

Newsletter August 2026

Interest Groups Timetable for August

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 25 th	2 pm	Congregational Church, Ashby. Our AGM followed by Cream Tea
Activities	Wed 5 th Fri 21 st	1-3 pm 2-4 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Arts and Crafts	Thu 6 th	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Breakfast	Thu 20 th	10 am	Lakeside Bistro, Shortlands Rd, Moira DE12 6BW
Bridge	Mon 3 rd Mon 10 th Mon 17 th Mon 24 th Mon 31 st	7-9pm 11am 7-9pm 11am 7-9pm TBC	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Calligraphy	-	-	No meeting this month
Coffee and Chat	Wed 12 th	10 am	Ulverscroft Grange Tea Rooms, Whitwick Road, Copt Oak LE67 9QB
Computer	Wed 5 th Mon 17 th	2 pm 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Croquet	Fri 28 th	10 am	Moira Miners' Welfare Club, Moira DE12 6BP
Digital Photography	Thu 6 th	10 am	Tropical Birdland, Lindridge Lane, Desford LE9 9GN
Drawing and painting	Thu 19 th	10 am	At John's
Family History	Wed 12 th	2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Food from Afar	Thu 6 th	6 pm	Wing Wah Chinese Buffet, New Street, Burton upon Trent DE14 3QW
French	Mon 3 rd Mon 17 th Mon 31 st	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Gardening	Thu 20 th	2 pm	Garden party at Val and Trev's

Group	Date	Time	Venue
History	Thu 27 th	2.15 pm	Packington Village Hall. Colin Ellis - 'Stockton and Darlington Railway'
Industrial Heritage	-	-	No outing this month
Leisurely Walking	Tue 4 th	10.15 for 10.30 start	Meet at Willesley Wood, Oakthorpe Colliery Site DE12 7QG
Literature	Tue 11 th	1.30 pm	At Sandra's house
Lunch	Thu 13 th	12 noon	Halfway House, 65 Church Street, Donisthorpe DE12 7PX
Medium Walks	Mon 10 th	9.45 for 10am start	Meet at Money Hill CP, Warner Rd, Ashby LE65 1LS
Music Appreciation	Wed 5 th	10 am	At Sallie's
Poetry Reading	Thu 20 th	2.30 pm	42 Avenue Rd, Ashby
Recorder	Thu 6 th Thu 20 th	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Rummikub	Tue 11 th Tue 25 th	11 am	Ivanhoe Social Club.
Science & Technology	-	-	No meeting this month
Scrabble	Mon 10 th Mon 24 th	10.30 am	The Bulls Head, Ashby
Short Walks	Fri 21 st	10 am	Meet at Albert Village Lake car park, 219 Occupation Road, Albert Village DE11 8HD
Social Events	-	-	No events this month
Supper Club	Thu 27 th	7 for 7.30 pm	The Unicorn Inn, Main St, Orton-on-the-Hill CV9 3NN
The 10 Milers	-	-	No walk this month
Trips and Outings	-	-	No outings this month
Walking	Tue 4 th Tue 18 th	9.30 for 9.45 9.30 for 9.45	Meet at Coldwell End car park, Youlgreave DE45 1UY TBA
Wine Appreciation	Wed 19 th	7 pm	Annie's house

Interest Groups Timetable for early September

Group	Date	Time	Venue
Walking	Tue 1 st	9.30 for 9.45	TBA
Leisurely Walking	Tue 1 st	10.15 for 10.30	Meet at the hut at Staunton Harold lower car park LE65 1RU
Music Appreciation	Wed 2 nd	10 am	At Mike's house
Activities	Wed 2 nd	1 – 3 pm	Ashby Leisure Centre
Computer	Wed 2 nd	2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Arts and Crafts	Thu 3 rd	9.45 am	Packington Village Hall.
Digital photography	Thu 3 rd	10 am	TBA
Recorder	Thu 3 rd	10 am	St Matthew's Community Hall, Overseal
Food from Afar	Thu 3 rd	6 pm	TBA
Bridge	Mon 7 th	TBC	Ivanhoe Social Club.

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERT TRIP OCT 14TH

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

NDR Philharmonic Hannover Orchestra Programme:

Prokofiev	Classical Symphony
Rachmaninov	Piano Concerto No.1
Brahms	Symphony No.2

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, 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

FISH SUPPER OCT 1ST

We are holding a fish supper again this year. For full details of prices and how to book see the **SOCIAL EVENTS** section down below. There are now just a few places left, so get in quickly!

