

## Newsletter July 2026

### Interest Groups Timetable for July

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 28 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Kathy Powis – 'The Mary Rose'
Activities	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> Fri 17 <sup>th</sup>	1-3 pm 2-4 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Arts and Crafts	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup>	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Breakfast	Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Bull's Head, Thringstone LE67 8LR
Bridge	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Mon 20 <sup>th</sup> Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	11am-1.30pm 7-9pm TBC 11am TBC 7-9pm TBC	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	-	-	No meeting this month
Coffee and Chat	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Newlands Farm, Hilton, Derby DE65 5GQ
Computer	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> Mon 13 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 31 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10 am	Hicks Lodge, Willesley Woodside, LE65 2UP
Drawing and painting	Thu 15 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBA
Family History	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 2 <sup>nd</sup>	6 pm	Hickory's Smokehouse, Swarkestone Rd , Chellaston DE73 5UE
French	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> Mon 20 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	Arrive for 1pm	Self-drive to Greenacres Holbrook, Belper DE56 0TF. Lovely large garden. £10 entry including tea and cake after.
History	Thu 23 <sup>rd</sup>	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Yogi Godwin - 'The entrepreneur Joseph Wilkes (1733-1805)'

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Industrial Heritage	Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup>	TBA	Macclesfield Silk Mill
Leisurely Walking	Tue 7 <sup>th</sup>	10.15 for 10.30 start	Meet at the lower car park of Sence Valley, Ravenstone Road, Ibstock, LE67 6NW
Literature	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup>	1.30 pm	At Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 9 <sup>th</sup>	12 noon	Belper Arms, Newton Burgoland LE67 2SE
Medium Walks	Mon 13 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Ticknall Village Hall CP, Ingelby Lane DE73 7JX
Music Appreciation	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	At Pete's
Poetry Reading	Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	42 Avenue Rd, Ashby
Recorder	Thu 9 <sup>th</sup> Thu 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup> Tue 28 <sup>th</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	Tue 14 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	Packington Hall. 'Why Hydrogen' a Zoom talk by u3a speaker David Dundas
Scrabble	Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 17 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Meet at car park near St Peter's church, Stapenhill.
Social Events	-	-	No events this month
Supper Club	Thu 23 <sup>rd</sup>	7 for 7.30 pm	The Green Man, Main St, Clifton Campville B79 0AX
The 10 Milers	Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	9.15 for 9.30	Meet at Ticknall Village Hall Carpark. DE73 7JX
Trips and Outings	-	-	No outings this month
Walking	Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Tue 21 <sup>st</sup>	9.30 for 9.45 9.30 for 9.45	Meet in Hartington opp. the Charles Cotton Hotel SK17 0AW. TBA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 15 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm	Annie's house

## Interest Groups Timetable for early August

Group	Date	Time	Venue
French	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Bridge	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	TBC	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Walking	Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 for 9.45	TBA
Leisurely Walking	Tue 4 <sup>th</sup>	10.15 for 10.30	TBA
Music Appreciation	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBA
Activities	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	1 – 3 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Digital photography	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	TBA
Recorder	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	6 pm	Wing Wah Chinese Buffet, New Street, Burton upon Trent DE14 3QW

## **CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERT TRIP**

On Wednesday 14th October 2026 at 7.30pm at the Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham

**NDR Philharmonic Hannover Orchestra Programme:**

<b>Prokofiev</b>	<b>Classical Symphony</b>
<b>Rachmaninov</b>	<b>Piano Concerto No.1</b>
<b>Brahms</b>	<b>Symphony No.2</b>

Based on car sharing from Ashby to Clifton South Park & Ride, then tram to a stop immediately adjacent to the Concert Hall.

Cost of Concert Ticket, Tram Travel and Contribution to petrol, cost estimated at £40 - £45.

A pre-concert meal at Bistrot Pierre will be arranged.

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 concert seats required

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](mailto:colinellis1950@gmail.com)

## MONTHLY MEETING

### 23rd June – Martin Lloyd – ‘Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies’

Martin worked for HM Immigration Service for 24 years. He now writes books, appears on TV and radio and gives talks to groups such as u3as. Today his talk was about passports, assassins, traitors and spies and the influence three people had on the way passports are treated and issued around the world. Amazingly Martin spoke without slides or photos and without any form of script or notes for 50 minutes whilst rattling off endless facts, dates times and names.

