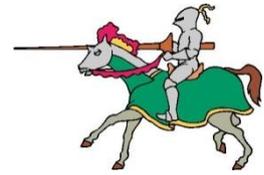




Ashby de la Zouch

U3A



Newsletter December 2016

General Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month from 2:00p.m to 4:00p.m. at the Congregational Church, Kilwardby Street, Ashby de la Zouch

Last General Meeting: 13th December

Burton Leaside Singers entertained us with a program of carols, seasonal songs, poems, readings and harmonica playing, and even persuaded the audience to join in a carol singalong.

Thank you for an enjoyable afternoon's entertainment.

We then retired to the hall for mince pies, stollen and biscuits along with the usual tea and coffee.

Next General Meeting: 31st January

Speaker: Ben Devine will be giving a talk about Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

New Groups

Four new groups have been proposed: Play Reading, Poetry, Ladies Golf and Arts & Crafts. If anyone is interested in joining, or indeed leading, any of these groups please contact James Bloor at interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk

2017	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
January	Jane Harris, Wendy Somers plus a.n.other	Marion Shuttleworth and Sheila Hampson	Calligraphy Family History
February		Sandra Fox and Cynthia Wells	

Interest Groups Timetable: January 2017

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Bird Watching	TBA	TBA
Bridge	2nd, 16th & 30th Jan at 2-4 pm 9th & 23rd Jan at 7-9 pm	Royal Hotel, Ashby.
Calligraphy	10th Jan at 10 am	Planning meeting at Jenny's
Computer	Wed 4th Jan at 2 pm Mon 16th Jan at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	5th Jan at 10 am	16 Winchester Way.
Drawing and painting	18th Jan at 9.30 am	Visit to Leicester Art Gallery. Meet at 2 Marlborough Way to share lifts
Family History	11th Jan at 2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	19th Jan at 2 - 4pm	Packington Village Hall. Illustrated talk on Tatton Park
History	26th Jan at 2 pm	'Ashby Tramroads' by Colin Ellis
Industrial Heritage	25th Jan dep Ashby at 9 am	City of Caves + Galleries of Justice, Nottingham
Italian	23rd Jan at 10 am	9 St Michael's Close
Literature	10th Jan at 12.30 pm	28 Willesley Gardens
Lunch	12th Jan at 12 noon for 12.30	The Monkey Tree, Mill Lane, Ashby
Medium Walks	9th Jan at 9.45 for 10 am start	Meet at Smisby Church, walk to Hartshorne and back through woodland
Music Appreciation	none	The next meeting will be in February
Quiz	none	Please Note: There is no quiz in Jan as the pub will be closed that day.
Recorder	5th Jan at 10 am 19th Jan at 10 am	65 Gresley Wood Rd, Church Gresley, DE11 9QP
Short Walks	20th Jan at 10 am	Meet at the Royal Hotel for a walk around the alleys and back lanes of Ashby and then to the Larder for coffee/tea.
Trips and Outings	No trips currently planned	
Walking	3rd Jan 9:45 for 10 am start 17th Jan 9.45 for 10 am start	Castle Square, Melbourne TBA

Early February

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Bird Watching	TBA	TBA
Bridge	6th Feb at 7-9 pm	Royal Hotel, Ashby.
Computer	1st Feb at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	2nd Feb at 10 am	16 Winchester Way
Recorder	2nd Feb at 10 am	65 Gresley Wood Rd, Church Gresley
Walking	7th Feb at 9.45 for 10am	TBA

*For trips, outings, walks and other events which meet away from the usual venues, see further details in the relevant Group Reports below, or on our website www.ashbyu3a.co.uk

Group Reports

Bird Watching – Leader James Bloor birdwatch@ashbyu3a.co.uk

The Bird Watching Group didn't meet in December. Their next meeting is yet to be arranged

Bridge – Leader Neil Roberts 01530 455957

This is Bridge for players of all levels playing friendly Contract Bridge with some chatter. Several of our number are "beginners" or "returners" and we have experienced players who are happy to help others improve their game. We now have about 20 active players.

We meet weekly on Mondays at the Royal Hotel, Ashby and at present we alternate afternoons and evenings.

The agreement with the Royal is that we pay for refreshments. Currently when we play we pay £2.50 per week. The Royal provide Car Parking Permits free to our group when playing Bridge.