JIM'S TRACTOR RUN JULY 27TH

Many of the committee and other members took turns to staff our gazebo at the Tractor Run on Bath Grounds last Sunday. There was a reasonable degree of interest from passers-by and we continue to get our name out there to the Ashby public.

MONTHLY MEETING

28th July – Kathy Powis – 'The Mary Rose'

Kathy Powis is a volunteer for the Mary Rose Trust and gives talks all around the E Midlands about the famous Tudor warship.

The Mary Rose was Henry's favourite ship and had a successful service for many years before undergoing a major refit in 1536. This increased her size from 500 to 700 tons and added an extra tier of broadside guns. This may have made her top-heavy.

In July 1545 France attempted an invasion of England with 38,000 soldiers in 300 ships – larger than the Spanish Armada 43 years later. On July 19th the French entered the Solent but light winds becalmed both fleets. The French used rowing galleys to approach the English fleet but the wind picked up and English ships, including Mary Rose, were able to sail out to engage them.

Mary Rose is believed to have fired a starboard broadside and then attempted to turn to fire from the other side. At that moment a gust of wind caused the ship to heel over and because the gun ports of the recently fired guns were still open, water flooded in. From that moment she was doomed. As she heeled, guns, ammunition, supplies and other materials not fastened down would have moved to the starboard side making her unable to be righted. She sank in one and a half minutes. All but 35 of the 500 crew drowned.



The casualty rate was made far worse because of the practise of fixing heavy netting over the deck to prevent the enemy from boarding a ship in close quarters fighting. It also trapped almost all its crew beneath it.

Despite the loss of Mary Rose the French were routed and they returned to France.

Attempts were made to raise her over the next couple of years but it proved impossible and it wasn't until 1982 that it was possible to recover the starboard side of the ship which had been covered in silt. The port side and much of both ends had

been eaten away by small crustaceans called Gribbles.

After more than 40 years of preservation and restoration, the Mary Rose is now housed in an award winning building in Portsmouth docks which allow people to walk alongside the 3 decks of the surviving starboard side whilst artefacts recovered from multiple dives are displayed in context. There are guns, longbows, shoes, plates, nit combs!, rosaries, even the skeleton of the ship's dog and a truly amazing collection of ephemera. It is considered to be the greatest underwater archaeological recovery in the world. I could write much more but space does not allow. The fuller story can be found on the website. I suggest that you try to visit the museum if you possibly can to see and learn so much more than I can retell here of this fascinating story.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

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

July

The number of members attending remains low so I am asking those who previously joined the Activities Group to rejoin so that those who attend regularly can have an even better experience.

We have been asked by Melbourne u3a to have a Pickelball match with them on September 9th at 2pm. This will be a fun afternoon if we can get 8 members to play.

Regards,
Michael

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

2nd July

There were only 9 ladies present at this month's meeting. Some were away on holiday and others were unwell.

We diverted from the project we have been working on to make summer earrings. For the first time, there was no set pattern to follow. Each lady chose the beads in the colour(s) they wanted and then made the earrings. They were so delighted with the finished products that they asked if we could make matching necklaces next month.

The next meeting will be at Packington Village Memorial Hall at 9.45am on 6th August.

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 August although Bank Holiday Monday is unconfirmed.

Times for each day usually alternate between 11 am to 1.30 and 7 to 9 pm but can vary depending on the number of Mondays in the month. 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

16th July - Bull's Head, Thringstone

Eight of us congregated for breakfast on 16th July. The buffet style breakfast was ample if a little overcooked. The choice was fairly standard enabling our group to satisfy their hunger pangs with anything from toast and marmalade to a full blown English breakfast including black pudding.

The next breakfast gathering will be at the Bull's Head, Lakeside Bistro, Moira DE12 6BW at 10am on 20th August. This will be a traditional Café style breakfast with plenty of choice.

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.

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

July

We are not meeting now until Sept because of holidays etc. Two of us attended a Calligraphy course on Modern Calligraphy which was very informative and really enjoyable. So much so that three of us are going on the next one on Saturday Sept 5th.

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

20th July

Today we were 4 and tackled a communications problem.

Paul McKay had set up a Zoom call with an outside speaker for the Science & Technology Group, to be projected on the main screen at Packington Hall.

Everything worked fine except that the audience could not hear the speaker's voice. No solution was found on the day.

After discussion, we decided that the only way to check this was to simulate a zoom call using Paul's laptop and one in the house.

