, they were worth waiting for. Very nice. Desserts next. As the mains weren't huge, and we'd waited quite a time for them, we all had space for desserts. These did arrive quickly but were slightly disappointing compared with the previous two courses and Bill had to ask for more toffee sauce for his sticky toffee pudding. However overall not bad at all.

Then came the big surprise, and the reason the pub was so full. As we were all calculating how much to pay by each adding up the prices of what we'd had on the menu, our waitress announced that all food, but not drink, was half price tonight as it was a new menu!!

If only we'd known. I don't suppose anyone thought to tell us when we booked a month ago. We all agreed we would have had something more expensive had we known. Never mind, you can't look a gift horse in the mouth as they say. And it made the whole meal much more enjoyable knowing how cheap it was. It took £100 off the bill for 6 people.

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

17th July

Annie now has family commitments which mean that she will be unable to host, or attend, meetings on a Wednesday after August and so, after much discussion, we have agreed to move the date to the third Tuesday of the month from September. This was the date best suited to the greatest number of members but unfortunately it means that Tanya and Chris will not be able to attend in future. We'll be sorry to lose them and hope that some other arrangements will be suitable for all sooner rather than later.

This month we had an almost full house of 8 to taste Ken's selection of different Shiraz blends from France and Australia.

First up was Aldi's 2022 14% Merlot-Syrah, from the Coteaux de Béziers in France by Chassaux et Fils at £8.49. This fruity wine tasting of dark cherries with a slightly tart tannic aftertaste proved popular with most who found it very approachable and easy-drinking. Good with red meats, it scored 56.5 out of 80.

From SE Australia came "The Black Stump" by Laithwaites. 2021, 14.5% and £10.99. This Durif/Shiraz blend had quite a kick considering the alcoholic strength but nonetheless was very smooth, dark and with almost no tannin. Almost port-like but without the fortification. everyone enjoyed it and it scored 63/80.

Third was another Durif/Shiraz blend (Almost none of us had heard of the Durif grape before); "Dark Corner" also from Laithwaites and 2021, 14.5% and £11.99. Again very smooth, very dark and plum-like but with light tannins. We all felt this was not as good as the last wine, almost too strongly flavoured, and it was marked down to 53.5/80.

Last was the dearest wine of the night, 2020 S. Australian Boscwood Petit Verdot/Shiraz blend by Virgin Wines at 14% and £12.50. Strangely this was the least liked of all the wines. It had an odd aftertaste. Again it was very dark, tasting of black fruits and liquorice. It only scored 52.5/80 partly because of its high price without any improvement over the others.

An interesting selection of wines which went to prove that the dearest wines are not always the best liked.

MEDIUM WALKS - Alison Thompson - mediumwalk@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07930 557432

8th July. From Zouch, led by Trev and Val

11 of us met at Zouch, for a flat 4 and a half mile walk.

We started off by crossing several fields in the direction of Hathern. From there we walked through very long grass to reach the river Soar and our coffee stop. Continuing north along the river bank, passing the chain Ferry, we were able to look at the lovely houses and the ramshackle cabins lining the other river bank.

On reaching the weirs and bridges in Zouch, we found our way now closed due to an unsafe bridge so we took a rather circuitous route back to our start point, missing out the planned walk along the canal path.

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

19th July. Mount St Bernard Abbey

A glorious summer's day tempted 13 walkers to assemble in Mt St Bernard's carpark. We strolled out along a broad, slowly rising track to the southwest until we came to a field boundary at the highest point of our walk and then turned northwest along the ridge, stopping to take in the superb views out over the Abbey and beyond.

Mercifully, as the sun was getting quite strong, our way was mostly pleasantly shaded. Now the path beside the field became narrow so we had to go in single file along into the shade of the woods, dropping down to the edge of the fields stretching away to the Abbey to our right, now mostly on or above our level.

The path became more and more overgrown as we came to the remains of the Abbey Grange Farm, marked on the early 20th century maps, but now almost totally vanished but for a long narrow outbuilding buried in undergrowth. Behind us we could hear activity in the Midland Quarries quarry, where work continues to extract rock from what had been Peldar Tor but is now a very large hole in the ground. Interestingly, the quarry is an enormous extension of the original Peldar Tor Quarry, sited where the offices of the MQP are now.

