

Newsletter August 2025

Interest Groups Timetable for August 2025

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

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 26 th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Our AGM and Cream Tea
Arts and Crafts	Thu 7 th	10 am	Packington Village Hall.
Breakfast	Thu 21 st	10 am	Bull's Head, Thringstone LE67 8LR
Bridge	Mon 4 th Mon 11 th Mon 18 th Mon 25 th	7-9pm 11am-1.30pm 7-9pm TBA	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	-	-	No meeting in August
Coffee and Chat	Wed 13 th	10 am	Ulverscroft Grange Tea Room, Whitwick Road, Markfield LE67 9QB
Computer	Wed 6 th Mon 20 th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 29 th	10 am	Ashby Croquet Club, Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Bath Lane, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 7 th	10 am	Donnington Park Race Circuit, DE74 2RP
Drawing and painting	Wed 20 th	10 am	At Christine's.
Family History	Wed 13 th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 7 th	6 pm	Jaipur Restaurant, 42 High Street, Repton DE65 6GD
French	Mon 4 th Mon 18 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 21 st	2 pm	Garden Party at Anita and Dennis, 6 Wood St, Ashby
History	Thu 28 th	2.15 pm	'New Directions for the Industrial Revolution'
Industrial Heritage	-	-	No meeting in August
Literature	Tue 12 th	1.30 pm	At Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 14 th	12 for 12.30 pm	The Boot Inn 12 Boot Hill, Repton DE65 6FT

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Medium Walks	Mon 11 th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at St Wystans Church, Bretby DE15 0QR. Please note the church is off Watery Lane/Mount Road NOT Bretby Lane as stated on Google. Turn off Watery Lane at the phone box.
Music Appreciation	Wed 6 th	10 am	Neil's at 40 Willesley Gardens
Recorder	Thu 7 th Thu 21 st	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 12 th Tue 26 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	-	-	No meeting in August
Scrabble	Mon 11 th Mon 25 th	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 15 th	10 am	Meet at Snibston Country Park car park LE67 3LN. The car park fee is £3 all day. The entry is further into Coalville than the Golf centre and into the old colliery entrance.
Social Events	Tue 19 th	6 pm	The Beeches, Burton Rd, Ashby Fish Supper and light-hearted quiz.
Supper Club	Thu 28 th	7 for 7.30 pm	The Royal Oak, Long Whatton LE12 5DB
Walking	Tue 5 th Tue 19 th	9.45 for 10am 9.45 for 10am	Meet at Dovedale Car Park DE6 2AY TBA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 20 th	7 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early September 2025

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Scrabble	Mon 1 st	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
French	Mon 1 st	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Bridge	Mon 1 st	TBA	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 2 nd	9.45 for 10am	Details TBA
Music Appreciation	Wed 3 rd	10 am	TBA
Activity	Wed 3 rd	1 – 3 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 3 rd	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	Thu 4 th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 4 th	10 am	Packington Village Hall.
Recorder	Thu 4 th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 4 th	6 pm	TBA

NEW GROUPS

ACTIVITY GROUP

Firstly, I want to thank everyone who attended the Taster event at the end of June. Our hope was that everyone would have some new experiences, try out some new sporting activity and have fun and laughter. Based on the feedback we have received, that was achieved. That is not to say that everything was perfect and we had some feedback which we will for sure take onboard.

We have been planning the follow up sessions and wanted to update you all on the future schedules.

We have reviewed with the leisure centre management, the centre and staff availability over the busy holiday season and, along with the likelihood of our own members holidays and grand parenting responsibilities etc, we have decided that a solid start in early September is the best option.

Our revised plan is to recommence the Activity Group on Wednesday the 3rd September at 13.00 to 15.00, followed by Friday the 19th at 14.00 to 16.00. Thereafter the Activity Group will meet on the first Wednesday and the third Friday of each month at the times outlined above.

Based on your feedback, we have chosen to have different days, so that those who cannot attend on one day, have another option.

We will have further updates closer to September 3rd and hope that we will have a great turnout, as we had for the Taster event.

Fun, laughs, new experiences and great exercise awaiting for all.

NEW LONGER WALKING GROUP

This new group plans to do walks that are a bit longer than the other walking groups. Typically around 10 miles.

