

Newsletter March 2026

Interest Groups Timetable for March

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 24 th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Jyoti Shah – 'Prostate Cancer'
Activities	Wed 4 th Fri 20 th	1-3 pm 2-4 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Arts and Crafts	Thu 5 th	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Breakfast	Thu 19 th	10 am	Bretby Garden Centre Cafe, Bretby Lane, Burton upon Trent DE15 0QS
Bridge	Mon 2 nd Mon 9 th Mon 16 th Mon 23 rd Mon 30 th	11am-1.30pm 7-9 pm 11am-1.30pm TBA TBA	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	Tue 10 th	10 am	At Lynda's
Coffee and Chat	Wed 11 th	10 am	Lakeside Bistro, Shortheath Rd, Moira DE12 6BW
Computer	Wed 4 th Mon 16 th	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Mon 30 th	10 am	Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 5 th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Drawing and painting	Wed 18 th	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Family History	Wed 11 th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 5 th	6 pm	La Torre, 48 High St, Coalville LE67 3EE
French	Mon 2 nd Mon 16 th Mon 30 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 19 th	2.10 pm	Packington Village Hall. Talk by Howard Drury on '70 years of Garden Tips'. Entry £4
History	Thu 26 th	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Julie Holland - 'Newbold, Coleorton - a local history'

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Industrial Heritage	Wed 25 th	TBA	National Needle museum, Redditch. Provisional
Literature	Tue 10 th	1.30 pm	At Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 12 th	12 noon	The Sump, Newton Rd, Burton DE15 0TT
Medium Walks	Mon 9 th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at the Thornton Reservoir free car park on Reservoir Road LE67 1AR
Music Appreciation	Wed 4 th	10 am	At Brenda's
Poetry Reading	Thu 19 th	2.30 pm	42 Avenue Rd, Ashby
Recorder	Thu 5 th Thu 19 th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 10 th Tue 24 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	Tue 10 th	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. 'Sir Isaac Newton' by Paul McKay
Scrabble	Mon 9 th Mon 23 rd	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 20 th	10 am	Lower car park of Beacon Hill, Breakback Road, Woodhouse Eaves LE12 8SP
Social Events	-	-	No Socials this month
Supper Club	Thu 26 th	7 for 7.30 pm	The Priory, Nanpantan Rd, Loughborough LE11 3YD
The 10 Milers	Mon 23 rd	9.15 for 9.30	Packington recreation ground car park, Vicarage Lane, Packington
Walking	Tue 3 rd Tue 17 th	9.30 for 9.45 Start	Hardwick Hall car park S44 5RW. Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre CV13 0AD
Wine Appreciation	Wed 18 th	7 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early April

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Music Appreciation	Wed 1 st	10 am	At Neil's
Activities	Wed 1 st	1 – 3 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 1 st	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 2 nd	10 am	Packington Village Hall.
Digital photography	Thu 2 nd	10 am	16 Winchester Way
Recorder	Thu 2 nd	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 2 nd	6 pm	TBA
Bridge	Mon 6 th	TBA	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 7 th	TBA	TBA

NOTTINGHAM CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERT TRIP – THURS 4TH JUNE

Colin Ellis is interested in organising a trip to The Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham on Thurs 4th June at 7.30pm. The Halle Orchestra are performing a programme of:

Janacek	Taras Bulba
Tchaikovsky	Violin Concerto
Dvorak	Symphony No.8

Based on car sharing Ashby to Clifton South Park & Ride, then tram to a stop immediately adjacent to the Concert Hall, the cost of Concert Ticket, Tram Travel and Contribution to petrol cost estimated at £40 - £45.

If you would be interested in taking part (there is no commitment at this stage), please complete the sign-up sheet available at monthly meetings to provide:

Your name
Your e-mail address or telephone number
Number of seats required
Whether you would be willing to drive
If you are able to drive, how many seats you would have free for passengers
Whether you would wish to have a meal before the concert, if this can be arranged.

Please write legibly – if I can't read it, I can't contact you!

Alternatively contact Colin Ellis on 01530 272592 or e-mail colinellis1950@gmail.com

HISTORY GROUP COACH TRIP TO LEEDS – THURS 30TH JULY

Colin is also organising the History Group's annual city coach trip. This year it is to Leeds. The trip is open to all Ashby u3a members.

