



## Newsletter October 2024

### Interest Groups Timetable for October 2024

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

Group	Date	Time	Venue
<b>Monthly Meeting</b>	Tue 22 <sup>nd</sup>	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. A talk by Steve Evans on 'The Great Central Railway reunification'
Arts and Crafts	Thu 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 am	Packington Village Hall
Breakfast	Thu 17 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Lakeside Bistro, Shortheath Rd, Moira DE12 6BW
Bridge	Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> Mon 14 <sup>th</sup> Mon 21 <sup>st</sup> Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	11 am 7 pm TBC 11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	Tue 8 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Sue. Topic - Autumn
Coffee and Chat	Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Moment in Thyme, Pass Courtyard LE65 1AG
Computer	Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mon 21 <sup>st</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 25 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Moira Miners Welfare
Digital Photography	Thu 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBA
Family History	Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 for 6.30 pm	Taste of Thai, Market St, Ashby LE65 1AP
French	Mon 14 <sup>th</sup> Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 17 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Harvest at Packington Village Hall. Please bring an item of food to share, drinks will be provided. Booking required
History	Thu 24 <sup>th</sup>	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Several magistrates - 'Tales from the Court'
Industrial Heritage	Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup>	TBA	Black Country Living Museum, Discovery Way, Dudley DY1 4AL
Literature	Tue 8 <sup>th</sup>	1:30 pm	Sandra's house

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Lunch	Thu 10 <sup>th</sup>	12 for 12.30	The Bull's Head, Loughborough Rd, Thringstone, LE67 8LR
Medium Walks	Mon 14 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet in Carlton. Park in the street at bottom of Main Rd where it becomes Congerstone Lane.
Music Appreciation	Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10 am	Neil's, 40 Willesley Gdns
Recorder	Thu 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thu 17 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 8 <sup>th</sup> Tue 22 <sup>nd</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	Tue 8 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. Talk by Catrin Rutland 'Science Fiction versus Science Fact - Genetics'
Scrabble	Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> Mon 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 18 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Meet at the lower car park at Staunton Harold for a walk around the grounds.
Social Events	-	-	No meeting this month
Supper Club	Thu 24 <sup>th</sup>	7 for 7.30 pm	The Unicorn Inn, Main St, Orton-on-the-Hill, Atherstone CV9 3NN
Walking	Tue 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>9.30 for 9.45</b>	<b>Note earlier time.</b> Meet at Overseal Village Hall car park, Woodville Road, DE12 6LU
	Tue 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>9.30 for 9.45</b>	<b>Note earlier time.</b> Walk is 7.5 miles circular route from Stanton to Markfield.
Wine Appreciation	Tue 15 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm	Annie's house

### Interest Groups Timetable for early November 2024

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

## **MONTHLY MEETING – 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

With several committee members unavailable for the monthly meeting due to holidays and other commitments, it fell to Yogi, Glenys and Mike to run the meeting with help from many non-committee members. Everything was under control until Yogi received a phone call early on the Tuesday morning to say that our expected speaker Andrew Barson of Leicester County Council was not well and wouldn't be able to give his talk on 'A co-ordinated Ashby'.

Yogi stepped admirably into the breach and not only hosted his first monthly meeting but gave an impromptu talk as well. Despite having only a few hours to prepare, he talked about Change, in particular how change has affected us through our lifetimes.

He recalled how as a child the NHS was entirely free including prescriptions and dental treatment, how he went to university to study to be a teacher and received not only a grant for his education but also free digs and free meals. At the end of his time at uni, he had actually saved money. Compare that with today and the students now who leave university with debts of thousands of pounds.

He went on to say how once married, he and Janet moved into a 3 bedroom flat above Owen Jones with rent at just 4gns/ month (£4.20 in decimal money).

He described teaching methods at Newbridge School in Coalville where he started his career. How corporal punishment was common and meted out harshly and frequently. How ROSLA (the Raising of School Leaving Age from 14 to 16) meant that many children were there against their wishes when they had expected to be starting work and earning a wage and what the teachers had to do to keep them under control.