His first tale was of Italian Felice Orsini and English radicals in his attempt to assassinate Napoleon III in Paris. He believed that Napoleon was blocking the unification of Italy, which Orsini supported, because a unit of the French army was stationed in the Papal States protecting the Pope, and the papal states divided the would-be Italy into two halves, North and South. Orsini needed a passport to enter France but one didn't need to be a national of that country to get one. You applied to the consulate of that country to buy one but the French knew he was a radical and so would not issue him one. He therefore bought a British passport. To get it one had to personally know the Foreign Secretary or have someone vouch for you. Orsini got his passport under a false name and hence was able to travel to Paris. His bombing attempt failed to kill or injure Napoleon but 8 others were killed and over a hundred injured. One of his accomplices was caught almost immediately and he confessed, giving the names of the others. Orsini was arrested and executed. But it didn't end there. British passports, like Orsini's, didn't contain any details of what the holder looked like and so it was easy to use a forged or fake passport. The French fury over the British allowing Orsini to travel on a British passport which had been signed off by the then Foreign Secretary who was now the PM Lord Palmerston, caused Palmerston's resignation and collapse of the government. All future passports would include details of the person for whom it was issued.

The second tale started with Germany declaring war on Russia in 1914. Hundreds of Americans in Berlin demanded their passports be endorsed with an exit visa by the German Foreign Ministry to allow them to leave. One such American was Charles A Inglis who was advised that his passport had been collected the previous day by someone from the United States embassy. This was evidently not the truth.

In August an American named Charles Inglis registered at a hotel in Edinburgh. His travels took him all over the UK and on to Ireland where he was arrested. He was searched and a notebook was found listing details of British naval movements and addresses in Norway where letters had been sent. These letters contained other letters to be sent on to Germany and had been opened and read by the British Authorities. The man arrested as Charles Inglis was actually a German called Carl Lody who was charged with espionage and executed.

This led to countries around the world realising that passports should have photos of the holder, a design which lasts to this day.

The third concerned the arrest and trial of William Joyce, Lord Haw Haw. He was famous for making radio propaganda broadcasts from Germany to England claiming that we were losing the war. He was captured after the war ended in 1945 and stood trial for treason. However his father had been born in Ireland, then part of the UK, but he emigrated to the USA with his wife and took up US citizenship. William was born in the USA but travelled to England where he fraudulently obtained a British passport and later travelled to Germany where his Nazi sympathies lay. He then took on German citizenship. At his trial it was argued that he could not be acting treasonably as he wasn't British but the judge ruled that because he had travelled under a British passport, he was availing himself of its protection which he had abused. This made his acts treasonable. He was found guilty and sentenced to death.

A very detailed and interesting talk given by someone with an inside knowledge of the Passport Office and its history.

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

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

June

Not much to report on from the Activities Group, but we have seen a number of new members join us to have a taster of what is on offer and mostly the feedback has been very positive.

The ongoing challenge is that attendance overall remains low but even with small attendance, the fun, laughter and enjoyment level, is always high.

Regards,  
Michael

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

4<sup>th</sup> June

The "Crafty Ladies" met once again at the beginning of the month. We resumed work on our patchwork on a bag. This project, which is reinforcing many techniques we have learned in the past year, should be completed in one more session. However, we are taking a break next month to make a pair of beaded summer earrings.

The next meeting will be at Packington Village Memorial Hall at 9.45am on 2<sup>nd</sup> July

### **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**

18<sup>th</sup> June - Robin's Nest, Burton Road, Measham

Eleven of us congregated at the Robin's Nest for breakfast on 18th June. There was ample choice on the menu. None of us was brave enough to attempt their largest breakfast on the menu but all found something to their taste. The food was quickly and attractively presented. Once our bellies were full and many good conversations were ended, there was time to wander through the Aladdin's cave to peruse camping equipment; outdoor clothing; electrical goods; household items; DIY stuff and much, much more before wending our way home.

The next breakfast gathering will be at the Bull's Head, Thringstone at 10am on 16 July 2026. This will be a buffet style breakfast and you can have as much or as little as you want for £7.99 and bottomless tea or coffee for £3.09!

If you wish to join us, sign up on the sheet at the back of the Church at the Monthly meeting or send an email to breakfast@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

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

15<sup>th</sup> June

Four attended today, with not a lot to discuss.

We did look at the use of the scanner function available on tablets and mobile phones. This is a very useful way of capturing a better image than by photographing the document.

Printing directly from the device needs attention to the printer settings, though.

It also captures the document in .pdf format, which is suitable for most purposes. One caveat: scan one item at a time. Otherwise, the resultant composite file will be too big to email.

We then looked at 'casting' from laptops and mobiles direct to a Smart TV. This turns out to be quite simple, although the instructions from Dr. Google need to be interpreted somewhat as they don't necessarily accord with what is actually available on the casting device.

Windows 11 offers a variety of on-screen display options, with the ability to have more than one window running on the TV.

It is, of course, necessary to be on the same Wi-Fi network as the Smart TV.

We next meet on 1st July at 16 Winchester Way.

### **CROQUET – Leader: Rupert Knapton - [croquet@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:croquet@ashbyu3a.co.uk)**

#### 26<sup>th</sup> May

On safety grounds we cancelled the June meeting of the croquet group, when temperatures were setting new records.

Hopefully the July meeting on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> will have no such problems .

### **DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY - Leader: John Howlett - [digphoto@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:digphoto@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 461774**

#### 4<sup>th</sup> June

We were planning to go to Hick's Lodge, but the weather wasn't looking promising with rain forecast (do you remember rain?) and so we cancelled at the very last minute on Thursday morning. Unfortunately one new member didn't get the message and waited for half an hour while no-one else turned up. Sorry Ian. Ironically it didn't actually rain that morning. We will try again this month on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **CALLIGRAPHY – Leader: Sue Cornell - [calligraphy@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:calligraphy@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - phone 01530 413345**

#### 9<sup>th</sup> June

Four of us met to compare work we had done at home. Jenny got the gold star as she had spent a lot of time practising and writing out a poem in the uncial font. She had also written the word 'shadow' in a range of ways, using two pens/pencils fixed together. We were all very impressed!!!

We spent the rest of the time experimenting and trying to produce something presentable 🤩

In July there will be no meeting as some of us are going to attend a workshop on 'modern calligraphy'. August is our month off so our next meeting will be on Sept 8<sup>th</sup> when we will be making some backgrounds for our work and planning next term's projects.

It's been a busy year and we should be really proud of what we have achieved. Roll on next year!!

### **FRENCH – Co-ordinator: Tony Smith - [french@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:french@ashbyu3a.co.uk) - 01530 831822**

#### June

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.

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

**18<sup>th</sup> June – Swarkestone Nursery**

Twelve of us gathered at the recently refurbished Swarkestone Nursery Garden Cafe for tea, coffee and cakes. The café area has been much increased and redecorated and the servery area completely reorganised. Once the new system of ordering had been mastered, all went well. Our orders were efficiently and correctly delivered to our table. A good time was had by all. Afterwards, many browsed the garden centre and some purchased new plants for their gardens before returning home.

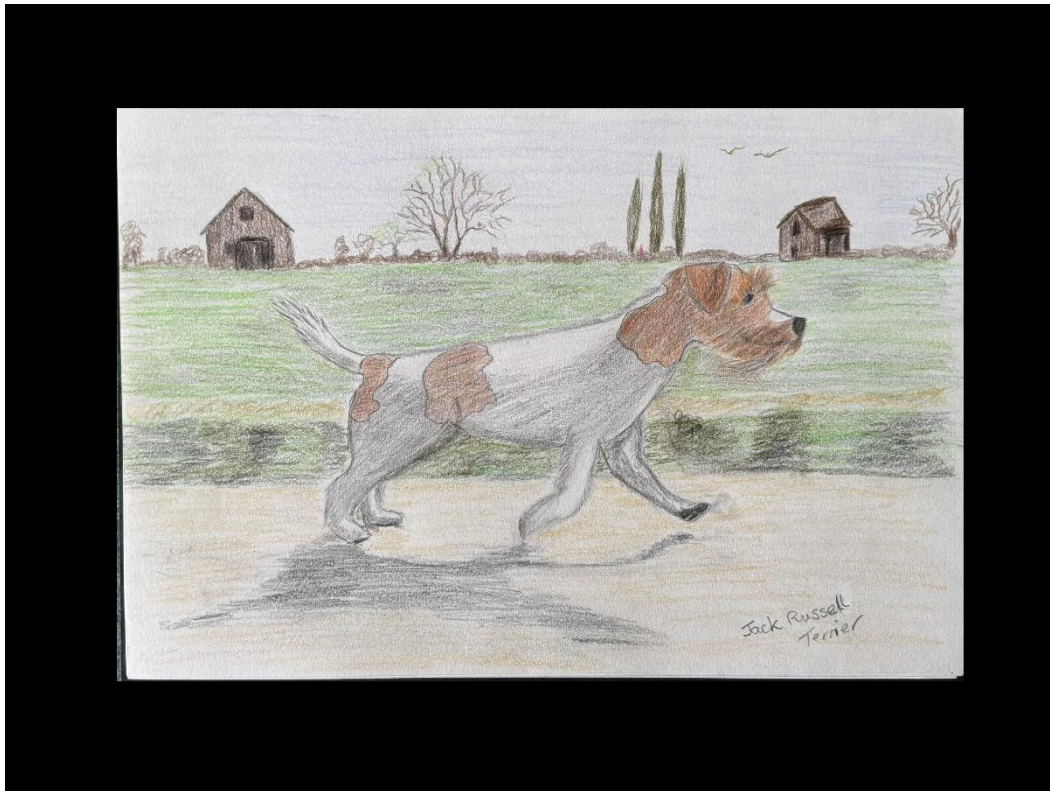
Our next gathering will be at Newlands Farm, Hilton DE65 5GQ at 10am on 8<sup>th</sup> July.

7 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 or sign upon the sheet at the back of the church at the monthly meeting.

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

**17<sup>th</sup> June**

The drawing and painting group met again, this time to paint something beginning with the letter J. Christine painted her Mum's Jug, Lesley, a Jack Russell terrier and John painted a Jay.



**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 July we will be meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

4<sup>th</sup> June - Tarboush, 12a Market St, Loughborough

Twelve of us managed to find parking and the way to the Tarboush in Market street in Loughborough for a meal of Syrian and Moroccan fare. The restaurant was very nicely decorated to give the impression that we were somewhere Moroccan, rather than in Loughborough. The food was truly authentic, well presented and graciously served by attentive, pleasant and helpful staff. A truly enjoyable time was had by all.

Our next Venue, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, will help us to prepare for celebrating American independence day with a typically American Smokehouse BBQ. It will be at the Hickory's Smokehouse, Swarkestone Road, Chellaston DE73 5UE.

So Far, twelve people have signed up. If you would like to join them, please let Colin Woodland Know at food\_from\_afar@ashbyu3a.co.uk Or sign up on the sheet provided at the back of the church at the members monthly meeting.

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

10<sup>th</sup> June

Today we had an excellent turnout with 9 and lots to talk about.

Adrian is still working on his written story, today using newspapers from around 1800. One fascinating detail he has unearthed concerns a rather remote cousin who had a most picturesque career before dying at the age of 26.

Sue is still engaged with her 3rd great grandparents and very large family. It seems they started out in Norfolk and migrated to Lancashire. Among them was a teacher. JD and she discussed the records available for teachers and the treasure trove their school logs can be.

Elizabeth is now compiling the back stories of her ancestors, to add to the summaries in her files. Bringing her parents' lives to life, as it were!

Linda has been working on someone and their business she learned about through family scuttlebutt, but is finding little information. She is considering an outing to the Birmingham Archives.

Jan is getting her certificates in order and has identified a great uncle who had been overlooked. This is good proof of the value of a disciplined approach to records!

Ana is similarly sorting out her certificates, and in particular ensuring that all those with her first name are valid. She too is interested in a trip to Birmingham.

Mary is working on the Walton's of Billingham (Not a John-boy amongst them. If you know...you know!) In the process she has uncovered two wills which we thoroughly enjoyed deciphering. They are a mine of family information, but can raise more questions than answers: why was the eldest son left so little?

JD discussed the history of primary education and school life with Sue, including School logs and where to find them.

Shirley is having trouble with using her tablet, and her laptop seems to be unreliable. For next time I suggest some help from the Computer Group.

Afterwards the idea of a joint trip to Birmingham Archives was being mooted. Options include going by train from Burton or Tamworth, or car sharing. Watch this space!

We meet again on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

**18<sup>th</sup> June – Powys Castle**

Today we had our June garden group trip to Powys castle near Welshpool. It was a good journey and the weather was fabulous. The castle is set on a hill and the garden is laid with terraces bordered by wide planted areas. There were many varieties of shrubs and herbaceous plants in flower and trees gently swaying in the light breeze.



Powys Castle. Photo by Mike Peel ([www.mikepeel.net](http://www.mikepeel.net)).

Powys castle is a National Trust property and has a small restaurant , shop and museum space. The garden is large and steep but so beautiful. There is a minibus available to take visitors to the bottom of the garden and bring them back up if the walking is too much but you would miss the beauty of the terraces if you took the bus both ways. Today's trip was very successful and enjoyed by all who came.

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

**11<sup>th</sup> June - Wolferstan Arms, Shuttington**

A booking was made at the Wolferstan Arms, Shuttington for 12 group members to take lunch on 11 June. On the day, sixteen turned up and the table had to be extended and rearranged so that we could all fit. The staff took it all in their stride and skilfully served us promptly and correctly with good humour. Unfortunately, our table location meant that we could not admire the lovely view across the sloping meadow to the distant woods. Despite the day being overcast, the view was still beautiful.