Leaving from the Royal Hotel, Ashby at 8.30

Anticipated arrival in Leeds approx 11.00. Leaving at 5.00.

Return to Ashby approx 7.30. A brief stop at motorway services about mid-way in both directions.

Cost: £25.00 per seat.

Major attractions in and around Leeds:

Royal Armouries, Industrial, Thackray Medical & City Museums, Art Gallery
White Rose & Victoria Arcade Shopping
City Varieties Music Hall
Leeds City Football Ground,
Temple Newsam House
Kirkstall Abbey
Tropical World, Roundhay

Please be aware that some of these are a bus ride away from the centre

If you would be interested in taking part (there is no commitment at this stage), please complete the sign-up sheet available at monthly meetings to provide:

Your name
Your e-mail address or telephone number

Please write legibly – if I can't read it, I can't contact you!

Alternatively contact Colin Ellis on 01530 272592 or e-mail colinellis1950@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

24th February – ‘The Western Front - Travels with a Tiger’ by Phil Drabble

Phil spent 40 years in education and was a French teacher for many years, he is also President of the Nottingham Anglo French Society. He has given this talk in French as well as English. He started by explaining why he was doing this talk and why he made the journey it describes. He came across a letter from one of two Scottish brothers who had joined up for WWI. Tom had written home saying that when the war was over the line of the Western Front should become a pilgrimage ‘Path of Peace’. Unfortunately he didn’t get to see that come about as both brothers died within a few weeks of reaching the front. The idea though was taken up by writer/historian Anthony Seldon who founded the Western Way association and he decided to walk the length of the Front. The Front is often thought of as being around the Somme but it actually spread from the Swiss border to the Belgian coast at Nieuwpoort – a distance of 440 miles. Phil decided that he too wanted to cover the length of the Front but thought that 440 miles was too far to walk, and being a keen biker, chose to do it on his Triumph Tiger motorbike. He also followed the story of two Nottingham men, Albert Ball who joined the Royal Flying Corps and Alfred Schofield who was a gunner in the Royal Artillery.

When the war started, the German army attacked France by avoiding the French defences along their common border and entering Belgium. As Belgium neutrality was guaranteed by Britain this brought us into the war. The Germans swiftly overran Belgium and northern France and within weeks were 43 miles from Paris. But British and French troops forced a retreat at which point both sides became dug in and the static trench war began. Both sides then tried outflanking each other in what became the ‘Race to the sea’ and trenches extended to the North Sea and Swiss border.

Phil started his journey just outside Switzerland as he thought it would be better to ride home rather than away from it. He travelled through Alsace and over the Vosges mountains into Lorraine. The Crest of the Vosges was a particularly violent battles of the war. It is believed that 30,000 men died to take one mountain peak. Coming down from the mountains Phil moved on to Verdun which was to the French what the Somme was to the British. Both the French and Germans each lost around 350,000 men in a 9 month battle with 1.25m casualties. It was estimated that at one point a German shell landed in the trenches every 3 seconds.

After the war a memorial ossuary was built at Douaumont containing the bones of 130,000 French and German soldiers. In 1984 President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl held hands in a symbol of reconciliation at the site.

Phil went on to visit Picardy and the site of one of the largest explosions of the war. It was detonated on July 1st 1916 to signal the start of the Somme offensive. He also visited Vimy Ridge, site of the Canadian’s greatest success. A very fine memorial stands there to honour the fallen.

On his travels Phil met many people, French, German, Canadian and British who were themselves following up on the lives and deaths of family members. Many came to help tend graves, some just to see where loved ones had fallen. Often family members who they had never met.

On reaching the coast in Belgium, Phil said he was glad to be going home but it was a very worthwhile trip

Phil then reminded us of the two men whose lives he was following. Albert Ball became a flying ace, with 44 credited kills but he was shot down and killed aged just 20. In his short life he was awarded the VC, the DSO with 2 bars and the Military Cross. The second was Alfred Schofield who was a gunner at both the Somme and Ypres. He survived the war and returned home, married and had children. He was Phil’s grandad.