Yogi gave us many other examples of how life has changed in our lifetimes, sometimes for the better, often not. An interesting talk particularly for being created and given at such short notice.

Annie Scotney and Sharon Woodland gave amusing and interesting reports on Wine Appreciation and Crafting respectively, before we all adjourned for tea, coffee and biscuits as usual.

## **WELFARE**

Estelle Sandles who looks after Welfare can be contacted at [welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto: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.

## **CHRISTMAS LUNCH DEC 5<sup>TH</sup>**

Members have now all been sent details of this years Christmas lunch, and we have sold all the tickets. In fact we had to add an extra table due to the demand.

We still have a number of people on the waiting list, so if anyone finds that they are unable to attend for any reason, get in touch with Glenys at [socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk) and she should be able to sell your ticket to someone else.

For those who have not yet paid or sent in their menu choices, remember that the last day to do so is Tuesday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, otherwise your place will be offered to someone else.

## **BURNS SUPPER FRIDAY JAN 24<sup>TH</sup>**

See the Social Events section below for details of the Burns Supper and ticket availability.

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

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

5<sup>th</sup> September

The crafting ladies met on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept at Packington Village Hall. Once again we worked on our Kumihimo necklaces. They are coming along but, because we only meet once a month, we need to have a revision at the start of each session. However, the ladies are all determined to eventually complete the project.

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

19<sup>th</sup> September – Redz Café, Coxon's Mews, Ashby

Five members of the group went to Redz Café in Coxon's Mews. Colin and Sharon were away, so the group was left to their own devices. Thank you for getting on and proving that the group is perfectly able to function when the leaders are away.

If you would like to join us at the Lakeside Bistro, Moira on 17 October at 10am, please contact Colin Woodland at [breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk) and he will add you to the list of attendees. There are at least 6 on the list already!

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 October. On the 7<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 1.30pm and on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> from 7pm to 9pm. The times for the 21<sup>st</sup> are yet to be confirmed.

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**

10<sup>th</sup> September

Six of us met this month for our planning meeting for the coming year. After catching up on all our news of the Summer and then coffee and biscuits, we made some decisions!

Our topic for the next couple of months is Autumn, incorporating an illuminated letter and an animal of some sort. The font we will use will be 'black gothic' as it's one we haven't used for a long time.

We also fixed dates for the next few months which are now on the website.

### **COFFEE AND CHAT – Leader: Colin Woodland - [coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 413867**

11<sup>th</sup> September - Centivo Lounge, Market Street, Ashby

Eight of us gave the Centivo Lounge a try this month and it proved a success. The cake selection was somewhat limited but the tea cakes were of good size and quality. Our table was in the conservatory, away from the fairly noisy main room so conversation was easy and enjoyable. The service was good and the drinks were of a good standard.

Our next gathering will be a just across the road at Moment in Thyme in the Pass Courtyard at 10am on 9<sup>th</sup> October. If you would like to join us, please let Colin Woodland Know at [coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk). There are seven on the list so far and there is room for more..

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

16<sup>th</sup> September

Only four attended today: Two Johns and two Richards!

Richard II had a series of questions about available apps, which we discussed:

- 1) The use of ChatGPT to aid writing: he is preparing a piece on schools in the early 20th century and needed background information. We discussed the relative merits of ChatGPT, Wikipedia and other online sources.
- 2) We talked about the pending arrival of Windows 12. The consensus was that you don't take on a new version: use an older version until the bugs are ironed out.
- 3) We discussed the availability of additional apps with Microsoft Office 365. These are not free, though a free trial is usually available.
- 4) Sticky notes are a sort of digital version of the ever faithful yellow stickers. We were undecided about them, although it is certain that the physical type is more secure for such things as passwords.
- 5) John D noted that there is a feature in Word that allows you to listen to your document being spoken. This can be useful when editing a piece.
- 6) Finally, we talked about a use of YouTube for looking at chess games and analysing moves.