At first all efforts to establish a link failed, until it was realised that the two laptops were on the same Wi-Fi circuit. John H then opened a link via his own Wi-Fi circuit.

This didn't work well, so the question remained unresolved.

There was an additional problem raised in which a Fitbit watch has suddenly lost the link to the phone app monitoring it. Efforts to re-establish the link were at first successful but then failed again.

There is a suspicion that, since the takeover of Fitbit by Google, the system has become prone to glitches. More research is needed, but the puzzle is that some of the functions work fine on the watch and others do not, whilst none of them is picked up by the app.

However, the monthly summary submitted to the holder's main account seems to show a full record...

We meet again on Wednesday 5th August.

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

2nd July

Seven of us went on safari today to Hick's Lodge. The weather was fine, sunny and with a slight breeze.

As usual, after meeting up, we split up and went searching for suitable targets and after an hour and a half, we reconvened to compare results.

Sadly, there were no real finds to note, just the usual suspects: Magpies, black-headed gulls, the geese and swans on the lake, and other regulars. There was a frustrating sighting of a Red Kite, but too far away to get any good shots, and one butterfly that did not fly away immediately a camera was produced.

Still, we all had a pleasant time strolling along in the woods and paths of the immediate surroundings, and in Willesley Woods across the road. The coffee and cakes were enjoyed by all, despite the attempts by the wind to blow everything off the table.

We next meet on Thursday 6th August, when we will be going to Tropical Birdland at Desford

Always a spectacular spectacle.

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 Aug we will be meeting on the 11th and 25th.

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

8th July – Newlands Farm, Hilton

Six of us journeyed either along the Derbyshire county border or through Staffordshire and then into South Derbyshire to enjoy Coffee and cake and a good old chinwag in a cute little cabin. We have been to this delightful spot a number of times and those who have made the journey have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. However, our numbers are always down when we visit Newlands Farm. Perhaps the distance is just a little too far for many. I would be interested to know why so few avail themselves of such a beautiful venue and pleasant experience.

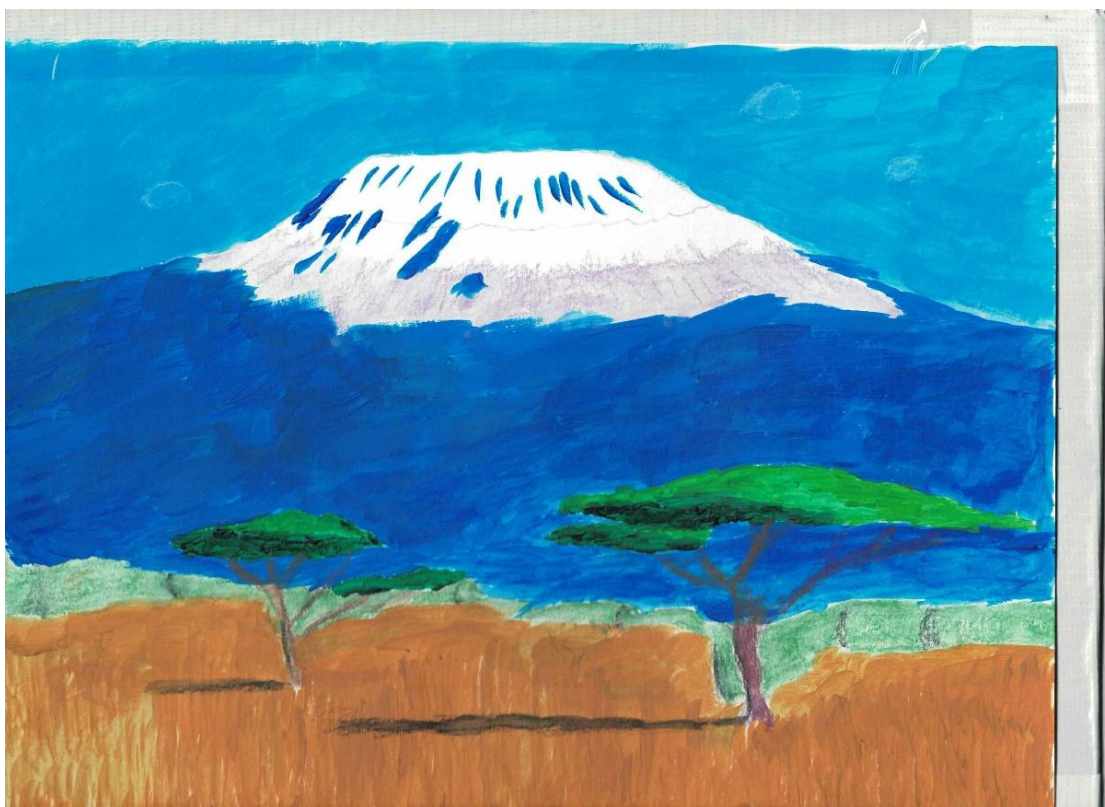
Our next gathering will be at Ulverscroft Grange Tea Rooms, Copt Oak LE67 9QB at 10am on 8 July 2026. This is a charity run Café linked to the Shuttlewood Foundation. Six have signed up to be there so far.

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

15th July

The Drawing and Painting group this month was attended by four members and we were painting anything beginning with K, so it was no surprise that there was a Kingfisher and a Koi carp but I wasn't expecting a Kookaburra and definitely not Kilimanjaro, so keep your eye on the gallery and view these pictures when they appear.



Kilimanjaro by John

Next month's meeting will be on 20th Aug at Conkers Waterside Centre, Moira for some painting 'en plein air'

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

July

The French group continues to meet at 11am every other Monday at the Ivanhoe Club in Ashby. This month it is the 3rd, 17th and 31st August

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

2nd July - Hickory's Smokehouse, Derby

Thirteen of us hitched our waggons and moseyed along to Hickory's Smoke House. Popcorn appeared at the table on the house as we perused the newspaper style menu. The portions are large and some would find one portion shared between two quite adequate. While others found the sumptuous dishes far too delicious to share! The food quality and the standard of service certainly deserved a rousing YEE HAH!!

For our next Venue we are travelling to the far east, to the Wing Wah Chinese restaurant in New Street, Burton Upon Trent DE14 3QW at 6pm on 6 August 2026. So Far, Fourteen 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.

Unfortunately, The Wing Wah has charged me a £10 deposit for each attendee. Please bring a crisp £10 note per person with you when you come. I will take the £10 from you and the Wing Wah will deduct £10 per person from your bill.

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

8th July

On one of the hottest days of a hot year, 6 of us gathered together

JD explored the parish records for north Northumberland (Berwickshire) to see if he can push the story of his great grandmother's ancestors into the 18th century. So far all he has is the baptismal date of her father's eldest brother. But it is a start.

Jan worked on her housekeeping: lots to do there.

Elizabeth is working up the back story of her parents, filling in details the paper records never show. Real history!

Linda has an intriguing mystery to sort out: her 2nd great grandfather, a non-combatant in the Army in the First World War, seems to have ended up dying well behind enemy lines in a place called Potsdam-Mittelberg in 1915. There is no actual town by this name though, although there is an area called Potsdam-Mittelmark around Potsdam, which itself is about 350 miles from the nearest western border with the Netherlands. Or it might be Mittelberg in Austria. This might be one of Ancestry's classic mis-transcription errors of course. She will try to get his Service Record to unravel the mystery!

The team opted mainly for cold water at break time.

We meet again on August 12th when hopefully it will be a little cooler.

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

16th July – Greenacres, Holbrook, Belper

This month we had our self drive to Greenacres at Holbrook, Belper. It was another warm and sunny day.

The large garden has wonderful uninterrupted countryside views over the Amber Valley. Apart from the shrubs, trees and borders there is an established pool and rockery with colourful patio plants and pots, a sweeping lawn and lots of seating providing a peaceful chill out area to enjoy our drinks and homemade cakes. We were allowed to sit inside looking out at the scenic view, the very large bifold doors being open.



Now we look forward to our next event, the garden party at Val and Trev's.

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

9th July - The Birch Tree, Coalville

Sixteen turned up for lunch at the Birch Tree. The venue had to be hastily arranged because the planned venue of the Belper Arms, Newton Burgoland, for reasons known only to them, never responded to my request for a booking. The food at the Birch Tree was of a very good standard generally, though, unfortunately, not to everyone's taste. The staff were very efficient and friendly. Most of those present were pleased with the venue and we will likely return in the not too distant future.

Our August venue, we hope, will be the Halfway House in Donisthorpe DE12 7PX. I am having some difficulty getting a response from them but I will keep trying. Twelve have already signed up to be there.

If anyone else wishes to join the group please email 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.