Our July venue is the Belper Arms in Newton Bergoland on 9 July at midday. Fourteen have already signed up to be there. If anyone else wishes to join the group please email on [luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:luncheon@ashbyu3a.co.uk) to book a place or sign up on the sheet placed at the rear of the church at the monthly meeting.

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

### **25<sup>th</sup> June – Artefacts from Ashby Museum**

On one of the hottest days on record, 17 Historians turned out to listen to our own Michael Hardy talk about and show us a collection of artefacts from Ashby Museum.

He is a part-time volunteer there and brought a wonderful collection of oddities which mark the history of our town and its surrounds.

First, he talked us through the display items, naming them and giving us a potted history. Then we had the chance of handling them ourselves and reading the fuller descriptions that came with them.

Too numerous to list all of them, we had sections of rail and tramways, the last tram ticket issued on the Burton and Ashby Light Railway, a scale model of one of the trams, small-scale potters' models of sanitary and plumbing ware, a brick with the interesting logo of 'DUR EX' stamped inside the 'frog', a whimble (other words are whimple, wimbrel, with variations, throw-crook, or scud winder, or even Womble) used for winding straw into cord to secure sheaves of corn for stooks, a 78rpm recording of 'Ashby de la Zouch Castle Abbey by the Sea', soaps from the old soap factory, and an ingenious analogue board for noting what items were needed in the kitchen of a stately home (just like the one in Downton Abbey!). There were more, but we spent a lot of time handling these things from a by-gone age and asking Michael questions about them.

As an event for a very hot day, it could not have been better. The museum is always worth a visit as there is much to see there, and the staff are extremely helpful and knowledgeable about Ashby. Of note is the very large collection of photos of the old Light Railway, which, unusually, was operated by the Midlands Railway, which explains its title of 'Railway' rather than Tramway. You can see the last of the original tracks in the approach to the offices which now occupy the old station buildings.

Yogi skipped his usual 'Anniversary' notes in favour of a quick recap of forthcoming events, including a replacement for the cancelled visit to Leeds, all of which are now on the website.

Thank you, Michael: a real treat!

## **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

## **TRIPS AND OUTINGS – Leader: Colin Ellis – trips@ashbyu3a.co.uk – phone 01530 272592**

### **4<sup>th</sup> June**

After a long gap going back to pre-covid, we at last made it out to a live concert. 12 of us met up at Clifton South tram station for the ride into Nottingham, where Colin had booked us in for an early evening dinner at Bistrot Pierre. That proved to be very good with excellent, prompt but not rushed service and brilliant food. Many said it was the best meal they'd had in ages.

We then walked the short distance round to the concert hall.

The Hallé were in fine form. The first piece - 'Taras Bulba' is about a fictional Ukrainian Cossack and his sons fighting for the Ukrainian independence. The conductor, Japanese/American Euan Shields dedicated to the present day Ukrainian people.

The second piece was Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto brilliantly performed by Dutch soloist Simone Lamsma, who earned a standing ovation twice, once, most unusually, in the middle and again at the end.

The Dvorak 8th Symphony was excellently performed by the orchestra but Simone Lamsma had already stolen the show. A great night out.

**24<sup>th</sup> June – Churnet Valley Railway, Staffs**

It was, up to then, the hottest day of the year when we gathered at Featherbed Lane to car-share out into the Staffordshire Moors to ride the steam trains of Churnet Valley Railway. On arrival, the car park was filling up and a coach had just arrived with what seemed like 100 5yo school children. The cafe and platform was teeming with people all looking for a bit of shade before boarding the train. We were half expecting the train to be cancelled or at least replaced by a diesel because of the danger of sparks causing lineside fires, but no, there was a steam engine coupled to the front of a rake of 8 coaches.



We left promptly at 10.30 from Froghall station heading north up the pretty Churnet Valley beside the R Churnet and the Caldon Canal stopping briefly at Consall. There are signs of early industrial activity such as forges, potteries and lime kilns on the way to Cheddleton where we could see engine sheds and the Boat Inn pub we would be heading to later.

It wasn't too hot on the train when it was moving, the air conditioning (open windows!) providing cooling. But it was quite a bit hotter when stopped.

There are the remains of other now disused lines that lead to Stoke and Leek before we stopped at Ipstones where the loco ran round to the other end to bring us back.

At one point as we crossed a level crossing, the fireman had to get down from the engine to see us safely across the road as there are no gates on the crossing!

On the return the track is mostly uphill and the engine was struggling noticeably and twice it came to a halt whilst we waited for it to cool down. Eventually we made it back to Froghall Station 30 minutes late. We dashed out of the train and back to the cars to head off to the pub getting there just in time before our 2pm booking. Another party from the train had booked for 1.30 and they arrived after us. By now it was baking hot outside and pretty hot inside but the pub staff did a remarkable job of taking our orders and getting them served up in quick time. The food was very good, very tasty and remarkably cheap.