Unfortunately the group's first outing on July 7th had to be cancelled and so the inaugural walk will be on Monday 1st September, a 10 mile walk starting from Paddington's bench at the top of Market Street in Ashby. Meet for 9.15 for a 9.30 start. Bring a snack and drink but there will be a short break and toilets at Hicks Lodge.

The following walk will be Monday 3rd November starting from Ticknall Village Hall car park.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Christine Green at christinegreen0203@gmail.com

PROPOSED PLAY-READING GROUP

Jane Reynolds and Lorraine Wilson-Jennings are hoping to start a play-reading group and are looking for expressions of interest from anyone who thinks they might like to take part. They haven't yet considered dates, times or venues or what plays the group might read as that will depend on what the group decide. If you are interested please email Jane at Janer.4a@gmail.com, or Lorraine at wilsonjennings@btinternet.com

WELFARE

If you know of any member who is unwell or isolating or has a family member who is unwell, please contact welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk or any 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.

JIM'S TRACTOR RUN

Having had successful forays at previous Jim's Tractor Run over the last few years, we once again set up our stall to show the wonderful people of Ashby what we're about. The weather was thankfully dry, which meant there was good attendance and we had a prime spot in centre of the main avenue of stands to demonstrate and discuss what's great about membership of our u3a.

Lots of passers by stopped and chatted, whilst their family members played on our bean bag and hoopla games, kindly provided by Kevin Green and Val and Trevor Reed, respectively. It was fabulous that so many Committee members and their families took the time to support the cause by coming along to set up, hand out materials, talk to attendees, organise the games and treats and pack away. Once again, a great opportunity to showcase our u3a positively and thank you to everyone for your help and participation.

John Pilgrim, Chair

MONTHLY MEETING – 22ND JULY

Yogi Godwin – Ashby in 1849

Unfortunately our planned speaker, Vince Eager, was unable to attend this month due to illness and even more unfortunately we did not find out until a few minutes before he was due to speak that he would not be coming.

Fortunately, our very own Yogi Godwin was prepared with a backup plan and was able to give us an impromptu talk about the state of Ashby as recorded in the Sanitary Inspectors Report of 1849. The report listed Ashby as being the most insanitary place in Leicestershire, and possibly in England.

Yogi outlined the conditions in Ashby, and particularly the lack of any sewage main drainage. This was, of course, almost universal and just 8 years later the 'Great Stink' of 1857 would persuade Government to authorise Joseph Bazalgette to build a sewer network under London. But in Ashby the geography and the placement of housing, the tannery and the glue factory meant that all waste flowed down into the Gilwiskaw Brook which was also the source of drinking water for many.

The Brook ran down from near Smisby, across Market St and the now Bath Grounds (it now goes underground through a culvert) and on to Packington but it was prone to flooding which meant that the whole area became a swamp.

The attitude of property holders then was to get rid of any waste, including sewage, take it off their grounds and dump it 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. The rest washed down into the brook. Disease was rife.

This created stark differences in health and life expectancy between Ashby, especially The Green and The Callis, and Smisby which is less than 2 miles north and 100 feet higher. Smisby was much better drained, and did not have the noxious industries which Ashby did.

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 in Smisby and just 53 in Ashby.

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 stepping into the breach so smoothly and for giving us all a fascinating glimpse into life in Ashby 175 years ago. I think we can all agree Ashby is a much nicer place now, even if all the new housing is again putting pressure on our sewage handling!

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

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

3rd July

Ten "Crafty Ladies" were at it again on 3 July! Having completed our lap quilt last month, we each made a nine patch square with sashing. Sharon has always done all the top quilt stitching on the previous quilts the ladies have made. Next month, she will be teaching them to do the top stitching on the squares they made this month.

When Sharon got the squares home, she had a look at them just to make sure there were going to be no problems for next month. She was delighted to see how much the stitching had improved. The stitches were not only more even, they were also smaller. WELL DONE LADIES!!!

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 June.

On the 4th and 18th it will be from 7-9 pm, and on the 11th from 11am to 1.30pm, times for the 25th have yet to be sorted due to potential clashes with the various darts groups who meet at the Ivanhoe not sorting out their dates.

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

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

17th July - Toby Carvery, Burton upon Trent

Eight of us ventured out of the comfort of Ashby de la Zouch, through the wilds of the southern corner of South Derbyshire, into the deserts of Staffordshire to gather for breakfast at the Toby Carvery in the outskirts of the once beer making capital of the world, Burton upon Trent.