We meet again on Wednesday 2nd October.

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

27<sup>th</sup> September

Eight weather optimists gathered for the penultimate meeting of the year. We were fortunate to meet a fine morning with a drying breeze which measurably increased the speed of the lawns in a period of two hours.

Our last meeting of 2024 is on Friday 25th October - just two days before the lawns close with the end of British Summer Time.

As the Miner's Welfare now serves food on Fridays Saturdays and Sundays, Jane and I are going to have lunch there after the final session. (Fish and Chip specials on a Friday). If anyone would like to join us could you please email me a couple of days before we meet so I can book you in.

**FOOD FROM AFAR - Leader: Colin Woodland - food\_from\_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk - 01530 413867**

4th September - Slice of India, Derby

A bijou group of just 6 gathered at the Slice of India for a delicious international, mainly Asian, buffet. as usual, there was a wide choice of dishes, all full of flavour. Although there were notices informing us that we would be expected to leave after 2 hours, the staff are pretty relaxed and only enforce this rule if the place is full and there are people waiting.

We are returning to the Taste of Thai in Market Street on 3 October at 6pm by popular demand. If you wish to attend, please let Colin Woodland know at food\_from\_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk. There are eleven on the list so already but there is plenty of room for more.

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

18th September

Although the theme was "A Hint of Autumn" not much was achieved as various personal factors affected attendance and attention. Sometimes a shared morning of companionship and quiet reflection is as important as inspiration and creation.

Our Facebook Moderator, Lynda, had approached the Photography Group to see if they could provide any photos of Ashby which could be used as the header of our Facebook page.

A few pictures were offered and she chose this picture by Brian Berry. You can see it on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ashbyu3a](http://www.facebook.com/ashbyu3a)



### 5th September

With six present we had a useful meeting planning out the next few sessions. We decided that it would be best to have a theme to pursue in the month leading up to a particular meeting, then review our results at the meeting. Our themes are:

3rd October meeting: Ashby Statutes

7th November meeting: Autumn Colours

5th December meeting: Fireworks and Halloween

There will be no meeting on 2nd January.

We had an interesting discussion on the current state of Virtual Reality systems.

JD showed us part of his collection of non-digital cameras

A 1985 Hanimex Disc Camera, complete with disc,

A 1982 Pentax Auto 110 format, through the lens ultra compact camera with interchangeable lenses; a pair of extra lenses including a 50mm zoom lens; a flash gun; and skylight filter. This was part of a system designed to take many more accessories, and lenses that also fit the Pentax 35 mm range.

A 1957 Franka Solida IIL, 120 format roll film, bellows camera he had for his 21st birthday complete with a flashgun and useable bulbs.

He has many more at home including a Kodak Baby Brownie which he had for his 11th birthday and was used to film his Outward-Bound days. All these except the Hanimex are in working condition.

We next meet on 3rd October at 16 Winchester Way.

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

**11<sup>th</sup> September**

After a break for summer holidays, we had a really good turnout of 8 plus one new member: welcome Anne!

Adrian is working on his personal life history: something perhaps we all dream of doing!

Elizabeth is working on a relative who was in Japanese POW camps and worked on the Burma Railway: the notorious and dreadful origin of the Bridge on the River Kwai film. Conditions were much worse than the film portrayed.

Eileen is still tracing her 'Kenfield' ancestors and was helped by Sue in clustering DNA matches: a new departure for us and bang up to date! Ana also was helped by Sue in sorting out her maternal and paternal lines.

Sue herself is working on 18th century wills: hopefully they will help break down some brick walls. This is a fascinating area and often produces surprises.

Linda is working on her great grandparents and finds that although her paternal ancestors came from one relatively small area in Birmingham, her maternal ones came from all over the Home Counties and the Midlands.

There are many surprises for us in this area, as our ancestors moved around much more than is commonly supposed.

The Leader worked with our new member, Anne, to start her work in establishing and organising her existing paper records, and starting on online research and family tree recording, using Ancestry.

The Leader suggested that each member could perhaps think of a small piece about their work to present to the Group after coffee at the next but one meeting in November.

One suggestion was to talk about what our ancestors did in WWI, as our meeting will be on the 13th, just after Armistice Day.

We next meet on Wednesday 9th October at 2 Marlborough Way at 2.00 pm.

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

**2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September**

The French group continue to meet fortnightly at 11am on Monday mornings for 2 hours. The venue is The Ivanhoe Club at Wilfred Place, Ashby. Next meeting is Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October.

We also often meet on alternate weeks in a members house.

In the last few weeks we have been reading short stories from a text book and using them as a basis for dictation exercises. This improves writing skills as well as comprehension and the author of the book sets short multiple choice questions at the end of each chapter. In addition we usually try in turns to tell the group what we have each been doing since the last meeting to improve conversational skills. If that's not enough we often try and master different but common mistakes particular to spoken French.

**GARDENING - Leader: Paul Dean - gardening@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07707 862762**

**19th September – Coach trip to Hidcote Gardens**

Today the gardening group had their last trip of the year and as of October we shall be meeting at Packington Memorial Hall. Our meetings are on the third Thursday of the month.

The visit today was to the National Trust property Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire. After a chilly and cloudy start it began to warm up and the sun came out to show the early autumn flowers and foliage at their best.

26th September. 'Sanitary Inspectors Report on Ashby 1849' by Yogi

37 members attended to see Yogi on top form with a presentation on the above Report on Ashby, but first he noted some interesting events happening this week in the past:

1580. Drake returned from circumnavigating the globe.

1969. The Beatles issued their Abbey Road album (memories are made of this!)

1066. Harold Godwinson defeated the Vikings at Stamford Bridge (Yogi discounts rumours of a possible ancestral link) and two days later William set sail for England from France.

1777. The British General Howe took Philadelphia, the then capital of America, out manoeuvring Washington (But, because he did not then go to assist General Burgoyne at New York, he possibly lost America for the British!)

Yogi proceeded then to regale us with an account of the 1849 Report on sanitary conditions in Ashby.

He thanked Michael Spence, Ken Hillyer and Mike Harding for their assistance, then called up for us a vision of Ashby at the time. Essentially Georgian, with a few early Victorian features, the town did not cover anything like the area it does today, extending down to the bottom of Market Street and the now culverted Gilwiskaw Brook. Industries included soap making, glue making and leather works, the Baths and what is now the Royal Hotel, and specifically the Green and the Callis. Several pubs we know today and Smithard's Bakery (on some old maps this is part of Smithard's Terrace/Row) Yogi even attempted to trace the origin of the name of this Brook, and the route it takes from its origin near the A511 Bypass through the town and to its meeting with the Mease near Snarestone.

The background to the Report, in which Ashby was singled out as the worst in all Leicestershire, was the series of cholera epidemics that swept the country in the 1840's, and the associated diseases and inconveniences resulting from the dreadfully insanitary conditions in English towns and cities.

Yogi outlined the multitude of insanitary situations in Ashby, and particularly the lack of any sewage main drainage. This was, of course, almost universal, but in Ashby the geography and the placement of housing exacerbated the conditions. Ashby was founded at the highest point, where Wood Street meets Market Street. There we find the Castle and the original Parish church. Market Street was originally fields down to the Gilwiskaw Brook until the Market was licenced in the 12th century. The courts and passageways leading off Market Street have their origins in that deed. Similarly, Kilwardby Street was a separate entity, with one or two grand houses built towards the top.

Consequently, the rich lived on the higher ground and the poor on the lower ground, which in the area from the Green to the Bath Grounds along the line of the Brook was low lying, and prone to flooding.