We were back in Ashby by 5pm after having a great day out despite the dire warnings of heat. Thank you to the drivers who got us there and back safely and coolly. Air conditioned cars are a great life-saver in this weather.

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

June

This month we have been reading 'Anything is Possible' by Elizabeth Strout. It has been a very complex book but a very good read. It will be an interesting book to discuss at our next meeting.

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

June

The big event coming up is the u3a Festival in York on the 1st to 3rd July. We will be playing there on the Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

There were 14 of us at our meeting on 4th June. We played a variety of music, some of which we are getting to know quite well. We are starting to decide on our list for the Festival in York, so that we can practise it in good time:-

Variations on Greensleeves

English Country Gardens

Sellinger's Round

Since First I Saw Your Face

Simple Gifts

Cantique de Jean Racine

The Hippopotamus

Pitts Quartets : Rondeau, Cherry Tree Rag

This is as far as we have got. Some of the pieces are for 4 parts: descant, treble, tenor and bass, whereas the others are written for descant, treble and tenor only. Some of us will need to change instruments between groups of pieces.

We decided to have an extra practice on 11<sup>th</sup> June for those playing at York.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, we had our usual practice, playing the pieces for York, plus some others. We had another practice for those going to York, the following Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> June. We're taking it (fairly) seriously.

We now have our banners, and name badges.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July, there will be no meeting, as seven of us will be at York at the Festival. We'll be able to report on our experience next month. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

Next meeting 9<sup>th</sup> July.

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

June

The group spent two productive meetings looking at poetry concerned with war and conflict which provoked some heartfelt and absorbing discussion. We spent a lot of time on Auden's poem 'September 1, 1939', raising some important and still relevant questions.

Tanya's choices of poems written in response to conflict in Sarajevo/Bosnia and Czechoslovakia were new to all of us and very worthwhile of our time. We also looked at writing by Heaney, Charles Causley, Simon Armitage, Primo Levi and Herbert Reed and I think we all felt that this theme had been a very meaningful and valuable choice.

In July we will be looking at poetry written by female writers. If anyone else would like to join us, please get in touch.

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

3<sup>rd</sup> June

Ten members met at Nev's house for our monthly music session. Janet started us off with the first of 3 female singers, the wonderful Whitney Houston singing 'One moment in time' followed by Andy's choice of Yorkshire's finest Kate Rusby and 'Who will now sing me lullabies and then Sue's first pick – Kirsty MacColl and 'In these shoes' complete with a hilariously rude video.

Brenda brought us some wonderful jazz violin playing from Ben Holder with 'What a difference a day makes' while Mike offered a very different but equally talented violinist Chloe Chua playing Vivaldi's 'Summer'

Neil switched to pop with Paul Young singing 'Everything must change' and Lesley had chosen Ellie Goulding and 'How long will I love you'

Sallie took us back to classical with the ever popular 'Radetzky March' played by the Wiener Philharmonic and Dorothy chose pianist Ida Andersson's excellent rendition of Sibelius' 'Finlandia'.

Nev played us a lovely version of 'Mountains of Mourne' sung by Don McLean, then Janet offered another great female singer – Tina Turner and 'I can't stand the rain'.

Andy had chosen a very funny reply to 'The girl from Ipanema' with Janie Dee and 'The boy from ...'

Sue found an interesting video of actor Jeff Goldblum on piano with the Mildred Snitzer Orchestra and a very jazzy version of 'Cantalupe Island'. Excellent stuff. Brenda gave us more jazz with the ever popular Ella and 'Summertime'

Mike had chosen the Blues Band and 'Let the good times roll' live, while Neil had picked Neil Young and one of his finest songs 'Unknown legend'.

Lesley 2<sup>nd</sup> choice was the incomparable Dolly Parton with one of her bluegrass songs 'Try' and Nev followed that with another legend, Linda Rondstat singing 'Love me tender' Sallie closed the session with Liverpool's own Frankie Vaughan and 'The garden of Eden'. A great end to another great session.

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

25<sup>th</sup> June – The Otter, Kegworth

On the hottest day of the year, so far, we ventured out to the Otter just south of Kegworth on the A6. As it backs on to the River Soar we were all hoping that it might be a little cooler than elsewhere. As it happened there was a gale blowing through the windows which threatened to blow anything and everything off the table. Although it was very refreshing it does prove that you should be careful what you wish for!

The pub was packed out, as was the car park, with everyone else from near and far having the same idea as us. Unfortunately that meant that service was a little slow (I'll give the pub the benefit of the doubt that it was the packed house causing the delays!).