The path onwards was so overgrown in places, despite clear evidence of regular traffic, that we had to beat back nettles and brambles for quite a way. Eventually we emerged from the shade of the woodlands onto open fields where we stopped for a drink. Here the path we had been following and which we now were walking beside, was revealed as a substantial roadway for, presumably, transporting goods from the Grange farm to Oaks Road, where there is a wide gate buried in overgrowth. On this stretch the ,roadway' was fully populated with bushes and trees and quite impassable.

Here, when we were nearly arrived at Oaks Road, the footpath joins one coming down from Ratchett Hill behind us, and we turned northeast to leave the field at Oaks Road. We walked along the road for a couple of hundred yards to a path leading fairly steeply up towards the Abbey, but fortunately reasonably clear of undergrowth, despite being a little rough underfoot. As we emerged onto open fields at the top we encountered the only stile on the route, which the walkers all managed to scale, although needing a little help in one or two cases. From there it was a short stroll back to the cars.

We managed 1.75 miles in around 1 hour and 20 minutes. A very pleasant summer's walk, rounded off with very welcome coffee and cakes in the Library of the St Joseph's Tea Rooms, attended to by mine host himself.

16th July. Thorpe, led by Trev and Val

When we left Ashby, it was raining, but on our arrival in Thorpe the rain had left off and we were pleased when 10 hardy souls turned up to walk the 6 and a half mile walk.

We headed through Thorpe and out on to the top of the hill with a lovely view, then walking down to the river and following it along to Dovedale. There we were advised by the Ranger that the river was flooded at the stepping stones and not passable after the previous nights rain. After a quick rethink we headed up the other side of Thorpe Cloud and out onto the hills beyond, onwards through fields to Tissington, where we stopped for coffee and CAKE, returning to Thorpe along the Tissington trail. Luckily the rain stayed away for our walk, only returning when we were all sat outside the pub at the end.

2nd July. Garendon Park, Loughborough, led by Colin

Fifteen intrepid explorers gathered at the Wheatsheaf on the western edge of Loughborough to explore the only recently discovered delights of Garendon Park.

After a short distance along residential roads, we turned onto the trackbed of the former Charnwood Forest Railway. This line from Coalville to Loughborough opened in 1874 and closed to passengers in 1931. The section we covered lost its goods service in 1955. A short distance brought us to the drive into Garendon Park. There used to be a wooden halt here but all trace has long since disappeared as has the bridge which used to cross the drive.

Garendon Park dates from the dissolution of the monasteries when it was acquired by the Earl of Rutland. In 1683 the hall was purchased by Ambrose Phillips and his grandson built the three monuments. After use by the military during the Second World War, the house was in poor condition and demolished in 1964. The park then became an agricultural estate. Recently, the site was acquired for house building, which has begun at the Hathern end. As part of the deal, certain paths were to be opened to the public, hence our exploration. It was also a requirement that the monuments be restored.

Turning onto the drive, we began to climb a slope, at the summit of which, on our left, we could see the Temple of Venus. This was based on the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli and was originally planned as a chapel but later became a small art gallery. Continuing round the drives, we next came to the Triumphal Arch, a reproduction of the Arch of Titus in the forum in Rome. Our route now proceeded under the M1 to emerge in Shepshed. Here we had to make our way along the road before joining the bridleway leading back into the park. Eventually we reached the Bavarian Gate which was built in 1838 to give access to the house. It is currently in use as a private residence, although what we could see of the floor plan suggested a somewhat inconvenient one.

A rather circuitous path then took us to the final monument, an obelisk. Work has begun here and the whole structure was encased in netting. From what was visible, it appeared in very poor condition and little actual work was in evidence. It is rumoured that it has been undermined by badgers and there are certainly fresh setts nearby. We continued through Booth Wood to the former railway and turned west to our starting point.

We returned to the Wheatsheaf after three and a half hours and about eight miles for a well earned lunch.