The attitude of any property holder then was to pay regard to their property only, with the result that any waste, including sewage, was taken off their grounds and dumped outside. Anywhere outside. Some had cesspits, of course, and the nightsoil operators would collect from there and whatever was outside, mix it with straw and sell it to farmers for fertiliser, along with any parasites and other nasties therein.

As the Industrial Revolution gathered pace more and more people, the vast majority being the poorest, flocked into the towns and cities across the land, and were catered for by cheapjack builders. Naturally, these built where there was space (much as today) on the lowest lying, cheapest land. Land that was swampy, the repository of sewage runoff from higher ground and liable to flooding, which spread the mess much further.

During the late Georgian and early Victorian period, Parliament became concerned about the health and prosperity of the nation, and instituted many reforms including the first Factories Acts, Education Acts and in this case, Sanitary Inspections.



For Ashby, the latter in 1849 threw up stark differences in health and life expectancy between Ashby and its close environs in The Green and The Callis, and Smisby, less than 2 miles north and 100 feet higher. Smisby was much better drained, and did not have the industries that did Ashby which created additional noxious and foul effluents. Which of course joined all the rest in flowing downhill.

The statistics are chilling: The death rates for children under 1 year old were 9% for Smisby and 24% for Ashby. For all under 15 years of age the figures were 27% and 50%. Overall average life expectancy was 63 years and 53 years. An extract from the Report in 1847 for one street in Durham showed similar figures in a similar situation: A steep road with posher properties at the top and poorer ones at the bottom, and a Market at the bottom to collect everything to boot.

There was no public clean water supply. There were wells, but as John Snow showed in his famous survey in London while investigating Cholera, these were liable to contamination from the ground water. Which was made worse by the tendency of people with cellars to use them as toilets.

Things improved after the Report, as Lord Hastings, who basically owned the town and much of the country around it, decided to implement all the changes recommended, despite there being no compulsion to do so. A later Report in 1911 gave Ashby a clean bill of health.

Thank you, Yogi for this most thought provoking piece; one which must surely make us thankful for the work done by these Reports and those who implemented the recommendations..

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

25<sup>th</sup> September – The Museum of Timekeeping, Upton near Newark

Do you know the difference between a clock and a timepiece? Following our fascinating and informative tour of this museum our u3a members can answer that question easily. Although our guide, Dave, was relatively new to the job, he had all the facts at his fingertips and provided us with an excellent introduction into the history of timekeeping in Europe.

We learnt that the oldest working clock in Britain is in Salisbury cathedral and that the miniature figures which move or strike the hour on some clocks are called Jack's figures. Early clocks were gravity driven, rather than by a spring. The mainspring was invented in 1505 and the first pocket watch was in the shape of a pomander which opened up to reveal the clock. In 1657 the pendulum was invented which led to much more precise timekeeping. No talk about timekeeping would be complete without mentioning Harrison's H4 marine chronometer which solved the problem of how to calculate longitude while at sea. Harrison's solution to a public competition revolutionized navigation and greatly increased the safety of long-distance sea travel, although he never received the full reward due to political rivalries.

The Huguenots were the best clockmakers for several centuries after fleeing France for Switzerland, eventually settling in England, mainly in the Clerkenwell area of London. The English, however, stole the Huguenots' ideas and went on to become the best watchmakers in the world. This was a lucrative profession and the skill was a closely guarded secret, threatened by competition from mass production in the early 19th century. The European and UK makers were finally put out of business by the Ingersoll company in the USA mass producing watches for \$1 which they exported around the world.

We saw a wide variety of clocks and timepieces, including early gravity driven and pendulum timepieces, Captain Scott's watch, the hands from the original St Pancras station clock, a water-driven clock, a clock made completely of wood and listened to various versions of the Speaking Clock.

Lunch was taken at the Admiral Rodney pub in nearby Southwell with some of us then looking round this interesting town, famous for its Minster.