If you would like to know more contact Neil on 01530 455957 or Pat Ford on 01827 830672

Calligraphy – Leader Jenny Slawson 01283 229718

A small but friendly group, we enjoy extending our calligraphy skills through a more experimental and creative approach to writing texts. We focus mainly on italic and uncial scripts and have produced some very imaginative pieces both at home and during our monthly meetings. We usually meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 10am however this month on the 13th the group met for their Christmas meal at the Bull's Head, Hartshorne.

Computers – Leader John Howlett 01530 461774

We meet twice monthly to try to solve anyone's computer problems and to better learn how to use them whether they are PCs, Macs, iPads or Android Tablets. All are welcome. No experience necessary.

19th December

Today six of us concentrated on preparations for the Digital Photography meeting in January when we will show what we have learned about movie making.

Problems aired included the difficulty in downloading Movie Maker. Windows 10 does not offer it as a standard part of its package; it has to be downloaded as part of the free (for now) option in Windows Essentials.

Colin Ellis' difficulties were traced to the fact that his version wasn't Movie Maker, but a different piece of software altogether. The problem was corrected. Later, during a Long Walk, he raised other problems, so an extramural meeting was arranged with John D to review the process and sort out gaps in his knowledge. These covered the unexpected changes to slide timings when effects such as fade and merge were introduced, and adding music to suit the action. This was successful.

Discussions were also held on how to adjust the characteristics of photos used in order to establish an homogeneous look to the video. Most of them can be addressed by importing individual photos into separate programmes, such as Picasa, amending them, then saving them back to the video file.

Digital Photography – Leader John Howlett 01530 461774

We meet to try to understand how to get the best out of our digital cameras whether they are simple compact cameras or full-blooded DSLRs and how to edit or modify the pictures afterwards. We try to get out and practice every other month. We do not as yet enter competitions.

1st December

Five of us looked at creating and editing videos today

First we discussed the difference between continuous video and slide show types.

Colin outlined the techniques available for adding those professional touches: Smoothing frames; transitioning between moods; adding sound; adding effects; We should treat each frame of continuous video just as if it were a single still.

With video you can apply 'slowmo', or speed up. Stills can be stretched or compressed. Colin uses Pinnacle Studio for editing, but for the novice Windows Video Maker is easier.

Additional techniques include holding a frame for extra time, and zooming in or out on a subject Also you can match shots (and general timings) to music rhythms.

Colin showed us a DVD he made of a holiday visit to Bruges. He had blended video with stills, added titles, music and fading, replaced ambient video sound with his own sound

He then ran a demo on making a movie with Windows Movie Maker showing us how to insert slides, amend text box, add time delay, transition effects, cross fading, titles, attributions and music. Then he demonstrated how to modify music with fading, volume and timing. He stressed that making a video takes time. When finally burning to a DVD you can add titles etc. then chaptering. It can take lots of time.

Next time we should try making a video, or at least report on using the process and software.

Drawing and Painting – Contact Chris Dogherty 01530 411148

The Group didn't meet in December. Their next meeting will be an outing to Leicester Art Gallery (weather permitting).

Meet at 2 Marlborough Way on Thursday 18th January at 9.30am to share lifts.

Family History – Leader John Dogherty 01530 411148

14th December

Only one person came and we found the two census entries from 1901 and 1911 could be correct as his great grandfather died between times it must be verified by getting a death certificate.

Gardening - Leader Paul Dean 01283 295987

The Gardening Group is one of the largest interest groups. The committee try hard to provide a selection of activities suitable for all, including talks on various topics, trips out to well-known gardens and social events where plants are swapped and garden problems are solved! There is always food and drink at the end of each meeting and occasionally prizes to be won! Please come along and meet us and give the gardening club a try.

16th December – Secret Santa

The Group all met at Packington Village Hall and were asked to bring a wrapped gift for the Secret Santa sack.

History – Leader Dorothy Chapman 01530 413042

The History Group didn't meet in December. Their next meeting will on Jan 26th at Packington Hall for a talk by Colin Ellis on the Ashby Tramroads

Industrial Heritage – Leader Mike Stow 01530 469152

The Group met at The Plough Inn for the annual planning meeting to discuss what we will be doing next year. Although the schedule needs some fine tuning before being published, we will start the year with a trip to the City of Caves and Galleries of Justice in Nottingham on January 25th.

Italian Group – Leader Lynda Hall 01530 415922

5th December

An enjoyable session today, ordering rooms with bed, shower etc. Various combinations of facilities. Then rating hotels from Trip Advisor style comments by users.
Good vocab work outs.

Literature Group - Leader Sandra Harris 01530 416653

The Group are due to read “Charles Dickens: A Life” by Claire Tomalin this month, before meeting at 1.30 on 10th January to discuss the book.

Luncheon Group – Leader Ray Bentley 01530 412505

We are a group of men and ladies who enjoy a meal together, we take it in turn to choose a venue and organise it. Everyone is welcome, all we ask is that you sign the notice board in the coffee room at the monthly meeting prior to the lunch, so we can book the relevant number of seats. If you cannot make the monthly meeting please use the contact email or phone number.

Forty five members enjoyed our annual Christmas lunch, this time held at the Willesley Park Golf Club. All agreed it was an excellent meal in good company and in fine surroundings, and the easy car parking was a big bonus as well. Thanks to Dorothy Chapman and Ann Thompson for volunteering to organise it all. Well done ladies!

NOTE: The January 12th get together will be at the “**Monkey Tree**” in Mill Lane, Ashby not at the “White Hart” as previously advertised. This is due to refurbishment at the “White Hart”.

Music Appreciation – Leader David Oakley 01530 563409

This month we were kindly hosted by Neil Roberts, with seasonal refreshments served by Lesley. There were seven of us with an apology from Sally who was on family duties.

Neil began with two songs by Leonard Cohen who had died recently. Neil has long been a fan of Leonard and he chose two tracks from his last album, 'You want it Darker', recorded when he was bedridden. The selected tracks were 'Steer your way' and 'Treaty'.

Dorothy had selected a brass band Christmas track by the Ibstock Brass Band, a band the rest of us weren't aware of but we were all impressed by the quality of the playing. It goes to show that we often don't know what's available locally.

David had managed to locate a recording of two Czech Christmas carols he and Ann had heard at a Christmas concert in Prague last year. Unfortunately none of us could understand the words but the music was needed no translation.

Wendy has planned to see 'The Nutcracker' in London fairly soon but decided to choose another Tchaikovsky piece this from the 'Sleeping Beauty' and her second selection was the Military Wives choir singing 'Wherever you are'.

Lesley went for two choral pieces, the Middle English 15th century carol 'Myn Lyking' and the 16th century 'Coventry Carol'.

Ann also remained in the Christmas mood with 'Once in Royal David's City' sung by the choir of Kings College Cambridge, which always brings back fond memories of her time there. She later added the tune 'Silver Bells'.

Clare had brought along a Karaoke CD and for a while we all thought we were each going to have to sing a song. She put us out of our panic and handed out song cards for the chorus of 'Last Christmas' by George Michael, which we all then sang along to and had a good laugh in the process.

We finished up with a number of pieces from Bach's Christmas Oratorio to David Essex 'Winter's Tale' Chuck Berry 'Run, Run Rudolph', 'A Fairy Tale of New York' and finished with 'White Christmas'. Ann chose guitar music by Juan Caldarado, a busker she and David had heard on a recent holiday in Madeira, as they said you probably had to be sitting in the sun with a glass of wine and a nice lunch to really enjoy it.

Dorothy had found some unusual music taking her back to her York roots. This was a group of musicians called The York Waites, who played medieval instruments. The Waites were a sort of City watchmen who would circuit the city walls playing instruments denoting the time of day etc. Fairly basic instruments but they have a sound of their own.

David had selected two items by Paolo Conte, the Italian pianist-composer. His music is described as being dreamy compositions evocative of Italian and Mediterranean sounds. The tracks were 'Blue Tangos' and 'It's Wonderful'.

Finally we had a few animal tracks of Roy's Saint Saens CD, 'The Carnival of the Animals'.

Quiz group - Leader Malcolm Bird 01530 563872

The group meet at the Bull and Lion, Packington. The Start time is 2.30 and involves tables of four. You do not need to arrange a team of four before the meeting as teams can be organised on the day. This enables single individuals to take part - and to make new friends by joining an ad hoc team. Tea and coffee are served. Total cost £1.20 of which 20p goes to a kitty for prizes.

The quiz group had a successful competition in December. **Please note:** There will be no meeting in January due to the pub being closed during the day. Sorry, they gave us no warning but I have tried to contact regular members. However, the February meeting will take place as planned with the winter lunch at 1.0 pm on Wednesday 15th followed by a quiz at 2.30pm. The list for lunch bookings has now closed with 17 members signed up.

Recorder group - Leader Joan Gibson - recorder@ashbyu3a.co.uk

The recorder group, meet twice a month, to make music in a relaxed, fun way. I would hope that we would be able to cater for a wide range of experience and skill. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday mornings each month.

Our recorder group now has 4 members, but a couple of other people are thinking of coming along to check us out. We have been playing Christmas carols recently!

New members would be very welcome. Complete beginners would find it difficult to catch up, though.

Trips and Outings Group - Contact Margaret Howlett 01530 461774

There are no trips or outings planned for the immediate future

Walks

The walk leader will be at the meeting place whatever the weather and will only cancel the walk in consultation with those who turn up on the day. All dogs must be kept under control at all times. Walking boots or strong shoes are recommended. Be prepared for bad weather by taking warm waterproof clothing. Leaders act in a voluntary capacity. All ramblers walk at their own risk.

Walking Group - Leader Bob Baxendale 01530 481435

The walking group usually does walks of between 7-8 miles, twice a month, and normally have a lunch stop at a pub near to, or at the end of, the walk.

6th December. Thurlaston.

A large group of 18 set off from Thurlaston, Leicestershire, on a rather foggy Tuesday morning. We walked up the village and along a path towards Hill Farm. Although we could scarcely see a hand in front of us we headed off across the fields towards the A47. We crossed the road and then started to traverse the next rather large field towards Tooleys Park Cottages. Having arrived at the far end of the field we couldn't see the next stile on account of the fog. At this point Nev Bray decided to quit the walk and double back (to be fair he had a prior engagement to attend). The remaining 17 people followed the line of the hedge until the stile was found. We then made our way over to Peckleton village but on this occasion couldn't even see the village church spire. We then travelled South towards Earl Shilton stopping for a tea break just outside the village. The fog lifted a little but the rest of the walk was on recognisable paths or bridle ways. We crossed the ford on Water Lane and walked through Normanton Park before arriving back at Thurlaston just in time for lunch at the Elephant & Castle.

20th December. Swannington

For the last walk of the year, Bob Baxendale led us around the heritage sites of Swannington and Coleorton; Swannington Incline, Gorse Field Bell Pit and Hough Mill. We crossed the A512 near Peggs Green and down to Coleorton village. Across some boggy heath to re-cross the A512 into a very waterlogged field by Coleorton school, over to Coleorton Moor, past Limby Hall and back to our starting point at the Robin Hood in Swannington for some refreshment.

Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman

The Medium Walk group do walks of up to 6 miles. Anyone interested please contact Carole.

12th December – Lount

7 walkers met at The Ferrers Pub in Lount. We took the footpath through the cottages in Lount into open countryside and walked towards the back drive way to Staunton Harold. Then continued up the drive towards the house, and then down the main drive towards Heath End. Then following the Ivanhoe Way, until it reached Alistair's Wood, which led us to the Nottingham Road in Lount. Then it was back to the pub for a Christmas Lunch. We wish everyone a very happy Christmas, and look forward to seeing you all on our January walk.

Short walks Group – Leader John Howlett 01530 461774

The short walk group organises walks using well defined paths and routes without stiles. The maximum length is 3 miles. All are welcome.

16th December

8 people met at the car park at Hicks Lodge and did the walk around the lake (1.25 miles !) and back to the cafe for a quick coffee as the 4 gardeners had to be off by 11:00pm. The weather was dry with no wind and the sun made an appearance at halfway and warmed our backs.

Your Committee

Following the AGM on 26th July 2016, the members below were (re)elected to the Committee.

John Howlett	Chairman	chairman@ashbyu3a.co.uk
James Bloor	Groups Coordinator	interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Dorothy Chapman	Membership Secretary	members@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Sheila Dean	Welfare	welfare@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Anne Donegan	Business Secretary	secretary@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Colin Ellis	Minutes Secretary	minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Isobel Salt	Speaker seeker	speakers@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Tony Smith	Treasurer	treasurer@ashbyu3a.co.uk
Mike Stow	Communications	webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk