



## Newsletter May 2026

### Interest Groups Timetable for May

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

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Monthly Meeting	Tue 26 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Danny Wells – ‘Florence Nightingale’
Activities	Wed 6 <sup>th</sup> Fri 15 <sup>th</sup>	1-3 pm 2-4 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Arts and Crafts	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Breakfast	Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Hill Farm, Spring Lane, Packington LE65 1WU
Bridge	Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Mon 18 <sup>th</sup> Mon 25 <sup>th</sup>	7-9pm 11am-1.30pm 7-9pm TBC	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Caryl’s
Coffee and Chat	Wed 13 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Swarkestone Nursery, Lowes Lane, Swarkestone DE73 7GQ
Computer	Wed 6 <sup>th</sup> Mon 18 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 29 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Sence Valley. Meet at top CP
Drawing and painting	Thu 20 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Lesley’s
Family History	Wed 13 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup>	6 pm	Pepitos, 127 London Road, Derby DE1 2QN
French	Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Mon 25 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>	Arrive for 12pm	Self-drive to Felley Priory, NG16 5FJ Garden admission £7.50, pay on the day. 16 places available at tea room to reserve for refreshments on arrival
History	Thu 28 <sup>th</sup>	Arrive for 10.30 am	National Memorial Arboretum. Travel by pre-arranged car share
Industrial Heritage	Wed 27 <sup>th</sup>	Leave 9.30am	Mini Factory Tour, Oxford OX4 2RD

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Literature	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>	1.30 pm	At Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 14 <sup>th</sup>	12 noon	George and Dragon Loughborough Rd LE67 8UH
Medium Walks	Mon 11 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet on Hospital Lane, Ravenstone LE67 2BX
Music Appreciation	Wed 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	At Mike's
Poetry Reading	Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>	2.30 pm	42 Avenue Rd, Ashby
Recorder	Thu 7 <sup>th</sup> Thu 21 <sup>st</sup>	10 am 9.30 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup> Tue 26 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Packington Village Hall. 'A Moss Safari' - a Zoom presentation by Andrew Chandler-Grevatt
Scrabble	Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Mon 25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 15 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Grace Dieu Wood. Park at the Bulls Head Inn free car park LE67 8LR
Social Events	Fri 8 <sup>th</sup>	5.45 for 6pm	Bowls Evening at Ashby Bowls Club.
Supper Club	Thu 28 <sup>th</sup>	7 for 7.30 pm	Staff of Life, Ticknall DE73 7JH
The 10 Milers	-	-	No walk this month as it is Bank Holiday
Walking	Tue 5 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 for 9.45	Thornbridge Estate, Ashford in the Water, Bakewell. On A6020 Ashford to Hassop road.
	Tue 19 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 for 9.45	Nags Head, Castle Donington DE74 2PR
Wine Appreciation	Wed 20 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm	Annie's house

### Interest Groups Timetable for early June

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Bridge	Mon 1 <sup>st</sup>	TBC	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 2 <sup>nd</sup>	9.30 for 9.45	TBC
Music Appreciation	Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 am	TBC
Activities	Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 – 3 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 pm	TBC
Arts and Crafts	Thu 4 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Digital photography	Thu 4 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBC
Recorder	Thu 4 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 4 <sup>th</sup>	6 pm	TBC
Social event	Thu 4 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 concert	Nottingham Concert Hall – Dvorák

## **HISTORY GROUP COACH TRIP TO LEEDS – CANCELLED**

Unfortunately the trip to Leeds in July has had to be cancelled as there have not been enough people signed up to this trip to make it viable. The coach hire would have been too expensive per person.

## **MONTHLY MEETING**

### **28<sup>th</sup> April – ‘Illusion, Delusion and Disillusion’ by Bishop Peter Fox**

Peter Fox is a clergyman, magician and member of the Magic Circle. He opened his talk by saying that it was really all about cheats, frauds and scamsters and how they employed natural means to create a belief in the supernatural.

He then entertained us with several card tricks involving guessing a card he couldn't possibly have seen or telling someone to remember a chosen card and then being able to find that card effortlessly from within a full pack of cards .

He then went on to talk about Hydesville, New York in the year 1848. In that town was a house which became occupied by the Fox family (no relations of Peter Fox himself) .They were able to buy it because the house was cheap and the reason for that was that the house was believed to be haunted. For years families who had moved into the house only stayed for a short time as they all complained of being able to hear strange noises, noises of people screaming or being strangled. Not long after the Fox family moved into the house their daughter Margaret started apparently talking to herself in the bedroom. When asked who she was talking to she told her parents that it was a man who came to visit her when she clicked her fingers. Everyone thought she was dreaming except the elder daughter Leah who saw a money making opportunity in this story.

In 1849 the sisters formed The Spiritualist Society. Before going on any further, Peter explained that he remained neutral on the matter of the work of spiritualists and that his talk was not intended to offend. He went on to explained how the sisters were able to discover facts about their clients without the clients realising this which gave the illusion that they, the sisters, were in touch with spirits of deceased relatives. He explained HOT reading (when a receptionist quizzed guests on arrival for info about themselves which was then fed back to the person conducting the séance, and about COLD reading which is gauging a person's character by conversing with them, and about SCRIPTED reading which is about horoscopes, fairground fortune telling and others who should not be trusted.

Peter kept us well entertained with many tricks such as having someone write a certain words onto a paper and then being able to produce from a wooden chest an envelope inside which the same information and the same words were written. How could he have done that. He demonstrated how easy it was to get information from someone by giving a lady in the audience a book and telling her to open it and remember the last line on the page that she had opened it at. He asked the person sitting next to her to look at the page as well. The trick then involved Peter asking a series of questions of the lady concerned but she needed to remain expressionless so as not to let on whether he was right or wrong in what he was saying. The lady concerned remained expressionless when asked all the questions but Peter was able to guess the last line of the page correctly because he wasn't watching the reaction of the lady concerned but rather that of the friend next to her who of course knew what had been written on the last line of the page.

Peter kept the audience well mesmerised for well over an hour ended to a tumultuous round of applause.

## POTENTIAL NEW SLOW WALKING GROUP

Many thanks to those members who stayed after the monthly meeting yesterday to give their input on what they would like to see from a Slow Walking Group.

There were seven members who gave feedback and the summary is as follows.

1. The walk should be slow paced, allowing for time to enjoy the surroundings, nature or places of interest.
2. It should be a relaxed and casual walk, without any pressure on time.
3. The walk should not be about how far you walk but about the pleasure of walking at a pace suitable for all.
4. Ideally, each walk would have somewhere to eat, but without a fixed time.
5. There should be plenty of opportunity to stop on the walk and consideration to be given for the various needs of the members.
6. Initially the walk would be on a once per month basis.

Hopefully this captures the main points raised and if anyone has anything further to add, please feel free to do so.

It is important to be aware, that to get this group up and running, it will need some volunteers to make that happen. A Group Leader needs to be found and I would suggest that it might be something that a few members could share that responsibility. So, if this is something that you the members want, please consider volunteering to make it happen.

Contact me at [interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

You can count on my support and the support of the other committee members.

I look forward to your responses.

Regards,

Michael O'Donoghue

Groups Co-ordinator

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

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

April

Not much has changed at the Activities Group. Attendance is still relatively small although we did have 18 at the last group.

It remains very enjoyable for all who attend, we just need to get more members to join.

Regards,

Michael

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

2<sup>nd</sup> April

The attendance at the April craft group was down considerably. Many were away on their Easter holidays.

We continued working on our crochet bags. We now have handles complete and were putting linings into the bags. The ladies have taken the bags home to complete the work.

Our next session will be on 7<sup>th</sup> May at 9.45 am in the meeting room of the Packington Village Memorial Hall. We will be making birthday cards.

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

20th April

Seven turned out today, but only one problem presented itself. It seems that WhatsApp messages weren't getting through on Sylvia's phone, but nothing seemed to be wrong.

Steve helped Sylvia to track down the fault. Surprisingly intractable, at first put down to a new phone, it turned out that the sender was sending to a landline!

Once identified the appropriate correction was made and tested, and all was well.

We meet again on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> May

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

April

We didn't meet this month as the date clashed with Easter. On May 7<sup>th</sup> we shall be setting out to photograph Sence Valley Park and its surroundings. Let's hope this good weather continues.

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

April

The drawing and painting group have been very busy this month painting our contribution to the Ashby Arts Festival Outdoor Gallery 2026. The theme this year is the life of local lad David Attenborough who turns 100 this month. We have been at it for three weeks and finished the painting yesterday. The varnishing will take place next week and be ready to be put in place the following week.



Next month we return to our usual once a month meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> May at Lesley's house and the subject letter will be 'I'.

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

16<sup>th</sup> April - Brewer's Fayre, Flagstaff Island

Seven hungry souls gathered to partake of the delights of the Brewer's Fayre breakfast. There was a choice of continental breakfast or an all you can eat full breakfast.

Those present agreed that it was value for money and nicely presented. The group divided quite quickly into two groups. The ladies were in one group and I was in the other, on my own. The ladies decided to turn the occasion into a craft meeting with breakfast included for most of the time. However, the conversation did eventually turn to current affairs, which I found more interesting.

I could do with a few more male participants so that we can bore the ladies with our more technical talk.

Our next gathering will be at Hill Farm, Spring Lane, Packington LE65 1WU on 21<sup>st</sup> May at 10am.

**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.

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

24<sup>th</sup> April

I am pleased to report that the April meeting on the 24th April was greeted with blue skies and freshly mown lawns. With eight members attending and four players needed for a doubles match, the maths worked for a friendly morning of competition. Our next meeting (still on a Friday!) is on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

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

14<sup>th</sup> April

A short report today as there were only two of us!!

We had a long chat over coffee, compared our latest writings and congratulated ourselves on our work. We were supposed to be practising the uncial font today but decided we would encourage all members to do this at home and produce a completed piece of work for the next meeting.

For the last few meetings of this term the suggestion is that we experiment with patterns and lines using a variety of methods e.g. using pencils joined together etc.

Next meeting is at Caryl's on May 12th.

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

8<sup>th</sup> April - Bawdon Lodge Farm Tea Room, Charley Road, Nanpantan

Eight members gathered at Bawdon Lodge Farm to enjoy tea, coffee and cakes. The food available is fairly limited but it was a nice place to sit and chat.

Our next gathering will be at Swarkestone Nursery, Lowes Lane BE73 7GQ at 10am on 13<sup>th</sup> May. This is a firm favourite with the group.

Nine 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.

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

April

The French group continues to meet at 11am every other Monday at the Ivanhoe Club in Ashby.

At present we continue to encourage conversation at the start of each session by each person in turn recounting the things that they have done in the previous fortnight. After that there will be revision of grammar or verbs with translation of interesting articles thrown in for reading and comprehension practice.

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

2<sup>nd</sup> April - Mount Gurkha, 31 Ashby Road, Loughborough

The staff at the Mount Gurkha were most helpful, efficient and kind. The food was Indian with a Gurkha twist and most enjoyable.

For our next soiree we are returning to Pepitos Mexican Restaurant, London Road, Derby DE1 2QN at 6pm on 7<sup>th</sup> May.

So far, eleven people have signed up. If you would like to join then, please let Colin Woodland know at food\_from\_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

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

8<sup>th</sup> April

Today we were 6 once more.

Mary was struggling to locate a marriage in 1872 for two ancestors. They are proving most elusive!

Eileen is now using FindMyPast and researching the excellent newspaper feature. She found a report of her parents' wedding.

JD worked on the life story of his great grandfather, turning the lifeline into a connected story. This requires research into the background events in the area which might have affected him. So far, he has managed to complete it up to his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday as there is so much material to use. But less is more as they say! There is a long way to go to his death at 66...

Dora has purchased Family Tree Maker 2019 and is thinking of dropping FindMyPast. She wants to copy over her tree from Ancestry by Gedcom, but I suggested she should be able to synchronise the whole file more easily as these two have this feature available.

Linda found a link to her paternal great grandmother, which set her on a trail to connect with members of her extended family she has not heard from for 50+ years.

We meet again on 13<sup>th</sup> May

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

14<sup>th</sup> April

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

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

The Rummikub group meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 May we will be meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

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

**17<sup>th</sup> April – Ashwood Nurseries and John's Garden**

Our first coach trip of the year was to Ashwood Nurseries and John's Garden. We had some perfect spring weather and an uninterrupted journey. On arrival we had plenty of time for food and drink before exploring the nurseries with its amazing variety of plants in a beautiful setting.



John's Garden

At 1.30 we met at the entry to John's Garden where we were joined by Howard Drury who was the speaker at our last meeting and who has a lot of connections with the owner. Before exploring the gardens we were given a short talk about them and their history with the superb gardens bordered by the Staffs and Worcester canal. Also visiting the gardens was one of the best plant photographers in the country who was taking pictures for a feature next year in the Times.

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

**9<sup>th</sup> English – Unicorn Inn, Orton on the Hill**

Just thirteen members turned up at the Unicorn Inn at Orton on the Hill for Lunch. There was a wide variety on the menu plus there was an extensive specials board. The standard of service and quality of food remains very high and we will certainly be revisiting in the not too distant future.

Our May venue is the George and Dragon at Thringstone, LE67 8UH on the A512 Ashby/Loughborough Road at noon on 14<sup>th</sup> May. Fourteen have already signed up to be there. If anyone else wishes to join the group please email on luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk to book a place.

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

### April

On 2<sup>nd</sup> April 14 of us welcomed our guest conductor, Patrick Heatherly, who is the musical director at Lichfield u3a recorder group. A few years ago we benefited from two visits by Nick Epton, who also directs recorder groups around the country. Patrick brought some music with him to get us started; a couple of rounds, which were good fun, and a straightforward warm-up. We sat in a different layout, a semicircle, so that we and Patrick could face one another. (We usually sit in a circle.)

We also played some of our own music, including the Telemann tasters, with which we were familiar. He was able to improve our playing, by pointing out changes in dynamics, and getting us to listen more to the other parts. He was very supportive, encouraging, and enthusiastic. We could feel that our playing had improved.

We also paused halfway through for a brief break for a drink and a short discussion. Several members were keen to continue this practice, while others preferred to keep playing for the whole 2 hours. This calls for a debate!

On 16<sup>th</sup> April, there were 13 of us, and we played more three-part music than usual, in preparation for the concert with the Boundary Singers at Linton Heath on 9<sup>th</sup> May. We are going to be careful regarding copyright, as the rules are very strict. We plan to play popular, well-known tunes, as we did for the Open Day last year. In July, for the u3a Festival, there won't be any problems with this issue, as the necessary licence has been obtained for the event, so we can use photocopies. We played some of the Recorder Poppettes: 'When the Red, Red, Robin', 'Puppet on a String', an Early Tudor Trio, 'English Country Gardens', Sellinger's Round, 'Since first I saw your face', and a couple of Spirituals, the Cantique de Jean Racine, and the Hippopotamus.

The next practice, on 7<sup>th</sup> May, will include a practice for the concert. The compromise agreement about the tea-break seems to be for a strictly-limited 10-minute break, with a 10-minute extension to the practice. It has also been agreed that, when Patrick visits again, we start at 9:30 to fit in with the arrival time of his train at Tamworth station at 08:55. Last time he and Marion (his taxi-driver!) had a 30-minute wait before the start of the practice. His next visit will be on 21<sup>st</sup> May. Patrick won't be coming to us every time: we are considering how often would be best for him and for us.

We had a new lady at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup>. I've known her for ages, and she decided to join us to see what we get up to. She seemed to enjoy herself, so we may see her again.

The group is growing! Trouble is, it gets more difficult to keep us all together when we play! Victims of our success!

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

### 23<sup>rd</sup> April – 'A Stropky Lotte' – Tales of Leicestershire Dissenters

Another excellent presentation from our very own Andy Jones with lots of history and informative slides.

A 'Dissenter' was a Protestant who refused to conform to the Church of England, often called a Non-Conformist, or Breakaway, especially during the 17th century when the country was in turmoil after Good Queen Bess passed away.

James I (Of England, VI of Scotland) wanted to make them fall into line with his version of the Church, which involved the appointment of bishops by the crown. The Dissenters felt they should not be told how to worship by the King. But he insisted under pain of imprisonment.

Life wasn't easy for the head that wears the crown and even the Catholics tried to blow him up.

Things were no better under Charles I who went even further and reinstated the idea of the Divine Right of Kings. Which did him no good at all and he lost his head.

Sadly for our Dissenters, Cromwell was no better either and he removed bishops and 'scandalous and malignant' priests altogether. He imposed a form of Protestantism called Presbyterianism, which some non-conformists didn't like. This is partly because the movement in general was prone to splintering into slightly different sects. The upshot was that within the 17th-century Westminster Assembly, "dissenting brethren" opposed the majority of Presbyterians. They believed a national Presbyterian structure was just as stifling as the episcopal structure of the Church of England, arguing for the autonomy of each local congregation.

Following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 things changed yet again, seemingly, and the Clarendon Code (several Acts from 1661 to 1665) tried to insist that they fall into line with the Anglican Church as Charles would like to see it. But subsequent Acts on 1672 and 1673 showed just how difficult that was to enforce.

Well, he didn't last long as James II succeeded him in 1685 but his blinkered and absolutist approach to ruling generally brought about his removal and replacement by William of Orange (King Billy) in the Glorious Revolution in 1688.

The Crown now passed to William and Mary, the curious joint Monarch who at last seemed sympathetic, passing the Act of Toleration in 1689 which granted freedom of worship to Protestant nonconformists (such as Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians) who dissented from the Church of England. It allowed them to hold services in licensed meeting houses but excluded Roman Catholics, Jews, and non-Trinitarians.

Andy now turned to the effect on Ashby.

The Great Ejection followed the Act of Uniformity 1662 in England. Several thousand Puritan ministers were forced out of their positions in the Church of England following the Restoration of Charles II. Some of these came to Ashby.

Samuel Shaw (not stroppey) was Master of Ashby Grammar School, and held secret meetings at night, although it seems he could have been licensed to practice openly. In 1689 he was able to operate from a licensed schoolhouse in what is now Bath Street, but then was very probably in more open ground, being in the lower part of town and more likely to be flooded by the Gilwiskaw Brook. He also preached openly in St Helens Church. In 1675 he gathered a congregation around him having been ejected from his living in Smisby, establishing a chapel in Smisby Street in 1725 after the Act of Toleration. This is the original of the one we now use for our monthly meetings. The reason for it being set back from the street front is conjectural but could be to provide a calm respectful approach from the hurly burly of the main street. Other explanations are available.

Reverend Richard Evans (stroppey) preached illegally at his day school and was liable to fines of 12 pence a day, which would be worth around £15 today. If he didn't pay up, he had personal goods taken to the value to be sold off. The story goes that nobody wanted to buy his stuff!

Other stroppey Ashby non-conformists were the St Helens Churchwarden who was fined but later let off; William Wood whose house was registered as a licensed preaching house; likewise the Doughty Brothers Samuel and Thomas; The Brinsley father and son; The Reverend John Hartley who had a following of 200 in 1692 which fell away to 50 in 1715.

There was much more in Andy's talk but there is no space here to elaborate further on it.

A really interesting canter through a very complex period of our history.

**INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE – Leader: English Stow – indhist@ashbyu3a.co.uk – phone 01530 469152**

**23<sup>rd</sup> English – Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford**

With expectations of possible fuel shortages, we planned a trip which could be cancelled at short notice if necessary. Since Cosford is free (apart from car parking) and neither it, or its café, needed pre-booking, it was ideal. Well the fuel shortages didn't happen and RAF Cosford turned out to be more than just a convenient venue. Its three large halls of planes, engines and paraphernalia were an excellent way to spend a few hours.



English Electric Lightning going vertical as normal!

On display are uniforms and equipment of pilots and ground crews, including replicas of Guy Gibson's medals (VC, DSO and bar, DFC and bar). There are early tanks, motorbikes and other ground vehicles but the main display is, of course, the many wonderful warplanes from WWI through to the Cold War such as the Wellington, Vulcan, Victor, Valiant, TSR2 and a Lightning hanging vertically from the ceiling. You could spend many more hours studying all the exhibits than we had time for today.

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

**27<sup>th</sup> April**

The group met on the unusual date of Mon 27<sup>th</sup> due to holiday and other commitments and were looking at poems of war or conflict as suggested by the members.

The next meeting will be back to our normal schedule of the third Thursday in the month, i.e. the 21<sup>st</sup> this month. If anyone wishes to join the group, please get in touch. (07857688822). You would be very welcome.

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

1<sup>st</sup> April

Not an April Fools joke between us, shame. We were joined by new member Pete for the first time, welcome Pete and he started the session with that popular classic 'Summertime'. Not by Ella but by the Modern Jazz Quartet. Very different but very good. Mike then played a duet from Barbra Streisand's latest CD singing 'The very thought of you' with a mystery singer who only Nev guessed – Bob Dylan! Barbra's voice is still amazing at age 83. Bob's is less so!

We then had show tracks from Les Miserables and Jodie Prenger as Nancy singing 'As long as he needs me' from 'Oliver'

Neil then chose Brenda Lee and 'Fool number one' while Janet chose Paul McCartney's 'Blackbird'

Yogi's first video was the Kovcheg Male Voice Ensemble singing Rachmaninov's 'We praise thee'. Lovely harmonies, and Andy chose Sarah Beattie and Eleonore Cockerham's 'When I survey' with equally lovely harmonies

Nev then offered Fairport Convention with the wonderful voice of Sandy Denny singing 'Who knows where the time goes'

That was followed by Joan Baez singing the operetta 'Bachianas Brasileirus' by Vila Lobos. Not her usual style by any means but lovely.

We then had Connie Francis and 'Who's sorry now' and Luke Evans 'First time ever I saw your face'. At least as good as Roberta Flack's well known version.

Next up was a cleverly put together video of Marc Almond and Gene Pitney supposedly singing together 'Something's gotten hold of my heart' Very clever editing.

Mike had found a 2019 video clip from 'The Voice' where Tom Jones turned around for a young singer only to find out he was Pete Donegan, son of Lonnie. Tom said "Lonnie wrote 'I'll never fall in love again' for me. Do you know it?. Do you want to sing it together?" Which they did. An amazing impromptu version with Tom's voice as good as ever at age 79 then.

That was followed by Frank Sinatra and 'That's Life', Sammy Davis Jr in the film Sweet Charity with 'The rhythm of life'. A very late-sixties vibe to that.

We finished with St Pauls Cathedral Choir singing Allegri's 'Allegrì Miserere' followed by the Stellenbosch Choir and 'Indodana' a Zulu Easter hymn. Beautifully sung.

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

23<sup>rd</sup> April – The Belper Arms, newton Burgoland

With several members away on holiday, there were just 8 of us to try the Belper Arms and yet more new management, and pretty good it was. After a small problem of them wanting us to pre-order but from a new menu which was due out the week before but didn't seem to be available, we settled for using the old menu. It was quite a short menu, which can be a good thing if it means everything is cooked fresh, and we all found something we liked. The service was very friendly and pretty quick and we all tucked in. The food was not the finest, but considerably better than we have had at one or two places recently. A good evening.

On May 28<sup>th</sup> we shall be returning to the Staff of Life in Ticknall which we haven't been to for a while, but recent reports have been good. Anyone wishing to join us, please drop a line to [supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays 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**

**14<sup>th</sup> April – 'Forensic Entomology' by Dr Kate Barnes**

Tanya introduced today's speaker by listing her qualifications; she had obtained a PhD at Lincoln University, had researched woodland environment at Nottingham West Hallam University and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Biology at the University of Derby.

Kate described how environmental studies had been used in a legal framework as far back as 1235 in China but not until 1935 in Britain. She went on to explain how the corpse is gradually broken down by insect infestation. There are three types of invasive insects that are involved, most important are necrophages that feed on the decomposing soft tissue of the body, while predators and parasites also contribute. The green/blue blowfly is often the first to invade the carcass, its sensitive sense of smell being able to detect bodies buried in shallow graves or wrapped in bin liners, suitcases and wheelie bins. Kate has researched how long it takes for blowflies to colonise various dead animals and how the presence of water and coverings like a duvet affects the rate of colonisation. The main objective of these studies is provide a scientific basis for the time of death, a crucial factor in most legal investigations.

Kate described the anatomy of the most common invasive insects noting that they do not have haemoglobin in their blood, so it is green in colour, not red. Also, these insects cannot regulate their body temperature, so need to find a suitable environment to survive. High ambient temperature accelerates the life cycle of blowflies so data loggers are often used to estimate the temperature profile at the scene and then correlate the data against local weather measurements. Blowflies are attracted to natural body orifices, eyes, nose, genitals or an open wound and this is factored into time of death studies. It is important to understand the stages of the blow flies life cycle, from egg, larvae, pupae to adult and how the time-frames are affected by temperature and humidity. Kate explained that the forensic entomologist must search for evidence of blowfly eggs, larvae and pupae under carpets, behind skirting boards or other cracks and crevices to understand the scene of a crime or an accident. Kate also supervises post-graduate students who investigate specific aspects of entomology in outdoor conditions, such as the effects of a wet environment and the collection of flies in bottle traps for study in the laboratory. From Kate's description of her work to estimate the time of death of a person, even when all the evidence is meticulously collected and recorded, it was still subject to wide variation.

After the talk there were many questions on this fascinating subject. Were maggots of blowflies really used to clean open wounds, as shown in the film 'Gladiator' or was that pure fantasy? Turns out, sterile maggots are used under clinical conditions to eat away only the decomposed flesh of a wound, leaving living tissue untouched!

For our next Science & Technology meeting on Tuesday 12th May, Andrew Chandler-Grevatt will take us on a Moss Safari. This will be a virtual talk using Zoom technology and if successful, will allow guest speakers to deliver talks from their homes and avoid the need for long journeys.

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

15<sup>th</sup> April

This month it was my turn to present the wines and I chose a selection of Iberian wines i.e. Spanish and Portuguese. Fortunately Tesco were having one of their 25% off for 6 bottles promotions which, combined with some Clubcard discounts, produced some real bargains. Prices quoted are for the combined discounts.

We started with Porta 6 White 2024 12.5% which was reduced from £9 to £5.44.

This brand is quite well promoted but we'd not tried the white before. It comes from near Lisbon but close to the Atlantic coast. It is a blend of local and more famous grape varieties including Chardonnay and Viognier. It was a very pleasant surprise. Aromatic, fresh and crisp. An ideal aperitif or to drink on its own on a sunny day. We all liked it and thought it great value at the discount price. It scored 7/10 on average.

Next was Marietta Albariño 2024 11.5% £13 -> £8.63

This is made in Galicia, NW Spain. Apparently it is deliberately made slightly off-dry which is not typical for Albariño. However it is delicious. Fruity and gently citrus it is ideal for shellfish for which Galicia is also famous. It scored 7.5/10. Only its price stopping it scoring more.

On to the reds.

Altano Rewilding Edition Douro Red 2022 13.5% £11.25 -> £6.75

This wine is made far up the Douro river near to the Spanish border by the Symington family who are best known for Port producers and uses some Port grape varieties. We found it to be dark and fruity, quite drinkable but without a lot of character. Similar to many other reds out there but a little pricey.

It scored 7/10 on average but one of us didn't like it at all.

Care Garnacha Nativa 2022 14.5% £12.50 -> £9.38 100% Garnacha

This wine comes from Cariñena in NE Spain near Zaragoza which is where Garnacha is originally from. It is used extensively in Rioja wines. At 14.5% it had a good strong body, dark cherry flavour and a smooth taste. Quite a step up from the previous wine, it scored 8.5/10. A good recommendation.

Last but far from least,

Vina del Cure Rioja Gran Reserva, 2018 14% £15.25 -> £11.44

A blend of Tempranillo and Graciano from the Rioja Alta, high up in the foothills of the Ebro Valley. It is made by award-winning Baron de Ley winery and has a 2 years in oak barrels and several more years in bottle to mature. Note that it is 8 years old. On first taste two people said 'That's a serious wine!' Lots of mellow black fruits, a hint of vanilla but no tannic bitterness. Very smooth and a good spiciness. This is a wine to go with roast lamb or beef or a game stew for a special occasion.

Five of us scored it a 9, the others 8.5. On average 8.8/10. One of the best wines we have tasted in quite a long time.

So our wine of the month? The Rioja is an obvious choice for a special occasion but it is still £11.50 after discount so we would recommend the Care Garnacha which is £2 cheaper and very nearly as good. Or the Porta 6 White for a real bargain at £5.44 if you can get it at a discount.



Care Garnacha Nativa

## **THE WALKING GROUPS**

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

#### **15<sup>th</sup> March. Sence Valley Forest Park**

Today was a rerun of the walk we did in September 2024, but slightly truncated. The route took us anti clockwise round the east and northern side of the central lake. Enroute, we stopped off to watch the wild birds out on the water, including gulls, ducks, and swans. The ducks brought their fluffy ducklings to say hello, but soon the swan muscled in as much as to say, "Keep off my patch!" Later we spotted a heron in the reeds, but he (?) disdained to say hello.

The weather stayed dry and mild, although with some rain threatening, and the route now bent round the western end and southern side of the central lake. 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. We stopped for a little while halfway up and made use of the nice bench there.

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 1.5 miles and was completed in just under the hour. 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.

A thoroughly pleasant morning in good company.

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

#### **7<sup>th</sup> April. Ticknall, Foremark and Milton, led by Kevin**

The sun was shining as twenty-five of us gathered for an earlier start than normal at the Staff of Life Ticknall.

Following a group photo, we crossed the road and passed though Ticknall Cricket Club ground turning left towards Foremark sawmill and Milton.

After crossing the Repton and Ticknall road we begun the steady climb up to Brookdale farm, passed the reservoir on our left and continued upwards to Bondwood farm stopping for short break.

Continuing on, we passed Carvers Rock, Scaddows Farm, Scaddows Cotttage, and back to the Staff of Life for a well earned rest after 8 miles and twelve stiles.

#### **21<sup>st</sup> April. From Lakeside Café, Moira led by Michael O'Donoghue**

We were blessed to have a beautiful Spring Day, if a little chilly, for the Walking Group and we met at 09.30 at the Lakeside Café, Moira. Once everyone had been registered and gave their lunch orders to the Café , we headed to Moira furnace and down the canal heading towards Castle Gresley and from there to Albert Lake, where we stopped for a brief refreshment break. Walking clockwise around the lake, we then headed up the hill to Boothorpe and through the woods back to Moira .

We had a record number of members joining the walk , including five new members which was great. Lunch at Lakeside was hopefully enjoyed by all.

The walk was just over 8 miles, so longer than initially indicated but glad that everyone managed the extra distance and congratulations on completing the route and on time for our lunch.

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

13<sup>th</sup> April. From Grace Dieu, led by Alison

15 of us met on a lovely spring morning at the car park for Grace Dieu Priory (better known as The Bulls Head car park!) on the A512 at Thringstone. There were 4 'newbies' to the group and, hopefully, we haven't put them off too much and will see them on future walks.



A good turn out

The walk took us through the woods along the Grace Dieu trail, eventually crossing Turoloough Road and into Cademan Woods. We passed some impressive rock formations en route including Calvary Rock, Reg's Crack and High Cademan. Along Warren Lane and back into Grace Dieu Woods and the Priory.

It was quite a short walk at 4.3 miles but we had sunshine, bluebells, an impressive viaduct, a bubbling stream and an ancient monument - what more could you ask.

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

April

We didn't walk in April as we only walk bi-monthly and there will no walk in May as the date falls on Bank Holiday Monday. However during May there are plenty of guided walks during the National Forest Walking Festival. Walks range from a few miles to 16 miles if you are feeling energetic!  
<https://nationalforest.org>

Our next walk will be on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July starting from Ticknall Village Hall

## Your Committee

If you want to get in touch with any of us, here are our email addresses

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