Most of us seemed to choose a variation on the same thing, various meats on skewers with salad and trimmings. The meat was very tasty but the salad was distinctly mean. My mango and pineapple slaw contained 3 small pieces of pineapple and just 1 of mango. If one was being generous, one might think that everybody had been ordering the same and they were running out of supplies, or the portions may just be very mean. Desserts were generally ok. Not the best meal we've had recently but not terrible either.

For next month we are off to a new venue for us, The Green Man at Clifton Campville, where the landlord has assured us we are in for a treat! Fingers crossed.

Anyone wishing to join us, please drop a line to [supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk](mailto:supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## **SOCIAL EVENTS Organiser; Glenys Morrice – socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk**

We are planning a Fish Supper for 1st October to be held at The Beeches, Burton Rd, Ashby. Just like last year there will be a light hearted quiz, but this year there will be a choice of menu. Details will be circulated when negotiations are completed with the pub.

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

9<sup>th</sup> June – 'Technology in the theatre' by Kit Lane

Kit Lane gave a fascinating talk on the Performing Arts and technological effects used in theatre and music productions, with many demonstrations.

He started his career as a computer science graduate and later did a degree in performing arts and theatre in London. In 2006 he became a lecturer at Derby University with responsibility for a number of related degree courses. The list of special effects used in theatre and music production is enormous. His first major topic was lighting, and he had brought several examples to illustrate this topic. Lighting is now powered by LEDs which produce more light per watt. He outlined how they could mix colours to achieve a particular effect and how productions could scroll through different colour mixes, as well as moving colours across the stage. There was even special software to control light shows. Kit had worked on several famous national and international shows and also the TV show Strictly Come Dancing.

We then moved onto sound which is governed by WHO Global Standard for safe listening. The safe limit for sound is 100 decibels, and it's essential the sound engineers do not exceed this. Sound engineers often have to coordinate the sound from 30 or more actors who are singing in a production as they come in and out of the melody. If they leave the stage their microphone must be switched off in case they make any embarrassing remarks off stage!

There is even a system for projecting sound to move across the stage. This could simulate the sound of a helicopter taking off and flying overhead for example. Kit stressed that expertise in computers and networks was essential for the production of these special effects nowadays.

He explained the mechanics of raising actors in the air using counterweights and the many moving platforms that theatres use to change stage sets and scenery quickly.

Next we looked at particular special effects, such as smoke, fog and mist. Theatres use water and glycol mixes to achieve this, but they would also sometimes use Dry Ice (-80 degrees C) and even liquid nitrogen (-198 degrees C).

Sometimes special flame effects are required, projecting flames as high as 40m in the air. Outdoors of course! They could even create a water scene with a boat floating in 30 tons of water, although the stage had to be specially strengthened on this occasion.

Lastly we looked at lasers which were used extensively by music shows. He was even able to demonstrate many amazing special effects including the double slit effect which is a feature of quantum mechanics.

Kit's talk was incredibly detailed and entertaining; covering so many of the features used in theatre productions. Now when we go to the theatre or a music event we'll know so much more about what is happening behind the scenes.

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

17<sup>th</sup> June

This month Chris brought along four wines each of a different colour for our delectation. We had white, red, rosé and orange! Unfortunately due to various reasons there were only four of us there to taste them.

First off was the white, a Tesco Finest Cote du Rhone Villages 2024 13% Normally £9.75 but bought at £7.30 during a 25% off sale. Very little white Rhone is made as Rhone Villages which is a higher appellation making superior wine. This is unoaked but nonetheless has a rich, creamy mouthfeel whilst still being citrus enough to give a refreshing taste. Quite floral. A very drinkable aperitif to drink on its own or with fish dishes. We all liked this and all scored it 8/10

Second was an English Rosé from Balfour Winery in Kent 2024. Again Tesco Finest 11.5% at £12.50. This was Fruity and off-dry but with an odd cabbagey smell and an acidic aftertaste. Unfortunately we didn't really like this and everyone scored it 6/10 and even that was rather generous considering the price. Checking the reviews on Tesco's website 2/3 of the reviewers gave it just 1 star.



Third was the strange one. Orange wines have become quite trendy in recent years. They are made by fermenting white grapes with their skins to give an orange colour to the wine. There is no orange fruit involved. This wine was yet again one of Tesco's Finest, Gerard Bertrand Genora Orange wine 2023. 12.5% £12 but reduced to £6.75 on their end of line shelf. It is an organic wine, a blend of Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Viognier and Muscat. The latter two grapes give it sweetness but slightly smoky flavour, there is also spice and a strangely tangerine taste. It would go with a variety of foods from scallops or smoked fish to Christmas pudding, even a bacon sandwich! On scoring we though it deserved 7/10



Last was the red. A Sainsbury's Cotes du Ventoux, Southern Rhone 2024 13% at £10 reduced to £6.75. It looks very dark almost black which is in line with the taste of blackcurrants. Very smooth, un-oaked but quite dry. Typically French. Not sweetened up like so many red wines are nowadays. Perhaps not a wine to be drinking in a heatwave but it would be lovely with a beef casserole. It reminded us of a French restaurant's house wine. Decent, solid without being exceptional.

We each scored it 8/10

So to our wine of the month. The best two wines were both from the Rhone Valley and both scored 8/10 but, considering the weather, I think it should go to the Tesco Finest Cote du Rhone Village white. A cool glass of that whilst sitting in the garden would go down well.

## **THE WALKING GROUPS**

### **The 10 MILERS – Leader Christine Green – h May – phone 07784 738597**

We didn't walk in June but our next walk will be on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July starting from Ticknall Village Hall

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

#### **16<sup>th</sup> June. Beacon Hill and Outwoods, led by Val and Trev**

On a bright sunny day 20 of us set out from Beacon Hill lower car park, walking out to Broombriggs Hill to admire the view over Leicester and "Old John" in Bradgate Park.

We continued along the ridge to cross back into Beacon Hill Park and upwards to the Beacon, where we walked on to cross the Avenue and down through the trees to cross the stream over stepping stones. In the field we stopped for our break in the warm sunshine.

Then onwards, to cross the road into the Outwoods, following the tracks down to the lower path, which eventually heads back to the road, which on a good path we followed it back to Beacon Hill Car park and picnic area, where those of us who brought picnics, stopped for a well earned break. We had walked 6.5 miles.

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

#### **8<sup>th</sup> June. From Moira Furnace, led by Alison**

12 of us - 11 'oldbies' and 1 'newbie' - met at Moira Furnace on a slightly wet morning, hence the group photograph under the furnace bridge. Fortunately, the rain did not last too long and it turned out quite a pleasant morning.

After crossing Measham Road we took a very concealed footpath to Hicks Lodge. Skirting the lake, we then crossed Willesley Lane and into Oakthorpe Colliery Park, past the pit head markers and onto Pastures Lane to Oakthorpe. Onto Donisthorpe, through the Woodland Park and back to the Furnace. 5 miles completed.

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

#### **19<sup>th</sup> June. A walk around Melbourne Pool and woodland**

10 people met at Melbourne town car park on a very hot day, so we were very glad we'd decided on this walk as it is mainly in shaded woodland.

We left the town going past the united reform church and within 5 minutes we were in open fields with wonderful views then down hill to the woods which border Melbourne Pool.

The woods were very peaceful with lots of bird song, and really good views across the pool, especially of The Dower house and further along Melbourne Hall. On Leaving the woods we followed the path alongside the pool to the bridge where we took a slight detour to the right to see Jonny Vegas's most unusual glamping sight called 'A Field of dreams'. Very interesting!!

We then continued round the pool, past the hall, and made our way into town to have coffee at Meaks where we had a table reservation. The service was excellent in a lovely cool environment.

## **LEISURELY WALKS – Leader Estelle Sandles – leisurely-walk@ashbyu3a.co.uk – 07919 986456**

The group are due to have their first walk on Tuesday July 7th at 10.15 for 10.30 start, meeting at the lower car park of Sence Valley Ravenstone Road, Ibstock, LE67 6NW.

The Sense Valley All Abilities Trail is an accessible loop & a perfect, level, short walk around the Horseshoe Lake with many resting spots & picnic benches along the way. We can venture further if we wish and head up to Stonebridge Pools.

This will be an easier walk to get to know people's abilities. Approx 1 mile.

There are charges for parking, £2.80 for 2hr, £3.50 for 3hr, so share where you can.

### **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">chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Vice Chair	Adrian Hickson	<a href="mailto:vice-chair@ashbyu3a.co.uk">vice-chair@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Business Secretary	John Pilgrim	<a href="mailto:secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk">secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Treasurer	Kevin Green	<a href="mailto:treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk">treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Membership Secretary	Val Reed	<a href="mailto:members@ashbyu3a.co.uk">members@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Minutes Secretary	Iain Banns	<a href="mailto:minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk">minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
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Speaker seeker	Yogi Godwin	<a href="mailto:speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk">speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
Social Secretary	Glenys Morrice	<a href="mailto:socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk">socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk</a>
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