Oh, and the difference between a clock and a timepiece is that a clock should have a bell to sound the hours. Clock is an anglicisation of the French 'cloche' meaning bell. Early instruments for measuring time had no dial or hands, but rang a bell every hour. Without a bell, it is just a timepiece.

**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**

**3rd September**

This month we met at Brenda's house and Neil had managed to get her TV to display YouTube so that we could watch as well as listen to various tunes if we wished. And a very varied choice it was too.

There was quite a folk theme. Yogi showed two videos of Balkan and Ukrainian dancers performing Cossack style moves to local folk tunes whilst Janet was in Scottish mood with folk songs 'The Flying Scotsman' and 'Calling You Again To Scotland'. Dorothy had chosen Irish group Clannad singing 'Fairy Queen' or 'Thiós Fá'n Chósta' to give it its proper Gaelic title. She also chose a favourite band of hers from Somerset – Acker Bilk and 'That's My Home'. Somewhat more Trad Jazz than folk.

We struggled to find Brenda's choice of Andre Rieu with 400 trumpets on YouTube but settled for his version of the 'Triumphal March' from Aida. Also in classical mood, Nev had chosen the haunting Barber's 'Adagio for Strings' played by the Philadelphia Orchestra.

In more Motown mood, Mike had chosen two songs about the environment, Stevie Wonder's 'Village Ghetto Land' and Marvin Gaye's 'Mercy, Mercy, Me' which talks of oceans full of plastic despite being recorded in 1971.

Some earlier pop was provided by Neil's choice of Carole King and 'It Might As Well Rain Until September' from 1962 and Louis Prima singing a medley of 'Just A Gigolo' and 'I Ain't Got No Body' from 1956.

For some sheer class, Brenda played Ella Fitzgerald's 'Every Time We Say Goodbye'.

As a lighter interlude, Heather had chosen Tex Ritter singing 'Deck of Cards', made popular here by Max Bygraves, whilst Nev chose George Formby and the risqué 'In My Little Snapshot Album'

Mike closed the session with some more classic Motown with Stevie Wonder's tribute to Duke Ellington – 'Sir Duke'.

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

**12th September – The Oak, Whitwick Road, Copt Oak**

Some say that thirteen is unlucky but no serious misfortune befell the thirteen that visited the Copt Oak for lunch. Though the food was, in some cases, a bit below par, conversation flowed freely and a good time was had generally by all. It may be some time before we revisit this establishment to give them opportunity to improve the standard of the food. That said, the staff were very friendly and helpful, so it was not all bad.

The next lunch will be on 10th October 2024 at The Bull's Head, Thringstone at 12pm for 12.30. They are renowned for their carvery. Eleven 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.

**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**

5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> September

We had two meetings as usual this month. There were 9 members at the first meeting, but only 6 at the second. Some members have commitments, relatives or friends who depend on them to get to appointments, etc. Our library of music includes pieces written or arranged for a variety of instruments. As long as we know beforehand, we can find a list of music which will be playable by the people attending. Our base-line pieces are trios, quartets without bass, with plenty for quartets and larger ensembles.

On 5th September, without a bass, we played trios, including some from the early days of the group: a couple of calypsos, and some folk songs and madrigals. We enjoyed playing Variations on Greensleeves, and finished with Nellie the Elephant.

On 19th September, there were only 6 of us, but we had a bass, so we could play some different pieces. We had a look at "Three Dances for Recorder Quartet" by Nicholas Wynne, which are fun. We still didn't have the resources to play Fauré's Pie Jesu, because that needs a Great Bass, which we didn't have. However, we managed to play "Scarborough Fair" better than in the previous meeting, and enjoyed playing the Cantique de Jean Racine after the enforced break.

Val McCarroll, the u3a subject advisor for recorder groups, has set up a series of on-line workshop with Michael Piraner, to work on articulation, to help us to improve our sound. The first of these will be on 2nd October, at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. She is a real enthusiast, and is working really hard to set up new groups, and to make more resources available. She has started a set of 5 free lessons for beginners, and one of our group has taken advantage of them.

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

10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> August

The Rummikub group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 11am at the Ivanhoe club. We are a friendly group of keen players. We welcome new members so if you are interested please come along.

**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..

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

**Christmas lunch 5<sup>th</sup> Dec, 12 noon for 12.30 at Willesley Park Golf Club**

As you will have read above, the Christmas lunch has sold out and we have a waiting list in case anyone has to cancel for any reason.

**Burns Supper Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Jan, 7 for 7.30 pm at Willesley Park Golf Club**

Plans for the Burns Supper are underway and tickets will go on sale, or at least a sign-up sheet will be available, from the next monthly meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The menu of course is set but the price is still being negotiated!

10<sup>th</sup> September

Who was Erasmus Darwin? By Jenny Arthur

Wasn't he the grandfather of Charles Darwin but why is he still important?

Erasmus Robert Darwin (1731 –1802) was an English doctor. living in Lichfield. He became increasingly important and indeed at one time was asked to be physician to King George, thought to suffer from bouts of madness, but declined. He was one of the key thinkers of the Midlands Enlightenment, he was also a natural philosopher, inventor and poet with a wide variety of interests.

Darwin was a founding member of the Lunar Society of Birmingham, a very distinguished discussion group of pioneering industrialists and natural philosophers. Many famous people were members, including Josiah Wedgwood, James Watt and Joseph Priestley. They met regularly over a good meal to discuss the latest new thinking in science and technology and share ideas. They called themselves the Lunar Society because they could travel home on horseback by the light of the full moon.

Darwin also established a lifelong friendship with Benjamin Franklin, the US president who flew a kite in a thunder storm to collect the electricity. He visited the society when he visited Britain, and shared Darwin's support for the American and French revolutions. The Lunar Society was instrumental as an intellectual driving force behind England's Industrial Revolution

His poems included much natural history , including a statement of evolution, which Charles Darwin must have been aware of.

He was a member of the Darwin-Wedgwood family which includes his grandsons Charles Darwin and Francis Galton.

The members of the Lunar Society, and especially Darwin, opposed the slave trade.

A fascinating talk by volunteer Jenny Arthur from the museum in Litchfield. A visit to it for more information and the cathedral opposite is recommended.

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

26<sup>th</sup> September - George and Dragon, Thringstone

Rather like the Lunch Group's outing this month, 13 proved NOT to be unlucky for us either as that number turned out for a very pleasant evening at the George and Dragon. It was good to see a nearly full car park considering the number of pubs that are struggling at the moment. The bar and back rooms were also quite full.

We had pre-ordered our food choices and once we were all there the food arrived pretty quickly. All those who ordered starters seemed to enjoy them, particularly the two sharing the plate of "large nachos" which would have easily fed 6! The main courses also were delivered promptly without the long wait we've sometimes had at other venues, and as far as I know everything was delicious with large but not ridiculously huge portions. Only 4 or 5 managed a pudding, and although they had run out of the chocolate and orange dessert that almost everyone wanted, the alternative cheesecake was great. Colin W opted for just a bowl of custard! Again all very nice.

The bill was settled without fuss or errors, service was fine, and we all had a great time. I'm sure we will be back again before too long.

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

17<sup>th</sup> September

As there were only 4 of us available for this tasting session, we restricted ourselves to just 2 wines.

First was Tesco's Finest 2022 Torrontes, a white wine from Argentina at 12.5% and costing £10 reduced to £8.50 when bought. This grape variety is not usually sold on its own but is normally blended with other grapes, but here it makes a rather nice wine by itself.