A moving and fascinating story, reminding many of us of loved ones we too had lost or who had been injured in the Great War. Thank you Phil.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

ACTIVITIES – Co-ordinator: Michael O’Donoghue - activities@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07485 159487

Come and join us on Wednesday March 4th at 1pm or Fri 20th at 2pm at the Ashby Leisure Centre.

We will have our usual activities, Walking Football, Badminton, Boccia, Pickleball and Table Tennis. We should also have Archery and Cornhole, which we introduced to the sessions last month.

Following enquiries from some members, we have also managed to make arrangements for swimming. This will be available on a daily basis at any public class at the Leisure Centre.

For those interested, you would be required to pay an annual membership fee of £8.80, payable to Leisure Link. Payment can be made at the Leisure Centre reception. There would also be a charge of £4.20 per session, which would be available between 12pm and 1pm on Wednesday and Fridays.

If anyone is interested in swimming and needs further information, please contact me directly.



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

5th February

Hook your wool - pull through the loop - hook your wool...

So our crocheting continued. Those who already knew how to crochet continued at their own pace. The beginners, having completed their trial piece, began their bag. Sharon had designed a little complementary purse for those who were beginners and felt that the bigger bag was too ambitious for them to do. This project will continue next month.

Along with our tea and coffee we had cake brought by one of the ladies who had celebrated her birthday a few days before. Yummy!

Our next session will be on 5th March at 9.45 in the meeting room of the Packington Village Memorial Hall.

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

For one month only the croquet group will be meeting on a Monday. As the last Friday in March is before the official opening of the 'Summer Lawns', ie before BST starts, we will meet this month on Monday 30th.

In future months we will be meeting on the last Friday of the month.

To recap the First Croquet Session of 2026 will be at 10.00 am on Monday 30th March.

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 February. Times for each day are either 11 to 1.30 or 7 to 9 pm but vary from month to month due to other events taking place at the Ivanhoe Club. Timings for this month are in the timetable above.

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

19th February - The Tall Chimney (Hungry Horse) at the Pipeworks, Swadlincote

Most, if not all of the group, had never experienced Breakfast at the Hungry Horse before and most of us were well impressed with the quality and value for money we received. As usual, there was no lack of conversation and the topics were many and various. Our members of parliament would do well to join us as they would get to hear of some excellent ideas for solving our nation's, if not the world's, problems!!

For a good chat, a hearty breakfast and some fun, why not join us on 19th March at 10am at Bretby Garden Centre? There is ample parking and plenty to browse over before you leave. If you want to join us, send a quick email to breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk and you will be added to the list and made most welcome.

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

11th February - La Zouch Coffee Shop, Kilwardby Street

Twelve members gathered at the La Zouch Coffee Shop and enjoyed tea or coffee and a nice selection of breads, pastries and cakes. It was nice to be back on home ground for some excellent conversations. If anyone would like to have their own coffee shop, La Zouch is for sale!

Our next gathering will be at the Lakeside Bistro in Moira on 11th March at 10am. This is a firm favourite with the group. Ten have signed up to be there so far. If you would like to join us, please let Colin Woodland know at coffee@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

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

10th February

A full house for our meeting this month. Coffee and catch up was followed by a relaxing session on Zentangles — or as someone said “What’s the difference between a Zentangle and a doodle???”. Having the freedom to just draw lines, make patterns and fill in spaces with shapes or letters was a useful exercise to get us ready for our next, more formal exercise.

We are all going to choose our own font to write the same poem, chosen by Gill. Following on from this we are going to revisit the uncial font as most of us have forgotten how to do it!!!

Next meeting is at Lynda’s on March 10th.

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

16th February

Four people attended, down perhaps because people were on grandparent duty during half term.

The only discussion point was information about door bell cameras and which ones are cheapest to record video once the initial offer has expired. Unfortunately the only group member with any experience of this was ill and sent his apologies.

One person left before coffee and the meeting broke up early.

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

5th February

As we didn't meet on New Tears Day this was the first meeting of 2026 and there were eight of us, including a new member: Welcome Jan.

We enjoyed a show of photos from six of the attendees, covering holidays, Christmas, frosty weather and exercises in light/lighting and colour management and surrealism.

Next time, if we do not decide to go 'on safari', we will look at photos on the theme of the letter 'T'

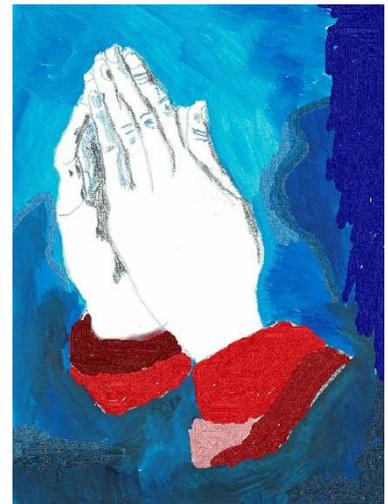
This will be on the 5th of March.

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

18th February

This month all five members of this group met at John's house and we used the letter H as our inspiration. The pictures were of: A Happy Holiday, some Hands, Chinese new year of the Horse, Hellebores, and last but not least, a Hoopoo bird. All these pictures can be seen on the group page art gallery. Here is John's painting of Hands after Durer.

Next month, if all goes well, we could be starting on the art installation for Ashby Art Festival, in which case the usual painting routine will be put aside and we will be meeting probably twice a week. Dates and times to be advised.



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

5th February - Aurora Cafe, Pass Courtyard, Ashby

The staff at the Aurora Cafe opened specially and exclusively for us to taste some traditional Ukrainian food. Eighteen of us managed to almost completely fill the cafe. We were served with a Sauerkraut salad and pickles starter. This was followed by Ukrainian Borscht, Lamb Goulash and roast Pork. After trying Ukrainian Dumplings, we finished with a Ukrainian Apple Pie. It was interesting to observe some distinct differences in the dishes from those with similar names from other Eastern European countries.

For our next soiree we are returning to an old favourite at La Torre Italian Restaurant, on the High Street in Coalville at 6pm on 5th March. So Far, thirteen people have signed up. If you would like to join then, please let Colin Woodland Know at food_from_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

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

12th February - Brewer's Fayre, Flagstaff, Ashby

Twenty six members turned up at the Brewer's Fayre at the Flagstaff services area, for lunch. We had pre-ordered our meals but this did not seem to speed things up any. Hopefully the chef and serving staff saw some benefit from this requirement. It seemed to have no advantage or benefit for the customer. Nevertheless, a good time was had by all. There was no shortage of conversation. In fact, at times, it was hard to get a word in edgewise.

Our March venue is the Sump, Newton Road, Burton upon Trent DE15 0TT at noon on the 12th. Sixteen have already signed up to be there. If anyone else wishes to join the group please email me at luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk to book a place.

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

11th February

Today we were 6. Jan was checking over her list of Certificates: a chore we should all keep on top of as these are among the most important documents we can pass on to our descendants.

Eileen is still struggling with her Dumolo trees, with two to try and link, while Shirley is working steadily on her documents.

JD worked on trying to pin down the movements of his great grandfather 's second wife just before she emerged on the scene in Newcastle in 1872. This will involve diving into the Scottish records which means buying credits.

Elizabeth concentrated on her 'neat and tidy' files. These are cleaned up version of the master records.

Ana is still struggling to make progress with chasing her namesakes, although did manage to identify and eliminate a duplicate file which was causing some confusion.

We meet again on March 11th.

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

19th February – Talk by Ken Sterne

February's garden group meeting was a little different from our usual program. The speaker we had originally booked was unfortunately taken ill and admitted to hospital just days before the date of our meeting, so Sheila approached one of our members and asked if he could help us out. Ken kindly agreed and thought carefully about what he would talk about.

It was a very interesting talk and unknown to us he had had a long and successful involvement with gardening. He started as a young boy and worked with older gardeners learning lots of tips from them. He won prizes and a certain amount of success which he demonstrated in his current garden creating a beautiful, colourful garden from scratch. He showed us photos of different stages of the garden's development. Thank you to Ken for stepping up just when we needed him.

POETRY READING – Leader: Kath Fisher – poetry@ashbyu3a.co.uk - phone 07857 688822

19th February

The group met at 42 Avenue Road to look at the poems we didn't have time to consider in January. These included work by Simon Armitage, William Wordsworth, Pablo Neruda, John Burnside and Roger McGough. If anyone is interested in joining us, please get in touch.

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

10th February

The group met, as usual, at Sandra's house to discuss the latest book reading.

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

February

The group has settled into a routine of spending the first hour or so discussing the news of the week or previous fortnight with each member taking part in turn.

After that we will read and translate from a particular text. Last time Jane was explaining the exam for obtaining French citizenship with examples of the questions an examiner would ask. It was far from easy but a very useful way of learning new words and expressions.

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

25th February. Mountsorrel and Rothley Heritage Centre

A break in the weather gave us a lovely day out at Mountsorrel Heritage Centre. We even had sunshine! After everyone had had tea or coffee at the nice café on site whilst trying to avoid the lovely cakes on display, we all wandered around the site. There is a small shunting yard at the back of Nunckley Hill station which in turn is the half way point on the Mountsorrel branch line off of the Great Central Railway.

Unfortunately no trains were running today but we were able to look around the yard and museum at the wagons and coaches there. There is also a renovated lifting bridge which used to span the Grand Union Canal at Leicester built originally by Robert Stephenson, in the 1830s. This counterweighted bridge could be raised by one person to allow the bargee's horses to pass underneath. It was moved to Mountsorrel from its previous home in Snibston museum in 2020 following Snibston's closure.



There are two more very interesting museum rooms in the main building covering the history of Mountsorrel from the bronze age, plus the story of the railway and of quarrying in the area.

We finished off with lunch at the Bradgate Arms at Cropston who served us good food without any fuss. Very friendly. A good day out, very much helped by dry sunny weather.

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

February

On 5th February, we were back in our usual schedule of first and third Thursdays, which we are hoping to maintain for the rest of the year. We had a record-breaking attendance of 17 members, missing only one member, who had gone off in search of winter sun and warmth. We are introducing some new music, while also unearthing some which we have played in the past, but not recently. We started with some music which wasn't very complicated, to get us warmed up.

On 19th February we suffered from half-term syndrome, and our attendance numbers plummeted to 10, with none of our usual tenor players. Luckily Nick had brought his tenor, so he bravely played tenor where needed, despite his not playing tenor very often. Swapping from one size of recorder to another can be tricky, especially if you aren't used to it! We managed to play the music on our list, spending time sorting out some more difficult passages. We will have to return to some, to iron out the problems. We looked at another new piece: good sight-reading practice.

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. In February we will be meeting on the 10th and 24th.

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

26th February

Today 43 of us had the pleasure of our own Yogi telling us about one of his Ashby Heroes: William Hastings, 1st Baron Hastings, 1431 to 1483

Yogi posed the question: what do people think constitutes a hero? Perhaps they would be someone who did something special for others. Preferably for everyone? But not all heroes wear capes.

A quick round up of the history of Ashby from before its first mention in the Domesday Book as 'Ascebi' started with the Invasion in 1066 and William the 'Bastard' taking the Kingdom. It had, of course, been in existence before then and there is some evidence of a settlement in Roman times. Why Harold lost the Battle of Hastings has often been discussed but most are agreed that the Saxons fought in traditional ways and lost to superior equipment and tactics, including horses, a new and formidable force on the Field.

Among many other gifts Hugh de Grandmesnil was given 65 manors in Leicestershire, including Ascebi. As Ascebi comprised only 20 houses at the time it wasn't a great prize. But its location was fortuitous, as a crossroads between the major towns of Leicester, Derby, Burton and Tamworth.

The la Zouche's later married into Hugh's family at the time when his line ran out of male heirs, so gave the town the extension to its name. In 1220 Richard de la Zouch gained a charter from the King to hold a Fair and a Market and proceeded to make it pay by granting the local Burghers strips of land at right angles to the new Market street on fields to the west of the original settlement. Market street was then closed off by toll gates at the east and west ends, forcing all through traffic along Market Street to the benefit of the burghers. The tolls of course went to Richard.

The town grew prosperous and William's father, Sir Leonard (1396 – 1455) who fought at Agincourt became a court favourite. William grew up as a competent knight and became friends with the future Edward IV. Well trained he turned out to be an excellent leader of men and fought with distinction in the Wars of the Roses. Surviving the bloody Battle of Towton, in which Edward triumphed over Henry VI, William was knighted on the Field of Battle: a singular honour.