Anyone with allergies beware! Toby Carveries have a list as long as your arm of dos and don'ts that you must plough through before you are permitted to partake of the delight of breakfast. Ironically, many of the items they list that are taboo for those with allergies and intolerances are actually not available anyway on the breakfast buffet! The food on offer was, however, of a reasonable standard and you could have as much or as little as you wished.

In August, we plan to return to an old favourite, the Bull's Head in Thringstone, on the Loughborough Road near the ruins of Grace Dieu. If you would like to join us on 21st August at 10am, please contact Colin Woodland at breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk and he will add you to the list of attendees. There are eleven on the list already! However, it is a large establishment and there is plenty of room for more.

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.

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

July

Our recent meetings have been a mix of reading and translation interspersed with pronunciation exercises. The reading material has comprised of passages extracted from email communications sent to Tony from a French teacher and the pronunciation exercises can be found on YouTube.

We continue to meet fortnightly on Monday morning at 11am at the Ivanhoe Club in Ashby . Next meeting there on Monday 4th August.

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

18th July

For this month the croquet group met a week earlier than usual on 18th July. Despite several of our regulars being on holiday we had nine players enjoying a morning of friendly competition.

Normal service will return next month when we meet on 29th August.

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

9th July - Bluebell Tea Room, Swadlincote

Thirteen of us enjoyed a most pleasant hour and a half supping tea or coffee and sampling the home made cakes and other baked goods while joining in several interesting conversations at the Bluebell Tea Room in Belmont street, Swadlincote. The staff were most pleasant and helpful. The surroundings are quaint and inviting.

Our next gathering will be at a new venue for the group, though some have been there individually and given good reports. It is the Tea Room at Ulverscroft Grange, Whitwick Road, Markfield LE67 9BQ at 10am on 13 August 2026. For the energetic ones among us, a number of walks start and finish at the tea rooms. Also, if you happen to pick a day when it is open to the public, there is a model railway to enjoy.

If you would like to join us, please let Colin Woodland Know at coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk. There are nine already on the list so far and there is room for plenty more.

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

3rd July

Today 6 of us convened at Elford Hall for our delayed visit to these lovely gardens. We welcomed a new member: Karen. Welcome, Karen!

The weather was near perfect: sunny with a few cloudy sessions, warm and a slight breeze.

We all enjoyed an hour's wander round the enclosed gardens, and the paths and additional gardens outside. The river also provided lots of opportunities. Of note was the plethora of small critters of all kinds: bees, butterflies, all kinds of smaller flies and assorted flying insects, and one Banded Demoiselle.

We all repaired after the hour to the serve-yourself 'café' for tea and cake, and a look at our 'catches'.

We next meet on Thursday 7th August at Donington Park Race Circuit at 10 am..

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

2^{1st} July

Five people attended the meeting of the Computer group. Richard one of our experts announced he was moving to near Market Harborough, he will be missed.

The problems.

One query was why would an email attachment not print off in true coloursit looked to be because it had been forwarded from an Android phone ---it did print true from the source web page.

The other one was when I send an email to a specific person I get an undeliverable back from a complete strangers email in-box even though they have not been addressed.....still a mystery.

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

8th July

Four of us met today, and after a catch up on various ailments and illnesses, we decided on our next topic.

We are going to experiment using different textures of paper, our own choice of font, different types of pens or brushes and illustrations if we choose.

Ideas for writing included using a newspaper item as a point of reference, a favourite phrase or saying, a newly discovered poem etc. Practising the piece we have chosen by writing it out numerous times and in different styles so that we end up with a finished product is our aim for the term!!

There is no meeting in August so we come together again on Sept 9th at Jenny's.

DRAWING & PAINTING - Leader: Lesley Thomas- painting@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07895 971090



16th July

Four of the drawing and painting group met on the July 16th to draw something beginning with C. We had a cornucopia of c vegetables; cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, chillis, courgette, corn. Two very colourful clowns and Concorde in the clouds, so plenty of C's.

Next month, August 20th, will be at Christine's, 2 Marlborough Way, Ashby and of course the letter is D.

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

9th July

We were 5 at table today with a very active session, and two others joined in remotely.

Dora, working remotely, concentrated on her Scottish relatives and has found one she knew nothing about. She is also trying to research school logs, but, unless they are available online, they can be hard to find without a local visit.

John H is trying to establish the timelines for his aunt and grandmother, but they are proving quite elusive. JD assisted but we didn't get too far forward in the session.

Mary, also remotely, went to work to help John H with a knotty problem about his aunt and grandmother. There are difficulties over changing names and a disappearing father.

Elizabeth is still working on creating the master sheets for each line of her tree. She spent some time over an anomaly to do with a couple she had assumed were married but may not have been.

Linda is hot on the trail of some Australian relatives she has just discovered. Very exciting!

Ana has had a puzzling contact from someone trying to trace a father she never met. The link to Ana is tenuous, and so is the data available. I hope it isn't a phishing try.

John D is close to closing out the involved story of his great grandfather, that person's in-laws, and the financial scene in 19th century Newcastle. It's not what you know, it's who you know!

We next meet on the 13th of August

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

3rd July - Hickory's Smokehouse, Chellaston

Yeee Haaa!! Thirteen of us tied our 'hosses' to the hitching post at the Hickory Smokehouse, Chellaston to celebrate American Independence Day a little early.

This American style eatery did not disappoint either with the quality or quantity of the food. There was a bit of a kafuffle when a bottle on the waitress's tray mysteriously exploded! Was Jesse James or Annie Oakley taking a pot-shot at someone? The staff were amazing and really made us feel welcome. The free popcorn was appreciated by most of us.

Our next outing is to the Jaipur Indian Restaurant, High Street, Repton DE65 6GD on 7th August 2025 at 6pm. Seventeen have already booked for the occasion but we can increase the booking if more wish to join us. If you wish to attend, please let Colin Woodland know at food_from_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk

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

17th July – Kelmarsh Hall

Today we had our coach trip to Kelmarsh Hall gardens. Originally we were just having a garden visit as the Hall is closed on a Thursday, but just before our visit we were informed they would open the Hall until 1pm for anyone who would like to explore, so on arrival quite a lot of our party took advantage of a visit.

It had been owned by 3 different families. It was very luxurious and even though there were very large rooms, it had a very homely feel with the last lady owner being into interior design. The gardens were equally interesting and beautiful with a woodland walk, walled garden and winding borders.



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

10th July - Nag's Head, Castle Donington

Twelve members gathered at the Nag's Head, Wilson, for Lunch. We had to postpone a previous visit because it clashed with the "Download Festival".

The pub is clearly a popular venue for many locals and visitors from further afar. A brief look at the menu swiftly revealed the reason for its popularity: There was a steak special at an amazingly low price. A number of us took up the offer and were not disappointed.

For August we hope to visit the Boot Inn at Repton. However, when attempting to make the booking, the establishment required a large deposit and that all meals be pre-ordered. I will endeavour to negotiate better terms but if I fail, The venue may have to be changed. So, please keep your eyes and ears open. I will, of course, keep those who have booked informed of any changes. Eleven have already signed up.

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

For August the group will be reading 'Lessons in Chemistry' by Bonnie Garmus and already there has been a positive response from many our group. This seems to be a book we are all enjoying.

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

31st July – A day trip to Liverpool

The annual History Group coach trip took place on Thursday 31st July to Liverpool. Sadly, the weather was not quite so kind to us as in previous years but I don't think anyone actually got wet - at least, not from rain!

We were lucky with traffic, which was light in both directions, so we arrived at our destination and back in Ashby rather ahead of schedule.

Since there are so many tourist attractions in Liverpool and some passengers will already have visited some of them, the time we had in the city was entirely free for them to go where they wished. Our coach dropped us off at Pier Head, outside the Three Graces, the magnificent trio of buildings, the Port of Liverpool Authority, the Cunard and the Royal Liver Buildings.

From here some of our members sampled the open top bus tour, which is a great way to see and travel between many of the attractions, whilst others took a voyage on the Mersey Ferry, which, during the day, offers a fifty minute river cruise with commentary. Passengers saw the old dock clock from which ships set their chronometers on leaving port, the former tobacco warehouse which is the largest brick building anywhere and the new



Everton Stadium, built on former docks. On the other side of the river, Wallersey Town Hall, Birkenhead with it's docks and shipbuilding yards and Tranmere Beach, where Brunel's SS Great Britain was broken up. Returning, we saw the two Cathedrals, the dockside redevelopment and the preserved Albert Dock.

Back on dry land, various members ventured up the hill through some of the City's Georgian buildings to the magnificent Catholic Cathedral, to the Albert Dock with it's many eating establishments and the Beatles Story Museum. Others visited the world-famous Cavern Club whilst some visited the still new Museum of Liverpool to learn more of it's story.



The time passed much too quickly and it was soon time to rejoin our coach for the journey home.

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

The Rummikub group meets every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 11 am at the Ivanhoe social club. If you have not played it and would like to try a diverting and slightly challenging game, we would be delighted to see you.

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

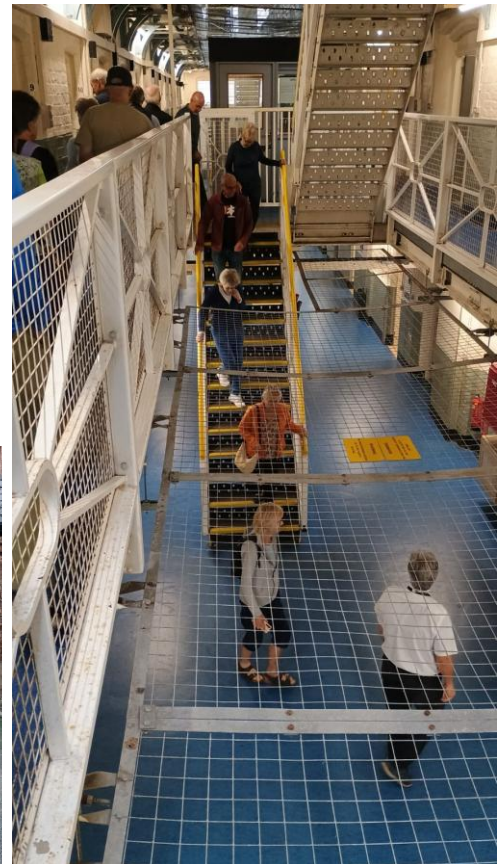
23rd July – Shrewsbury Prison

21 Ashby u3a members go to prison! Fortunately only for a look round this very interesting site. We were let out afterwards. Shrewsbury Prison is tucked away up some very narrow roads right next to the back entrance to the railway station in the middle of town and not too easy to get to, however we all arrived at much the same time and were able to park inside the prison grounds.



The prison was built in 1793 and only decommissioned in 2013 after 220 years service. Amazingly it wasn't closed because it was out of date but because it was overcrowded. In 2008 a report stated that it was the most overcrowded prison in England and Wales holding 326 inmates in a space designed for 170. Inmates were moved to more modern prisons in the area.

The original building was constructed by Thomas Telford but a new building was erected in 1877. We were guided round the building by Dan, a local historian, who told us all the stories of early Georgian and Victorian times as well as what it was like to be banged-up in there in recent times. His descriptions really told the story with details you wouldn't think of and with great humour. A thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating tour. Rather than stay for a plate of gruel (only joking, the café looked OK) we decided to walk down the road to 'Spoons for lunch before setting off for home and braving the A5 and its roadworks on the way home.



2nd July

This month we met at Mike's house. Just 6 of us were available due to family and holiday commitments but we still had a good listening session. The weather had been hot but today it was cooler which meant we wouldn't deafen the neighbours with the windows and doors wide open.

Many of us had chosen summery songs to suit the expected weather and Mike started us off with Carlos Santana and 'Smooth' a reminder of hot summer days. Neil followed it with the Beach Boys 'Surfs Up' and Sallie chose Ella and Louis singing 'Summertime'. Well you have to, don't you.

Brenda's choice was 'Who wants to be a millionaire' by Frank Sinatra and Celeste Holm from the soundtrack of 'High Society'. A great movie from 1956.

Dorothy had found a lovely piece of music, Scarlatti's Sonata in D minor (Night Passages) for clarinet and double bass played by Martin Fröst on clarinet. This is a beautifully relaxing piece with a slightly jazzy influence.

Nev had recently seen the John Wilson Orchestra in Nottingham and wanted us to hear some of it. He showed a YouTube video of the orchestra playing 'Slaughter on 10th Avenue' from the Gene Kelly movie of the same name. Classic stuff, excellently played.

Mike also had a YouTube video this one being of one of his favourite artists, Emmylou Harris, singing the old Chuck Berry song 'C'est la vie (you never can tell)' from an old 'Old Grey Whistle Test' show. Lovely stuff.

Neil had found a wistful version of the old Irving Berlin song 'What'll I do' sung here by Rufus Wainwright along with his sister Martha, dad Loudon and mother Kate McGarrigle. A super-talented family singing a great song.

Sallie followed this with Peter, Paul and Mary singing the Bob Dylan song 'Blowing in the wind'; another classic, whilst Brenda chose Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' played by the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein on piano. It doesn't get much better than that.

However Dorothy managed to follow it with Joscho Stephan on jazz guitar playing 'My blue heaven' very much in the French jazz style. Excellent.

Nev closed the session with a tribute to the late, great Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys playing 'God only knows'. A great way to finish.

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

July

We had two meetings this month as usual, on the 3rd and 17th.

On the 3rd, there were 11 of us, including one of our new members. We played the first four of the 14 Elizabethan Dances (Pavana, Gallyard, Allemana d'Amor and Gallyard). The Gallyards were in less familiar time signatures, but we coped well. We followed this with "Ecco La Primavera" by Francesco Landini, which is in 2 parts, but doubled between the upper and lower instruments. Then, for a change, Schubert's "The Trout", followed by arrangements by Marg Hall of Five Scottish Songs.

We then played a dance by Susato, and a selection of arrangements of popular music by John Pitts, who wrote a lot of less complicated stuff. We attempted "On My Own" from "Les Miserables", and "Don't Cry for me, Argentina" from "Evita", as well as the more familiar "Rondeau" by Purcell. His arrangement of "Cherry Tree Rag" went well. We then played a selection of music some of us had played at another group's playing day: an Irish folk song (It is not the Tear), a motet by Thomas Tallis, and a song by Fanny Hensel (a member of the Mendelssohn family, whose playing career was crushed by her husband).

We moved on to some music arranged for u3a groups by Ann Marshall, while she and her husband were national recorder advisers to national u3a: this selection included a minuet by J.S.Bach, which is familiar to almost all beginning pianists, and the Ash Grove. We ended the morning with "English ardens".

A few of us attended a recorder playing day at Sutton Coldfield on 16th July, hosted by the Sutton Coldfield u3a group, backed up by Val McCarroll, the present national u3a recorder adviser. It was an interesting and entertaining day, although a bit hard on the brain, with lots of sight-reading. The playing was led by Michael Piraner, an established performer and teacher.

On 17th July 8 of us played a slightly altered list of music from the previous meeting. We played a different 4 of the Elizabethan dance tunes, trying to allow for the type of dance, fast or slow. We played a selection from John Pitts' Quartet book: Kalinka, Rondeau, El Choclo (tricky rhythm). We repeated Tallis' "O Nata Lux de Lumine" and then Fanny Hensel's Gartenlieder (which we probably won't play again).

Then we played a few madrigals, in 3 parts: 2 descant (doubled on tenor) and one alto (doubled on bass). It Was a Lover and his Lass, While Joyful Springtime Lasteth, Though Philomela Lost her Love, and How Merrily We Live. We chose a couple of Marg Hall's Scottish songs, Duncan Gray and Jock O'Hazeldean, and then finished with a couple of Ann's Choice Volume 2: Bach's Minuet and The Ash Grove.

Our next meetings are on 7th and 21st August.

SCRABBLE - Leader: Usha Sood. Group contact: scrabble@ashbyu3a.co.uk

We meet twice a month at the Bull's Head, Market St, 10.30 on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month for fun sessions of Scrabble. If you'd like to try us out email the address above. It's fun and sociable.

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

8th July. 'Optical Stress' by Ruth Ibbotson

Ruth explained that although many have not heard of optical stress, it affects about 20% of the population in some way. Also, the offspring of those with the condition are at a higher risk. Optical stress is the inability to see clearly and manifests itself in many ways, such as double vision or blurred vision, sensitivity to lights, eye strain and depth perception. Consequently, this leads to poor concentration and reduced enthusiasm to learn which can affect a child's ability to study and their career opportunities.

The condition is not an optical/eye problem but a disorder in the way the brain processes the signals from the optic nerves. Before discussing how the condition can be treated, Ruth explained the structure and the physiology of the eye, and how the signals from each eye are combined in the brain. It was first recognised in 1980 and studies by academics and medical experts developed ways to treat the condition as it became more widely recognised. It can be triggered by images with strong colours, high contrast, stripes and glare. With a better understanding of the problem, ways to mitigate it were developed. Coloured film overlays or tinted spectacles, particularly yellow, were found to be effective. It helps if printed text is well lit, the contrast between text and background and font style were important. Every person requires tests to find a treatment that works for them and many organisations and companies now offer assessments that tailor a treatment to the individual.

During questions it was discovered that some members had experienced the condition but had difficulty finding help. Ruth listed many companies that offer this service. One of the issues young people experience is recognising that they have a problem, assuming that their experience is normal for everyone. Therefore a tactful and sensitive consultation is needed to find the problem and its subsequent treatment.

SOCIAL EVENTS – Organiser: Glenys Morrice – socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Fish Supper

The Fish Supper to be held on Tuesday 19th August at 6pm in The Beeches, Burton Rd is now sold out. Hopefully there will be a report on the festivities next month.

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

16th July

This month Ken brought along 4 French wines, 1 rosé and 3 reds, for us to try. No hidden labels this time so we knew what we were tasting.



The rosé was a Côté du Gascogne from Tesco costing £7.50 and 11% abv

Gascogne is the area of France between Bordeaux and the Spanish border and has an ideal climate for aromatic grapes. This wine was just off-dry and a good compromise between too dry and too sweet. It tasted of blackcurrant and redcurrant with a citrus finish, not the more usual strawberry flavour of many rosés. It was pleasant and a nice way to start an evening of wine tasting although some found it to be a little sharp.

On average it scored 6.5/10

The first of the reds was Palais St Vigny Cote du Rhone also from Tesco. It had a bit of oomph at 14% abv and was made from the classic Cote du Rhone grapes, Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, often known as GSM. This was dry, fairly tannic but smooth and easy drinking. I likened it to a good French bistro wine, the sort you would get as the

house wine. Everyone liked it and it scored 7.8/10. The amazing thing about it is that Tesco are selling it at £5.75 but if their 25% offer is on, which it is at time of writing, it only costs £4.30. A steal at that price.



Next came 2024 Vallée du Paradis from the Languedoc bought from Aldi at £7.99. 13.5% abv. This is a blend of Grenache, Syrah and Carignan grapes. This is a darker, heavier wine with a slight taste of red cherries, redcurrant and darker berries with a hint of liquorice. Soft and easy drinking but a little bit more serious than the previous wine. Great with winter stews and pies. No one scored this less than 8 and it averaged 8.2/10. Recommended.

Last but not least was Caladoc Rouge also from Aldi. 2024, £7.49 and 14%. A blend of Malbec and Grenache. This was very similar to the previous wine but slightly darker still and tasting of wild berries and maybe balsamic syrup. All but one of us liked this as much as the previous wine but one person found it too tannic and bitter for them. This dropped its average score to 7.8/10. Still very respectable.

It would be difficult to choose a wine of the month as we enjoyed all of them very much, but I suppose one would have to give it to the Tesco Cote du Rhone because of the remarkable price if you can get it on discount at £4.30.



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

24th July – The Wolferstan Arms

This month we ventured out to The Wolferstan Arms at Shuttington near Tamworth. We have not been there before but the Lunch Group have been there a few times. The pub is at the end of the village and looks out with lovely views from atop a hill over the Alvecote Nature Reserve. Unfortunately we didn't have a table with a view! That didn't spoil the evening though. We had pre-ordered our starters and mains and once settled at the table with our drinks the starters arrived soon after. Almost everyone had ordered a starter this time and they were pretty good. Again, without being rushed, the main courses arrived without any delay. These all seem to have been liked by everyone, as I heard no complaints. A few managed to eat a dessert too which all looked good and tasty.

After a good evening's eating and chatting we left without any problems with settling our respective bills. A good evening out again.

Next month on the 28th we shall be returning to the Royal Oak at Long Whatton. Anyone wishing to join us, please contact Mike or Colin at supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk

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

18th July. Beacon Hill

In pleasantly mild and mostly sunny weather, we set out anti clockwise to climb the tarmac track past the woodland sculpture workshop and on up the hill in the trees. Around three quarters the way up we paused as the trees gave way to give splendid view over the country to the north-east, and Loughborough.

Just a little further revealed the striking outline of The Old Man of Beacon Hill, so-called because of the resemblance of an outcrop in the ancient rocks to a man's craggy profile.

On the way we passed one or two of the carved wooden effigies for which the Hill is famous.

At the top we were able to see a great distance around, mainly to the north, but most forewent the pleasure of scrambling right up to the trig point.

The party continued then down the track to the south side of the hill, stopping ever and anon to watch the varieties of cattle grazing nearby, including British Longhorn and Highland cattle. These ferocious looking beasts are in reality some of the gentlest creatures you could wish to meet.

Past yet more of the wood sculptures and back into the pleasant shade of the trees, we finally made it back to the car park, and then the café, in around one and a quarter hours and 2 miles.

Our next walk will be on August 15th.

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

14th July. From Ravenstone, led by Alison

7 of us turned out today, meeting outside the Almhouses in Ravenstone and after having the customary picture taken, this time in front of the Church, we set off through the village.

We left the village via Heather Lane and then along the field edge to Sence Valley. Slight uphill section to the A447 which we crossed, and after walking through "fields of gold" we entered Kelham Nature Reserve and into Donington Le Heath. Our return took us through the small hamlet of Snibstone, past St Mary's Church and back into Ravenstone.

Good weather, if perhaps a little too warm, a few stiles, some indifferent horses and 4.7 miles completed.

1st July. Darley Bridge, led by Tony

On Tuesday 1st July the walking group met at Darley Bridge just North of Matlock. The weather forecast was for an exceptionally hot day with temperatures set to rise above 30 degrees but in fact it turned out to be a pleasant and comfortably warm day as we set off down the Derwent Valley Heritage Way.

Passing Ashton Farm we began the ascent through Jug Hole Wood. The wood is so named on account of the series of predominantly natural caverns which exist below ground but the entrance and exit tunnels were very visible from the path that we took. Once reaching Moorlands Lane we paused for a coffee stop and then walked onwards across Bonsall Moor. In the far distance it was possible to see the water fountain in the grounds of Chatsworth House spouting up high into the air. We stopped to have our picnic lunch by Luntor Rocks above the village of Winster.

After lunch we crossed through Winster and took the path up to Ivy House. To return to Darley Bridge we followed Clough Lane back across the top of the ridge. The walk measured 7.8 miles and took in some magnificent views of the Derwent Valley

15th July. Dale Abbey, led by Paul

Twelve walkers assembled at Bartlewood Lodge for a seven mile walk that included Locko Park, Dale Abbey and a hermit's cave. The weather forecast was not good, so after the usual group photo we started promptly, walking along a public footpath through Dale Wood natural cemetery that led to the Midshires Way. Carefully crossing the Spondon to Ilkeston road, we entered Locko Park and descended a good gravel and tarmac track. We stopped to admire the waterfowl on the lake and a distant view of Locko Hall, a Grade 2* building dating from 1725. I explained that the name 'Locko' originated from the hall being the site of a leper hospital in the 13th century where the unfortunate inmates were dressed in rags, or 'loques' in the French language.

We ascended a footpath in the estate to a small bridge and re-joined the Midshires Way, eventually reaching the Spondon to Ilkeston road again, where we stopped for drinks. After crossing the road we descended into a pretty valley or dale and picked our way through narrow footpaths into the small hamlet of Dale Abbey. Here we stopped to view one of the smallest churches in the UK, the semi-detached All Saints Church, a



pub once occupying the other half of the building. From there we entered a field that gave us a magnificent view of the ruined eastern window of Dale Abbey, all that remains after Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. Rain was threatening once again, so we walked a short road section to the head of the dale, where we were thankful for the shelter of the woodland along the route.

Next stop was another Ancient Monument, a cave carved by a hermit into the soft sandstone cliff in the 12th century, his home for 20 years! We then walked along a bridle track and made haste our return to Bartlewood Lodge, for a change into dry clothes, a welcome drink and lunch.

Your Committee

This is your Committee at the moment but things may change after our AGM on Aug 26th. Many of the current committee are standing for re-election as their 2 year term is up, and as far as I know nobody is standing down this year, but there will be some musical chairs as John's term as Chair is coming to an end and someone else will be elected to the role with possibly other changes if members choose to swap roles.

Role	Name	Contact email
Chair	John Pilgrim	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Vice Chair	Adrian Hickson	vice-chair@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Business Secretary	Tony Smith	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Treasurer	Kevin Green	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Membership Secretary	Val Reed	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Groups Co-ordinator	Michael O'Donoghue	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Welfare	vacant	welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Speaker seeker	Yogi Godwin	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Communications	Mike Stow	webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Social Secretary	Glenys Morrice	socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Without portfolio	Iain Banns	iain@ashbyu3a.co.uk