It has a perfumed nose and taste, slightly oily in the glass and just off-dry. We thought it would go very well with smoked salmon, fish and chips or Asian food. We all enjoyed it and all scored it 8/10

Secondly was Trapiche Reserve Oak Cask Malbec 2022 at 13.5% also from Tesco and costing £8.25 reduced to £7.25.

This was a blend of Malbecs from various vineyards in the Mendoza region of Argentina in the foothills of the Andes.

It has a rich, smooth, dark taste with only slight tannins, despite being labelled as Oak Cask, and all the better for that. A great wine for steaks, stews, cheeses or BBQs (if anyone is brave enough to venture out for one in the current weather!)

Again we all liked it and again all scored it 8/10. Unusual to find so much agreement amongst us!

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

20th September. Sence Valley

Despite lowering skies and a gloomy forecast, 8 walkers, including two new members, plus dog, assembled at the top car park. The new payment machines (card only) were handled without trouble, and we set off down hill to the bottom car park. This is now not specifically a disabled car park.

The route took us anti clockwise round the top of the northern lake, along the long western boundary of the Park, then back to the west shores of the central lake. En route we stopped off to watch the wild birds out on the water, including gulls and ducks, but no Canada Geese. Possibly because they had all started their long journey to their winter home. The weather stayed dry and mild, and the route now bent round the southern end of the central lake and turned towards the east side.

Just as the straight path leading back to the bottom car park came in sight, a bridleway up to the top car park presented itself, and the party steadily climbed upwards. This path is preferable to the road, as it is easier on the feet and inclined much less steeply.

As we regained the far end of the car park, away from the cars, we found dog training lessons in progress. The variety of trees and scenery was very pleasant in such a small compass, with the lakes and wildfowl coming and going into view. The walkers all enjoyed the walk and talk which is such a pleasant feature of these expeditions. The route covered just under 2 miles and was completed in a comfortable 1 hour and ten minutes.

We then felt justified in repairing to the Sunnyside Restaurant (in reality a sort of large canteen with loads of space, lots of cakes and beverage) which is attached to the Sunnyside Garden Centre with a large car park. Of note are the toilets which are a real credit to the management. Four of us sat outside, as the cafe does not allow dogs, so the other four sat inside at a window nearby in order to wave to each other. A thoroughly pleasant morning in good company.

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

9th September. From Packington, led by Trev and Val

The weather forecast promised rain, but luckily for the 13 walkers that promise did not materialise.

We started from Packington and walked out to Red Burrow Lane then turned to follow a field path through several fields, a solar farm and out to a crossroads where we took a very overgrown and puddly track. Then up hill through sheep fields to cross a road and we burrowed through a thicket of trees to cross fields and the drive to Champneys and then back across Packington community orchard and onwards to return to the car park.

We had walked 5.2 miles and probably set a record for Medium walks with a grand total of 24 stiles.

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

3rd September. Ticknall Circular, led by Chris and Val

A dull morning but still 14 turned out for the 7 mile walk. Leaving Ticknall and walking through fields and woodland to Woodend House and along tracks to St Brides farm, where we stopped for coffee, we chatted to another walking group who had also planned their stop there.

Onwards through some overgrown paths and out to the road at Robinsons Hill, Melbourne, we continued down the hill, turning right into the entrance to Staunton Harold reservoir, following the edge of the reservoir and on to fields and finally into the Calke Limekilns. After the tunnel we headed back to Ticknall, and a welcome meal in the Staff of Life.

17<sup>th</sup> September. Blackbrook Beauty, led by Kevin

19 of us started the walk from Mount St Bernard's Abbey. A beautiful September day with some mist over the valley. The mist soon cleared leaving a lovely blue sky and no threat of rain! From Mount St Barnards we walked down towards the reservoir and towards Fenney Spring Windmill and then towards Swannymote Woods with views towards Brendon on the Hill church where we stopped for lunch. We then walked into Whitwick before walking through some woodland back to the Abbey. Tea and cake was then enjoyed in the sunshine at St Joseph's tea rooms

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

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