After Edward was crowned, William rapidly acquired titles, high office and much riches. One of his perks was to 'castellate' the existing castle, which involved building the Hastings Tower. He also had two other castles, including Kirkby Muxloe which was neither finished nor occupied. It seems he was a great benefactor to the town and his tenants, but not very good with managing his own finances

However, in April 1483 Edward died in his bed (a rare royal occurrence at the time) and Richard III took the throne. Yogi touched on the murky story of his accession and the disappearance of Edward V and his brother Richard. This meant the end for William, executed in July. All his lands and titles were confiscated. Richard's reign was, however, short lived, and he lost the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. Then William's heirs regained their inheritance. William's heritage is in the prosperity of the town and his furtherance of its position linking the main cities around it.

So: was William a hero within the meaning? The meeting seemed unconvinced! But perhaps we had not really thought it through enough.

Another thought-provoking canter through the pages of local history. Many thanks Yogi!

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

4th February

This month we were at Nev's house, eight of us, almost up to full strength and with our usual eclectic mix of songs and tunes. We seemed to alternate between pop and classical all morning!

Mike started the session with a combination of rock and classical with ace guitarist Jeff Beck playing Nessun Dorma and really making that guitar sing! An amazing virtuoso piece. With a swift change of pace we went to the lovely Handel's Nightingale Chorus. Next was a very young Frank Sinatra and 'S'wonderful' and back to classical for the BBC Symphony Orchestra led by Andrew Davis playing Vaughn Williams 'Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis'. Very relaxing.

Then it was Leonard Cohen with his iconic 'Tower of Song' and back again to classical for Beethoven's Piano Sonata #8 (Pathetique) played by Daniel Barenboim. An artist new to most of us was trumpeter Mike Copozzi who duets with his alter ego on video this time playing 'You've got a friend in me'. Very good playing and funny with it.

Next was Menahem Pressler beautiful rendition of Debussy's 'Claire de Lune'. Exquisite piano playing.

Very different was the equally talented, in a different way, Bill Bailey with his hilarious tribute to German electro-synth band Kraftwerk playing the 'Hokey Cokey'. More classical, this time Rimsky Korsakov's Sheherazade played wonderfully by a Slovenian Youth Orchestra.

Then it was the Modern Gustin Trio's jazz interpretation of the Beatles 'Obladi oblada' followed by the Stellenbosch University Choir singing 'Baba Yetu' which is a Swahili translation of the Lord's Prayer set to a tune by Christopher Tin, a Chinese-American. Lovely.

We then returned to Leonard Cohen's 'Tower of Song' sung this time by Sir Tom Jones. Very different to M Cohen but brilliant. His voice just gets better and better.

A couple more classical tunes, firstly the well known waltz from 'Masquerade' by Khachaturian followed by Russell Watson singing 'Caruso' a song in honour of the great Italian singer.

We closed the session with David Crosby, Jimmy Webb and Carly Simon at a tribute concert to Brian Wilson singing his lovely 'In my room'

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

26th February – Ferrers Arms, Lount

This was our first outing since November last year but hopefully does not set the standard for the rest of 2026. On arrival (7 for 7.30) we were told that our table was not ready and we waited until 7.45 to be seated. After 10 mins the manager came to say that he only had 10 pre-orders but there were 12 of us. Colin pointed out that the extra two names and their choices had been phoned through a week ago. The starters arrived at 8.10. At 8.45 the first of the main courses arrived, and one was immediately sent back for being incorrect! The last main was served after 9pm. Only 4 people had ordered a dessert, but they had run out of one choice despite it being pre-ordered over a week ago!

Many of us enjoyed the actual food, but for others some meals were a combination of overcooked, undercooked or just plain cold. Not great. At least the company was excellent and we all enjoyed getting together again.

The final straw was that Marstons have been offering 30% off main courses, but the vouchers were refused because we were more than 8 people on one table despite the fact that we were paying individually. After a strong complaint the manager agreed to manually adjust the bills.

Hopefully the Priory in Loughborough will do much better next month.

10th February – ‘Are you prepared for when your loved ones fall ill? Would you know what to do if someone collapses?’