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

16th July

The poetry group had a very interesting meeting in July. As a lot of the poetry we have looked at so far has been written by men, we decided to look at poetry written by women. In the meeting, we ranged from Christina Rossetti to Vicky Husband, Carol Anne Duffy and Ruth Silcock. Husband's poem, 'Extremely Large Telescope' provoked a very interesting and wide-ranging discussion into 'life, the universe and everything'!

Our next meeting will be on Thursday August 20th and we'll be looking at the rest of the poems we didn't have time for in July - Emily Dickinson, Louise Glück, Wendy Cope, U.A. Fanthorpe, Imtiaz Dharker amongst them. If anyone would like to join us, please get in touch.

30th July – Joseph Wilkes of Measham

Today 29 of us were treated to one of Yogi's specials about Joseph Wilkes, one of the most influential entrepreneurs in the area.

He was born in Overseal in 1733 and died in Croydon in 1805. He was a true entrepreneur: defined as a risk taker (who accepts the chance of losing money to build a new project; a problem solver, who finds gaps in the market and creates fresh ideas; and a leader who manages time, staff, and money to grow a company). Joseph was all of these and more, and was responsible for kick-starting the industrial revolution here in our backyard.

He started out with his brothers as a cheese merchandiser and started building a fortune. He saw that Measham could be a hub for his enterprises, it being then on the main road between Ashby and the north and Tamworth to the south.

He saw the potential of the Bessemer converter in creating steel; the commercial advantage of good roads (which he promptly cashed in on by arranging local road maintenance systems and a toll supported turnpike network); canals, where he invested in the Ashby Canal, which was planned to reach Ticknall but never went beyond Moira; coal mining and the use of the clay waste to make bricks (some of which are still built in to the church wall in Measham); spinning and bleaching works to process the cotton now coming in from the USA; and banks to finance all these enterprises.

In the process he was involved in less worthy endeavours, such as child labour and the use of the inmates from the Ashby Workhouse to break rocks for his turnpikes, but he did build new better housing for the poor of Measham.

In so doing not only did he amass great wealth, on a par with the Hastings family, he made influential friends in high places, such as Sir Robert Peel, father of the Prime Minister of the same name.

He lived a long (for the day) life of 72 years, but how he came to finish his days in Croydon is still a mystery. Possibly he was in the area on the trail of yet another acquisition or enterprise to capitalise upon. A greater mystery is his actual wealth, as he died intestate. It is possible a close examination of the affairs of his three daughters might yield some clues, but the hope is slim.

In short, he enabled the whole area to prosper in a way it might never have without his work, but he seems largely forgotten. Even the large ceramic sundial still to be seen in Measham next to (but not actually on) the street named after him, is currently nearly overgrown, but definitely worth a visit.



HISTORY cont.

Yogi also entertained us with a few anniversary dates pertaining to July 30th :

- In 1966 the English men's football team won a football match somewhere.
- We celebrate The International Day of Friendship, and strangely, International Tiger Day, created by, of all people, Vladimir Putin.
- The Spanish Armada was first sighted approaching England (did Drake's Drum sound, then?) and on August 8 we remember the Battle of Gravelines in 1588, when that Armada was routed.
- In 1415 there was the dastardly Southampton Plot: a conspiracy to depose King Henry V of England,
- In 1860 to 1861, the heaviest annual rainfall ever recorded in India (and the world) fell. It was measured as 26,470 mm (1,042 inches), at Cherrapunji in Meghalaya between August 1860 and July 1861.
- And, lest we forget, the terrible battle of Passchendaele took place between July 31 to November 6, 1917.

Thank you once more, Yogi, for a most entertaining and instructive afternoon.

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

31st July

Despite it being the holiday season, we had 9 players present for a morning of friendly competition and without having to worry about the extreme weather which caused last month's session to be cancelled.

Next month we meet on Aug 28th at 10 am as usual.

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

July

This month we have been reading The Woman by Kristin Hannah. I really enjoyed this book and found it difficult to put down. Many of the books we read go backwards and forwards but this was a straight forward narrative that explored the chaos and destruction of war and the trauma of coming home to a changed America. For me it was a very good read. It will be interesting to hear the views of the rest of the group when we meet in August.

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

We meet twice a month at the Bull's Head, Market St, 10.30 on the 2nd and 4th 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

We didn't get out this month but Colin is organising another trip to Nottingham Concert Hall 14th October for a programme of Prokofiev, Rachmaninov and Brahms. See page 3 above for full details.

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

July

Unfortunately only 3 of us were available this month so we took the decision to postpone until Aug 19th

22nd July – Macclesfield Silk Museum and Paradise Mill

Despite the best attempts by traffic delays, diversions and road works, we all managed to get to the Silk Museum in time for tea, coffee and biscuits before our guide for the morning, Tim, took us down the road to the Paradise Silk Mill, which opened in 1862 but only closed in 1981. It is the last surviving of the 71 mills in Macclesfield which at one time housed 5000 looms, making Macclesfield the world's largest producer of finished silk.



Macclesfield became a centre for silk weaving because it was near to the Lancashire cotton mills and the machinery required was similar. There was also a silk-covered button industry in the town already.

Because silk is such a premium product, silk weaving was not a stable business subject to the economic conditions at any one time and also latterly by the arrival of manmade materials such as nylon and polyester. Latterly automated looms reduced the number of skilled men needed and replaced them with female machine minders who were paid much less, similar to the cotton and wool trades.

Paradise Mill still has a room full of hand looms. Much of it's custom was for military officer's ties. As the Army vastly increased in size for WWI business boomed but fell back afterwards; by WWII nylon was used for ties which was much cheaper material and couldn't justify the cost of skilled labour to weave it. Automated machines had taken over.

One interesting fact about hand operated silk looms was the use of punch cards to control the loom to weave patterned material automatically. This was the Jacquard mechanism and the punch cards are considered to be the precursor of computing as they used binary code to control a machine.

Tim demonstrated various machines to us and explained all the processes whilst continuing to relate all the history. A very tricky job well done.

We then had a short time (not enough really) to look around the museum and its fascinating trinkets, souvenirs, posters and artefacts before heading off to lunch at Sutton Hall, which was recommended to us by the museum staff.

This large country house was once home to the Earls of Lucan and also a convent! But it is now a very fine pub. There must have been a couple of hundred customers in the house and garden and service was a little slow, but the food was pretty good, a cut above the usual, and the house is amazing.

There is no outing in August as most venues are overrun with holidaymakers and children.

Tim started with the story of the silk worm and how and why it produces its silk cocoon and how the Chinese managed to extract the fibre from the cocoon to weave it into garments. The earliest known use of silk dates back 8500 years and the oldest surviving fabric is from about 3630 BCE. The Chinese maintained a monopoly on silk production until around 1000 AD.



July

At the start of July, seven of the group made our way north to York, to take part in the u3a Festival 26 at York University. It took us a while to work out where the relevant buildings on the map were, in relation to where we were!

We were due to play at 2:15 on Thursday 2nd July in the Large Lecture Theatre in the Exhibition Centre. At 9 a.m., we went to a recorder workshop, organised by Val McCarroll, the national u3a recorder advisor. She provided the music for us to play together, with some other people, including Rachel from OHMI (The One-Handed Musical Instruments Trust) who had visited us a while ago, and a few from Lichfield u3a, who were also scheduled to play later in the afternoon.

Val organised an event on recorder playing in u3a nationally at 12 noon, which we also attended. Rachel also took part in the event, talking about OHMI, and there was plenty of interest in her talk.

After lunch, we collected our instruments, and made our way to the lecture theatre, where we set up our chairs and music stands (with our smart banners: thank you!) ready for our small audience to come to enjoy our performance.



We were followed by Lichfield u3a Recorder Group, who have a conductor, which makes it easier to play together! Three (now four) of us also play in that group.

When both groups had finished their performances, most of us set off home: a few people stayed in Yorkshire for a holiday, and the Lichfield group found their minibus for the ride back to Lichfield. It was an interesting event, with a wide range of activities going on over the three days.

On 9th July, eight of us were back in the hall for another practice. We went back to a few older pieces, including some spirituals, and one two recent ones, including “Wombling”, and the Telemann Tasters, and a collection of Tudor Trios. Although it was very warm outside, conditions in the hall were comfortable.

On 16th July, ten of us had another meeting, playing some of the music we brought back from York, and more from our library. We have another meeting on 30th, but then revert to our usual pattern of meetings, starting on 6th August, when we will have a visit from our occasional conductor, Patrick.

As is usual, many of our members will be away during August, but we are continuing over the summer.

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

1st July

Seven of us made it round to Pete's house in Austrý without getting lost for a fine session of a variety of music. With the news that the BBC had finally closed down Radio 4 LW and the subsequent loss of the late night shipping forecast which all sailors used to stay awake for, it seemed appropriate to start the day off with the music which always preceded it – 'Sailing by' by Ronald Binge. A piece so gentle and soporific that many sailors fell asleep to it before the forecast started!

That was followed by Matt Monro singing 'Walk Away' and vocal group Voces8 and 'Lux Eterna'. Then to everyone's amazement Dorothy had chosen a song by Oasis! However it was not the Gallagher brothers but a previous group consisting of Peter Skellern, Julian Lloyd Webber and Mary Hopkin singing 'Weavers of Moonbeams'. Somewhat different and very pleasant.

Nev brought us sort of up to date with 'Days we left behind' from Paul McCartney's new album, whilst Sallie had chosen Vladimir Ashkenazy playing the lovely Chopin's 'Fantasie Impromptu'

We then moved on to some amazing harmonica playing from the J Geils Band and 'Whammer Jammer', followed by The Kinks 'Thank you for the days' and a blast from the past – Bert Kaempfert with 'Swinging Safari' and James Galway with the theme from 'The Thornbirds'.

'Midnight cowboy' by Harry Neilssen and 'The Boxer' from Alison Krauss followed. Andy then played another piece by the extraordinary vocal group Voces8, this time singing 'I won't dance' by Gerome Kern.

Pete introduced us to jazz clarinettist Julian Marc Stringle playing an excellent version of 'Rhapsody in blue', whilst Mike also introduced us to Oleksandr Khrustevych playing Vivaldi's 'Winter' on accordion rather than violin. Two incredible talents.

We finished off with a run of classic pop and show tunes in the form of Trini Lopez with 'If I had a hammer', Barbra Streisand's 'Evergreen', (son of Richard) Joe Stilgoe Trio's 'Rhythm of life', The Mavericks 'Blue moon' and finally a full-on performance by Doris Day with 'Deadwood Stage' to round off another great mornings music.

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

23rd July – The Green Man, Clifton Campville

This was a new venue for all of us, although some had tried and failed in the past to get a booking because it was closed for a private event. When we arrived the car park was pretty full, which is a good sign, and plenty of locals were using it as a pub.

We were seated at a pair of adjacent tables by friendly staff. We didn't have to pre-order so we had a little time to study the menu and make our choices. Our server was very helpful in explaining some of the more unusual things on the menu.

All the food came up reasonably quickly although there was a small hiccup over one starter on the other table, and one persons steak was not quite as hot as expected. Otherwise everyone seemed to enjoy the food, service and of course the company.

At the time of booking, the landlord had promised Colin that we would be in for a treat. He was right.

Next month, on 27th Aug, we are returning to the Unicorn at Orton on the Hill. We haven't been there for a couple of years. I don't know why as it is always very good.

Anyone wishing to join us, please drop a line to supper@ashbyu3a.co.uk

14th July – 'Submarines' by Paul McKay

For this meeting we planned a virtual talk via Zoom by u3a speaker David Dundas called 'Why Hydrogen', however, the IT system had other plans. We connected to the internet and Zoom displayed a video image of David and myself, but with no audio from David. We tried for over 30 minutes, and even with the kind help from our patient members, we could not connect with David.

With time pressing on, David and I agreed to abandon Zoom and to re-arrange for his talk to be given 'in person', as he lives in Lichfield, a reasonable travelling distance. To make the best of the situation, I delivered a pre-prepared talk called Submarines, describing my career below and above the waves.

My talk combined basic science, submarine technology and work experience. Inspiration for my lifelong interest in diving and underwater technology stemmed from an ITV programme 'Sea Hunt,' aired in the late 1950's, starring Lloyd Bridges as an intrepid diver (Mike Nelson).

Later, training with submarine builder's Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness balanced the fiction with the harsh reality of shipyard submarine construction. The relevance of Archimedes Principle and Boyle's Law to submarine diving operations were explained and demonstrated by diagrams and a video of a military submarine diving by venting ballast tanks.



The structure and operation of commercial mini- submersibles in support of oil and gas production and torpedo recovery was covered. Then, based on my experience as a design engineer at Rolls-Royce Submarines in Derby, the design and operation of Royal Navy nuclear submarines was described. Due to shortage of time, the talk had to be curtailed to make way for a very welcome drink!

For August we take a Summer break, so our next meeting will be a visit on THURSDAY 10th September, to Woolsthorpe Manor, birthplace and residence of Sir Isaac Newton.

Please email science@ashbyu3a.co.uk or pmckay189@gmail.com to register your interest and get further details of the visit.

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

After the success of last year's event, we are holding a Fish Supper at **6pm on 1st October** to be held at The Beeches, Burton Rd, Ashby.

There will be fish and chips and all the trimmings, followed by tea and coffee. We will have a short quiz after the meal.

Drinks will be available at the bar.

Cost £10 per head. There are just a few places left.

If you wish to join us, please let our Social Secretary Glenys socials@ashbyu3a.co.uk know as soon as possible.

Please make payments, preferably by BACS transfer, to:

Ashby u3a a/c 08-92-99 67259878

Or by cheque payable to Ashby u3a, handed or posted to:

Glenys Morrice, 6 Benenden Way, Ashby LE65 2QS or at a Monthly meeting.

If you have put your name down and haven't yet paid, please do so as soon as possible as the closing date for payments is the end of August.

THE WALKING GROUPS

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

27th July. From Ticknall led by Christine

Just the 2 of us completed the 10 mile walk. Quite a cool morning with some cloud, so ideal for walking. We went along Chapel lane turning left to follow the foot path towards Stanton Wood, then into Robin Wood, which for once was mud free. At Woodend cottage we turned right to follow the path towards St Brides, as some fellow walkers were sitting on the bench we continued onto Melbourne which was our half way stop. On our way back we walked around Melbourne pool and up to Staunton Harold Reservoir and into Serpentine Wood giving us some shade as the sun was breaking through. Finished at Ticknall car park with coffee and homemade carrot cake.

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

13th July. From Ticknall led by Alison

We were greeted by a lovely cool morning to start our walk from the village carpark in Ticknall, and all of us breathed a sigh of relief that we didn't have to walk in 30 degrees of heat.

13 of us set off across fields, past the Ticknall Cricket Ground and on to St Saviour's Church at Foremark and as there was a handy bench, we had our 'elevenses' there. By this time the sun was starting to make an impact but we still managed to enjoy the splendour that is the house at Repton Prep School (was Foremark School) and the lake opposite.

Fortunately, there was quite a lot of shade on the 2nd half of the walk, via Heath Wood, Seven Spouts and Stantons Wood. We arrived back at the car park after completing 5.3 miles.

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

21st July. Tideswell and Cressbrook Dale led by Trev and Val

The weather was cooler and a little overcast when 11 of us met in Tideswell village. After walking through the village, we continued down Tideswell Dale, turning to follow the River Wye along Millers Dale to Water-cum-Jolly Dale, where we stopped for a coffee stop and to admire the scenery.



The sun had finally appeared in time for the first hill of the day, to join Cressbrook Dale. Then onwards, up Cressbrook Dale, firstly through shady trees and then out to the open valley. Our picnic stop was on the slopes of Tansley Dale with the view of Cressbrook Dale. We then climbed to the top of Tansley Dale and out into open fields returning back to Tideswell after 7 miles stopping there for a welcome refreshment in the local pub.

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

17th July. Six of us met at the car park near St Peters church.

The weather was cloudy but dry and not as hot as recent days. We went straight to the flower gardens at Stapenhill by taking the footbridge which passes over the approach to St Peter's Bridge across the River Trent and it's washlands. We paused on the footbridge to admire the roundabout and its colourful display. We continued on to the old Ferry Bridge which opened in 1889 and which leads to the Stapenhill viaduct which was built in 1890.

We just used the Ferry Bridge and descended to the washlands which were very dry because of the recent hot dry weather. We stayed near the river until we approached the Library where crossed the washlands and over a bridge into town. We went straight to the old Market hall where we stopped for drinks and cake and to plan next months walk.

From the Market Hall we went straight to the Stapenhill viaduct and back to the Ferry bridge. We stopped to admire Stapenhill gardens by the Swan statue. From there we followed the path by the river to the car park.

2¼ miles in exactly 2 hours with a long rest over drinks.

7th July. Sence Valley Forest Park

For the very first outing of this new group ten friends old and new met and thoroughly enjoyed a relaxed, casual & very warm visit to this lovely area.



There was plenty to stop and stare at along the way. It was amazing how many butterflies of all shapes, colours and sizes surrounded us.

We caught up with a paddling of young mallard ducks at the first lake and a beautiful Swan family tending their four pretty, fluffy cygnets at the second lake.

A warm breeze fanned us at the start of our meander, developing into a hot spell at the finish. As the heat increased, we took it really easy and returned to the parking place by 12 noon.

YOUR COMMITTEE

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

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