Those were the questions that Richard Nevin, an NHS First Responder, asked us.

The usual human reaction is to panic hoping that someone else will know what to do but you knowing what to do and responding quickly saves lives. In Sweden 17% more people survive cardiac events because children are taught how to deal with a collapse in schools, adults also know and there are more defibrillators. It is even part of the driving test!

We all hope such an emergency will never happen to us, nor to those close to us, but Richard is usually called out every 4 hours when on duty. So it is important to be prepared and to be prepared to have a go, you have 10 minutes to save someone's life. And no you can not be sued for trying to save someone's life. Just do not stand round, watch and take photos!

Firstly one must look carefully, does the person respond to voice, are they breathing? If there are other people around get them involved, one dialling 999, another ready to wave paramedics down. If the casualty is not breathing you must start CPR asap to keep blood circulating throughout the body. Use both hands and press down hard on the chest depressing it considerably. Keep doing this 2 times a second and get someone else to take over if possible after 1-2 minutes as it is quite exhausting. It does not matter if you do break a rib, that is better than the casualty dying. Then get someone to collect the nearest defibrillator and start using it. The kit contains scissors to cut the clothing so you can apply the pads to the chest, even a razor in case you have a hairy male so the pads can adhere.

We were all amazed at how easy it would be to use, once you open the lid it talks to you giving clear instructions about what and when you do CPR and when you pause for it to shock the heart. It even asks if it is a child or an adult and responds differently. They are designed to “grab and go”.

In films or on TV a cardiac arrest is shown as an instantaneous event but in practice while the heart stops beating regularly it still “wobbles” for about 10 minutes. So you have about ten minutes and can save a life if you try resuscitation.

Where is your nearest defib? Seconds count in such a situation so do you know where the nearest defibrillator is to your home and places you visit? Well look on the website DefibFinder and find the two nearest to your home. Richard told us the location of many in Ashby but clearly they do not exist on housing estates. But defibs can be bought on the internet for about £1,000. So a group of neighbours could club together to buy one and place it centrally. The batteries are long lasting but would eventually need to be replaced.

Ones placed outdoors may be open access or you may need a code, the 999 call will tell you the position of the nearest one and the code to open the wall box. Many have the code C159X.

As a first responder Richard is often at big sporting events and giving community based talks so more people are aware of what to do in an emergency. So if you are a member of another group who could benefit from a talk like this then please get in touch with him. We can provide you with his contact details.

Date for your diary. The next meeting is 10th March at Packington village hall. A talk about Sir Isaac Newton. Most people know of him for his thoughts about gravity and explaining the wonderful colours of the rainbow, but he was a complex character; he was also an alchemist and Master of the Mint. Find out more. This will be followed up later this year with a visit to his house where you can see that famous apple tree.

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.

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

25th February

Due to unforeseen circumstances we had to postpone the meeting for a week but we were able to meet a week later. Kurt had seen an article in the paper suggesting that there were good alternatives to Chablis but at a lower price, so we tried some of their suggestions.

First was 2024 Castellore Pecorino Terre d'Abruzzo 11% from Aldi at £4.99. Abruzzo is on the east coast of Italy opposite Rome. This was a very nice clean dry white citrusy and a nice aftertaste. A very good start but although we were all reluctant to score it too highly without knowing what was to follow, we scored it 7.8/10.

2nd was a Greek 2024 Assyriko 12.5% £11 from Tesco. Although being dry and lemony it had an oily richness and a slightly frizzante taste on the tongue. A slightly unusual taste, as are a lot of Greek wines, as they are often made from Greek varietal grapes which don't appear in other wines. Again we all liked it. Quite different to the first but very pleasant. It didn't score quite as highly at 7.4/10

The third wine was from Galicia in NW Spain, a 2024 Rias Baixas Albarino 13% from Sainsburys at £12.50. This is particularly recommended for seafood and shellfish. A crisp and with high acidity but with a fruity notes. Style wise it was half way between the other two. We didn't think that this was the best Albarino we'd tasted and it was quite pricey so it only scored 7/10

Fourth was 2024 'The Pebble' Chenin Blanc Val de Loire 11.5% from Tesco at £9. This is a recently introduced brand at Tesco, again with quite a high acidity and with supposedly grassy, flinty overtones typical of the Loire. We thought it didn't have much flavour at all. It was pleasant and there was nothing offensive about it but nothing remarkable about it either. It only scored 6.7/10.

So far each wine had scored less than the previous wine, so we were a little apprehensive about the last – an actual Chablis. This one was 2023 Chablis Premier Cru by Albert Lucas 12.5% and £14.99 from Aldi.

We needn't have worried. This is what Chablis should taste like. it was a year older and so had a little bottle age and a touch of oaky vanilla, not a lot, but it just added a little creaminess to it whilst still having a nice acidity and freshness. Delicious. The only wine to score a 9 from one of us and 8.1/10 overall.

However when it came to our choice of the month, it had to be the first wine, the Pecorino from Aldi. It was not as good as the Chablis but very nice and easy to drink on its own or with food and it was just 1/3 of the price. Well recommended.

Stop press, this wine appears to be out of stock now 😞



THE WALKING GROUPS

The 10 MILERS – Leader Christine Green – 10milers@ashbyu3a.co.uk – phone 07784 738597

February

The group only meets bi-monthly so there was no walk this month. The next will be on 23rd March. Starting from Packington recreation ground car park, Vicarage Lane, Packington out to Sence Valley and back.

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

3rd February. From Lakeside Bistro round Albert Village lakes, led by Kevin

The forecast earlier in the week was for a very wet day but we were greeted by a dry but cold morning which didn't deter 23 turning up the Lakeside Bistro, Moria.



Turning right from the car park we passed Moria furnace and joined the toll path along canal passing both Conkers sites and crossing the road we walked up the short incline to Boothorpe. Here we passed by the grounds of Boothorpe Hall a 13-bedroom, mansion apparently on the market for £3,000,000. Next, we passed the newer of the two created Albert Village lakes formed from opencast mining and before crossing the road to circle the second lake stopping for coffee halfway round. We had avoided the mud up to that point but for the footpath to Spring Cottage we were not so lucky. On arriving at Spring Cottage we crossed the road to the old railway line and joined the heritage trail back to Moria and a very enjoyable lunch.

17th February. From Ashby to Hicks Lodge, led by Chris

21 of us met at South Street, Ashby on a dry day. In an attempt to avoid the mud we headed out across the Bath Grounds and along the Measham Road to Hicks Lodge. We walked along the paths staying relatively mud free before heading back towards Ashby and the Centivo Lounge. A total of 7.5 miles.

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

9th February. Dimminsdale and Calke, led by Val

For a change the day was fine if overcast and 9 of us met in Dimminsdale NT car park.



We walked down the road and entered the woods taking the path around the top of the Quarry enjoying the host of snowdrops in flower throughout the woods.



From there we walked through Calke parkland, stopping for our coffee break by the Calke café, before walking around the deer park, crossing the bridges across a now very full Staunton Harold Reservoir, then continuing on the road to bring us back to Dimminsdale car park for a total distance of 4.5 miles.

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

20th February. From Moira Furnace car park

On arrival it was slightly damp, that light drizzle which you hardly notice. 10 people eventually met at the car park after resolving a minor confusion with Burton u3a Strollers who were meeting at the lime kilns car park round the corner.



However when we did all get together we set off for the Furnace and joined the canal towpath and turned left towards Conkers. We paused to look at the lock that takes the canal under Shortheath Road. Crossing the road on foot we followed the canal to the basin at Conkers and the children's railway. We crossed the rail track and followed the path until we reached the path of the old Ashby & Nuneaton railway. We turned left and followed the track until we reached Poplar Avenue where we turned left up to the canal which we followed as far as the Furnace where we went down to the café for coffee. After coffee we returned to the car park. Total distance 2.5 miles.

Your Committee

Role	Name	Contact email
Chair	Tony Smith	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Vice Chair	Adrian Hickson	vice-chair@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Business Secretary	John Pilgrim	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Treasurer	Kevin Green	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Membership Secretary	Val Reed	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Minutes Secretary	Iain Banns	minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Groups Co-ordinator	Michael O'Donoghue	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Speaker seeker	Yogi Godwin	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Social Secretary	Glenys Morrice	socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Communications	Mike Stow	webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk