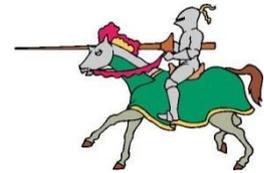




Ashby de la Zouch

U3A



Newsletter June 2017

Reminder

Subscriptions are now overdue. Contact Dorothy Chapman at members@ashbyu3a.co.uk to renew.

Notice of Annual General Meeting - 25th July 2017

Members of the Ashby de la Zouch U3A are hereby formally notified that their 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for 2pm on Tuesday 25th July 2017 at Ashby Congregational Church, Kilwardby St, Ashby de la Zouch. All paid up members of Ashby U3A may attend, make nominations and vote.

AGM Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of previous AGM
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Group Co-ordinator's Report
7. Election of Committee
8. Any other business

Please send any items you wish added to "Any other business" to the Minutes Secretary at minutes@ashbyu3a.co.uk. Items must be received by Tuesday 18th July.

YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

As always at this time of year, we are seeking new committee members.

Our Chairman John Howlett is standing down this year, as required by the constitution, and the committee is the smallest it has been for many years. No special skills are required, just a willingness to help move our U3A forward. Some of the present committee members, including our Chairman, helped form our U3A which was set up in 2010, - we need "new blood" to help keep our U3A vibrant and interesting. Please consider putting yourself forward – we would be very happy to have you "on board"!

If you feel you could help us, please submit the following form or speak to any member of the committee.

Present committee as elected or re-elected in 2016

Position	
Chairperson	John Howlett†
Group coordinator	James Bloor
Membership secretary	Dorothy Chapman
Welfare	Sheila Dean*
Business secretary	Anne Donegan
Minutes secretary	Colin Ellis
Speaker seeker	Isobel Salt*
Treasurer	Tony Smith*
Communications	Mike Stow*

† standing down * seeking re-election

Ashby U3A Committee Nomination Form

Name	
Signature	
Proposer	
Signature	
Secunder	
Signature	

Completed nomination forms should be to be sent to the Business Secretary, Anne Donegan, 41 Park Rd, Moira, Swadlincote, DE12 6BJ, or handed to any committee member, to be received no later than the start of the AGM.

The Proposer and Secunder can be any paid-up member of Ashby U3A.

Last Monthly Meeting: 27th June

Speaker: "Radio Leicester" A talk by Jim Davis

Jim put on a virtuoso display, entertaining and surprising us with anecdotes and history of Radio Leicester which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Local radio was first tried in 1929 by linking in some regional centres to London by phone line.

A War Correspondent, Frank Gillard, took the idea of local broadcasting after a visit to America but the idea failed to gain ground until the advent of Pirate Radio persuaded the authorities that it was a now "A Good Idea". In 1967 the first local station to go on the air in the UK was Leicester (despite claims from the audience to the contrary!).

Jim joined Radio Leicester in 2010, after spells with Classic FM, Heart and LBC, and his first breakfast programme and phone-in, to his surprise, included an interview with a local Madame.

His current co-host is Jo Heywood and they have covered an enormous variety of topics, gaining many friends in the local community. Perhaps the most memorable story of recent times was the finding of Richard III in the car park, having followed the story from its inception.

Then to have that matched by the success of Leicester City's Foxes was magical!

The station always likes to be at the centre of braking national news as well, presenting, where possible, the big events of the day from a local perspective, but times change and the station is changing too: there will be more emphasis in future on softer news and more fun, than on hard news as before, and less airtime for phone-ins.

Jim extended an invitation to the Group to visit the station and see how things work.

He rounded of his piece with a recorded series of amusing clips of on-air "bloopers".

There was a lively Q&A session with questions on:

What makes him smile? "Life!"

Is the job challenging? "Yes, but part of his professional work"

How do they manage going to the loo? "Take turns, but it can be tricky!"

How to measure the audience? "By selected listeners keeping paper diaries. But big commercial companies are worried about the advent of digital systems as they will show that listeners switch off or over when the ads come on"

What is the listeners age profile "50+ People who care about local issues and are mature"

A fun and entertaining piece from a very professional presenter, who later passed among the audience with a microphone recording some of their views on car security for a program to be broadcast the following day.

Group Reports

Dorothy Chapman gave a report on the Lunch Group and reminded us that Ray Bentley is standing down from leading the group at the end of the year and a new leader will be required. Volunteers please. Carole Harriman gave an entertaining report on the Medium Walk group.

Next Monthly Meeting: 25th July

After the AGM there will be a talk by a representative from the Air Ambulance

2017	Tea and Coffee Rota	Meeters and Greeters	Reporting Groups
July	Jane Harris and friends	Jane Barnett	Music Appreciation & Quiz
August	The Committee	Mike Stow, Tony Smith	No reports this month

Interest Groups Timetable: July 2017

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Arts & Crafts	Thurs 6th July at 2 pm	Shirley's house
Bird Watching	TBA	TBA
Bridge	3rd, 17th & 31st July at 2-4 pm 10th & 24th July at 7-9 pm	Royal Hotel, Ashby.
Calligraphy	11th July at 10 am	Sue Cornell's house
Computer	Wed 5th July at 2 pm Mon 17th July at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	6th July at 9.45 am NOTE EARLIER TIME	Meet at 16 Winchester Way for visit to Pot Kiln Café, Measham (weather permitting)
Drawing and painting	19th July at 10 am	2 Woodcock Way
Family History	12th July at 2 pm	2 Marlborough Way
Gardening	20th July at 2 pm	Visit Lesley Roberts garden at 40 Willesley Gdns for a cream tea and plant swap. £4 charity donation. Cream tea free of charge.
History	27th July at 2 pm	Packington Village Hall TG Pottery. A talk by Iain Hamblin
Industrial Heritage	26th July Car share. Dep. Ashby 8.30 am	National Mining Museum, Wakefield A 75min underground tour + museum.
Italian	3rd July at 10 am	9 St Michael's Close
Literature	Wed 26th July at 1 pm	41 Park Rd, Moira
Lunch	13th July at 12 noon for 12.30	The Rising Sun, Shackerstone
Medium Walks	10th July at 9.45 for 10 am	Meet at Moira Furnace CP
Music Appreciation	5th July at 10 am	9 Ash Tree Rd, off Smisby Rd. 01530 587683 Hosts Paul and Tricia.
Quiz	19th July at 2.30 pm	Bull and Lion, Packington
Recorder	6th July at 10 am (no meeting on 20th)	Joan's house
Short Walks	21st July at 10 am	Meet at CP on river side of Stapenhill Rd between the 2 bridges into Burton
Trips and Outings		No trips planned
Walking	4th July dep. Ashby 8 am Car share, 65 miles 1h45m. 18th July 9.45 for 10 am start	CP Bowden Bridge, Hayfield SK22 2LH to walk Kinder Downfall. The Swan, Main St Milton

Early August

Interest group	Meeting date and time	Venue
Bridge	7th Aug at 7-9 pm	Royal Hotel, Ashby.
Computer	2nd Aug at 2 pm	16 Winchester Way
Digital Photography	3rd Aug at 10 am	16 Winchester Way
Music Appreciation	2nd Aug at 10 am	TBA
Recorder	6th Aug at 10 am	TBA
Walking	1st Aug at 9.45 for 10 am	TBA. Leader required

*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

Arts and Crafts

The Arts and Crafts group didn't meet this month as Shirley was away, but they will next meet on 6th July to continue with their Teddy bear project.

Bird Watching – Leader Anne Donegan - birdwatch@ashbyu3a.co.uk 01283 760348

Sat 10 June 5 members joined a Bird Walk at Rosliston and we were led by Bird Expert Brian George and 2 volunteers. Brian gave us an introductory talk on the various calls and songs used by the birds to communicate, attract a mate, or simply to guard territory. We heard chaffinches and song thrush, a grey heron paused on a dead oak. We listened to a reed warbler on reeds on the edge of a pond but did not see it. There were coots with young and moorhens and a pair of tufted duck on the lake. We were entertained by a giant carp jumping in the water. A kestrel hovered overhead and a swift flew past. A female blackcap with 1 young was seen. We listened to the song of both the black cap and the garden warbler on a smart phone to compare and agreed the warbler was the more melodious. Finally to round off the morning we had the good fortune to see a young goldcrest, one of our smallest birds and the parents were close by in the same tree. If anyone is keen to learn the various bird calls, a variety of apps are available to download to smart phones and Peter one of the volunteers uses "Tweeter". We thoroughly enjoyed the walk and extend our thanks to Rosliston Forestry Centre Volunteers.

Friday 23 June 3 members met at RSPB Middleton Lakes Nature Reserve near Tamworth. The rain stopped on arrival and the weather was very pleasant for bird watching.

There are free maps on site to help with navigating round. There is a woodland trail, a meadow trail and a wetland trail. We followed the woodland and wetland trails for the best chance of spotting birdlife.

To start with we walked past the Heronry and spotted nests and 3 herons on branches nearby. A new development is a Photography Corner looking out on to feeders where a family of long tailed tits were feeding. As we passed on we heard a dunnock singing.

We then crossed a bridge over the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal and continued alongside Fishers Mill Pool for the first glimpse of waterfowl. There are large numbers of black headed gulls and their young around and the parents tend to be quite aggressive (even towards us). A pair of great crested grebe were seen as well as tufted duck and coots. A lapwing habitat has been created here and there were a few to be seen today. We carried on along the water's edge near the reeds and spotted a sedge warbler. Swifts were flying over the reeds and a common tern was seen in flight.

Moving on to the West Scrape we spotted 2 oystercatchers and a juvenile. Terns were seen on the scrape and a shoveller duck in the distance. A single cormorant was also spotted.

A reed bunting was spotted eating seed on a bulrush. On East Scrape we saw the stars of the day, avocets, 2 adults and 3 young but there are many more about and a birdwatcher mentioned seeing 8 young in total. They are an elegant bird both in flight and on land. Redshank were seen with a drake teal sitting in vegetation.

We had much discussion about ring plovers and the difference between little ringed- and ringed-plovers. Both were spotted and Jim Frost was very helpful with his scope to enable us to see the detail, little yellow ring around the eye of the little ringed plover.

We also saw Canada geese in great numbers, swans and a buzzard high overhead. We enjoyed a very successful visit and we can thoroughly recommend the area for families as there are many organised activities for children.

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.

11th June There was no report from the Calligraphy Group this month, but I believe they met at Ann Stapely's house to continue with their exploration of contemporary freeform fonts

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 June A mixed bag today.

Mike and Colin worked hard to try and solve a problem with an old laptop running Windows XP. The drag and drop, cut and paste, sound, and internet had been defunct for a long time. It being now time to transfer all the files from the laptop to a new one, a way had to be found that did not involve opening each document then saving individually to a backup hard drive. This defeated us all. It was eventually solved by using a function on the WinXP installation disk intended to transfer files to a new PC. As the internet wasn't working we moved the files to an external hard disk and then on to the other PC. After some false starts JD and Mike completed this at the weekend, but it took us 6 hours! The next step will be to delete all the personal files and then re-install XP on the laptop for selling on.

John H and Peter worked on obtaining a free Family History software and exploring its features. Steve helped along the way and worked on his photo library.

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 June Six turned up today, doubling up on last time! Steve and Bic worked on extracting a portrait from a group photo using Picasa. More work needed to get a neat job done, but not too difficult.

The talk turned to the recent BA outage and other similar problems we had met down the years. None of us could understand how this could have happened to BA, as they have perhaps had the longest experience in the world of on-line booking systems. Next time we will get out and visit the Pot Kiln Café, Measham, weather permitting. Meet at John's house to car share.

Drawing and Painting – Contact Chris Dogherty 01530 411148

21st June The Drawing & Painting group enjoyed a delightful morning in Lesley's beautiful garden on Wednesday. Our theme this month was "All the world's a stage" inspired by the recent Ashby Art Festival and among the shows portrayed were: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Les Misérables and Humpty Dumpty!!!!

Family History – Leader John Dogherty 01530 411148

14th June Five of us gathered round today. Audrey pressed on with her work. John H set to helping Peter organise his approach to starting work. We will continue this next time.

Eileen and JD also set to on a similar project. As Eileen was able to produce an impressive hand completed proforma Family History sheet, we were able to start on creating the basic Tree on-line. Because Eileen couldn't complete an application for an Ancestry subscription on the day, we created a new tree on the Dogherty site, and started inserting the basic details of the male line as far back as we could go. The objective is to export a .GEDCOM file to Eileen's own computer when she has a subscription set up.

In the course of inserting the data we looked at some basic searches and explored a few of the Ancestry 'hints' to see what they looked like and some basic guidelines as to how to evaluate them.

For next time we will look at some Ancestry DNA reports, and see what they can and cannot tell us!

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.

8th June We visited The Royal Horticultural Show at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire for our gardening group trip in June. Following a few days of heavy rain, which made the field very wet and muddy, we arrived at Chatsworth to a slight drizzle. The queueing system was very poor with little or no organisation, Some visitors were snappy and falling out with each other and the queue was very long.

We had difficulty in finding a place to eat that afforded cover from either rain or sun; finding a seat was a challenge in itself. On the bright side, and there was one, we were treated to some beautiful floral displays, show gardens, sculptures and other garden related artefacts.

History – Leader Dorothy Chapman 01530 413042

22nd June 29 members visited Middleton Hall near Tamworth and found it a very enlightening experience. One half of the group were given a guided tour of the buildings, while the other half enjoyed a very informative talk and slides on the history of the site, and were then able to amble at leisure around the rooms.

The first building on the site was the stone building, built for Philip of Marmion of Tamworth Castle in 1285. However Middleton is mentioned in the Domesday Book, with its first named residents being the Saxons Pallin and Thurgot. I think the best 'potted history' is to be found on the Middleton Hall website, rather than by me therefore I leave you to find out more there! (Not our normal scribe, as you'll realise).

The outstanding thing about the buildings is that all of them have risen from rubble through the dedicated work of volunteers, since the 1980's, after the site was happened upon by some ramblers

in the early 1970's when part of the estate was being used by a roadstone company. A grant was awarded by the company on condition that all the restoration work was carried out by volunteers alone, many of whom were and are 'of a certain age'.

An unacknowledged gem close to home, partly because of the workmanship and dedication of the volunteers, but also for its calm, rural setting.

Industrial Heritage – Leader Mike Stow 01530 469152

The group had two outings this month, both unusual in that the first was on a Saturday and the second involved an overnight stop. This was the first time that our U3A has organised an “away day”

10th June Eleven members set out in three cars to Scunthorpe steelworks. After meeting for coffee at Morrison's, we adjourned across the road for lunch at the Ashby Lodge (there's a co-incidence).

The steelworks began in the middle of the 19th Century following discovery of iron ore in the vicinity and improved rail communication. It was later amalgamated, nationalised in 1967, sold to Tata, resold, and now trades as British Steel. The site is enormous, about 6 square miles with over 100 miles of railway. In 1990 the idea of taking visitors around the site by steam hauled train was mooted and this has continued as a tourist attraction since.

We boarded our train a short distance from the pub. It is all very informal. Our locomotive was an 0-6-0ST named Cranford and had been built by Avonside in Bristol in 1924.

Because the steelworks operates non-stop, 365 days a year, there is no advance itinerary - where our train could go was dictated by operational requirements. We did a circuit of the perimeter seeing the terminal where the imported ore arrives, past the mile long building where the steel is processed into items such as railway rails, special section profiles and wire rod, and past the remains of the earlier derelict works. Moving in toward the centre, we saw the four blast furnaces and coke works.

Other traffic working on site included huge ceramic-lined tanks used to transport molten steel, nicknamed torpedoes, so heavy as to require a locomotive at each end, and trains of steel billets still so hot that the heat could be felt from within our train.

The trains are operated by a Preservation Society and we paused at their premises for refreshments and a look round the engine shed. Then it was a short trip back to the start point and the cars home.

28/29th June The Royal Historic Dockyard, Chatham. After much planning and online booking of hotel rooms, evening meals and annual tickets (so as to get 2 days entry without paying twice), 12 members climbed aboard 3 cars for the 155 mile drive to Chatham. Despite the predicted rain and the usual crawl down the M1, 2 cars got there in a little over 3 hrs whilst the others stopped for refreshments. Our tickets were waiting for us and so we plunged straight into a couple of guided tours.

The first was aboard HMS Ocelot, a 1960s spy submarine. 21 people + guide squeezed into the sub and through its narrow hatchways. Some found it a bit claustrophobic at first but were reassured that in service it held 69 men! A voyage could last 3 months and they only had one change of clothes each. Its missions were so secret that many details have yet to be released!

Our next trip was to the Ropery, a Victorian building ¼ mile long, once the longest brick building in Europe. Rope has been made here for 400 years and still is. There is a strong demand for hemp rope for old ships. 2 young American boys were “roped-in” to help our guide demonstrated the rope-making machine, before we were free to wander the full length of the Ropery.

2 more ships, 3 museums, a couple of large sheds full of Lifeboats and other interesting object were just some of the places we visited over the 2 days spent there. And we still didn't see it all.

An evening meal at a nearby pub was very pleasant, both for the company and the food, and the on-site Travelodge was excellent at £43/room. The weather was kind to us and the whole experience was only slightly marred by the chaos of a car fire at the entrance to the Dartford tunnel which caused an hour's delay on the journey home. We shall have to try another "away day" another time.

Italian Group – Leader Lynda Hall 01530 415922

5th June

Four students and Lynda today.

Today we had to listen to real live Italians telling us how they got to work and how long it took them. Hard work as they spoke normally, so some intense listening was required,. Nor did they couch their statements in the same way for any given situation!

Plenty of practice, then, in reading out the answers and identifying preferences in mode of travel.

Then we had to ask each other how to get to noted landmarks by transport.

Literature Group - Leader Sandra Harris 01530 416653

The Group are due to read "Lonely" by Andrew Michael Hurley this month, before meeting at 2 pm on the 26th July at 41 Park Rd, Moira 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.

The June meal was held at The Malt Shovel, Worthington, where we were made very welcome by the landlord and staff. Most of us had not been here before and some were not even aware of that part of the village, let alone the pub itself. The food was very good, the service excellent and I suspect many of us will be visiting there again.

Music Appreciation – Leader David Oakley 01530 563409

7th June

Seven of us met at Ann's house and we welcomed new member Mike Stow, and had apologies from Trish and Paul Bennett.

Lesley launched us off with two Nina Simone tracks, reminding us that she (Nina) was a trained pianist before she started singing. The first was a piano piece 'African Mail Man' followed by 'I love you Porgy', from 'Porgy and Bess'. A later choice reminded her, and us, of our youth with an album from the 50's, choosing Al Martino, 'Here in my Heart'. 'Smile' was Sally's theme in her selection, something we need to do to help us get through the recent awful events. Nat King Cole was her first choice, The second track was Fats Waller 'Ain't Misbehaving', a recording that always makes her smile.

David had chosen two tracks from the 'Trio' album with Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton. 'The Pain of Loving You' and 'Those Memories of You'. A later choice was Bernadette Peters singing 'Unexpected Song' from Andrew Lloyd Webber's, 'Song and Dance'.

Dorothy had brought along an album by Amy McDonald, 'This is the Life. The chosen track was the delightful 'Mr Rock and Roll'. Her second choice was 'Life is a Song' by Jean Sablon, from an album of French songs.

The Beatles album 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' seemed to be on several members minds as it was the 50th anniversary of its debut and Nev had chosen 'She's leaving home' while Ann had selected 'A little help from my friends'. Nev's second choice was 'A boy like that' from 'West Side Story' a favourite show of his and one he had seen only recently with his granddaughter.

Luckily Mike had brought along a selection of CDs as two of his albums of choice had already been picked by others. So his first track was by Bonnie Raitt, a performer new to the rest of us, with the song 'I can't make you love me'. This was followed by the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song 'Our House', not to be confused with the Madness song of the same name. Finally Dolly Parton re-appeared with her song 'I don't believe you've met my baby'.

A technical glitch prevented Ann playing her second choice, which we shall hear another time.

Our next gathering will be at 10 am on Wednesday 5th July kindly hosted by Trish and Paul Bennett at 9, Ash Tree Road, off Smisby Road, Ashby. Phone 01530-587683.

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 June meeting of the quiz group was attended by 21 members, all of whom enjoyed a cream tea following an hour of questions from Pat Ford.

The next meeting will be on 19th July - as usual 2.30pm at the Bull and Lion, Packington. Malcolm Bird will resume his normal role as quizmaster for this meeting. All u3a members are welcome to take part.

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

15th June Three of us had a good time yesterday morning.

As we had three descants, one treble and a tenor, we were able to attempt a variety of pieces in 2 or 3 parts:

All in a Garden Green (3 parts)

Sarabande or Bourree? by Handel

A few from "Recorder Trios from the Beginning "; my copy is hiding! These mostly have 2 descant parts plus a treble.

We decided to have a break from the tutor book (no more new notes to learn?). If anyone is missing a copy of any of these, please let me know.

Believe it or not, I am trying to organise the music! This has caused me to move the post-its from their places, and has fooled me completely! I do, however, have several copies, organised in punched wallets according to source, in a ring-binder, so they can't escape until next time! Possibly.

Next meeting on Thursday, 6th July, at my place. On the 20th, I'll be away, visiting my sister.

Trips and Outings Group - Contact Margaret Howlett 01530 461774

There were no trips this month.

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 we normally have a lunch stop at a pub near to, or at the end of, the walk.

20th June

Nine intrepid explorers found their way to the outer wilderness of South Leicestershire on Tuesday 20th June and met at The Shires Inn, Peatling Parva. We were prepared for the perils of 32 stiles but had not anticipated the horrors to soon engulf us on the way to Bruntingthorpe, where we found ourselves attacked by triffids (rape seed) which was very difficult to navigate, even around the edge of the fields as the plants were tall and entwined. At times only the heads of our party were visible (and then only the taller members). Having finally escaped, the going was rather easier onwards to Peatling.

Those who thought the walk had reached a rapid conclusion were sadly disappointed as this Peatling was the Magna of the species and we were only half way! By way of consolation, the churchyard did provide benches for our coffee stop. An easy walk across the fields took us to Willoughby Waterleys and we turned south back towards our starting point. The stile enthusiasts were now getting excited as there were some double stiles (one each side of a hedge) and joy of joys there was even one triple stile! Is this unique? Just as we were lulled into a false sense of security, the triffids regrouped and counter-attacked.

Another rape seed field and this one had to be crossed rather than walking round the edge. The track rapidly disappeared and it was only thanks to the leader's brilliant navigation (or sheer luck) that we emerged in the right place. A small climb and the Peatling church tower became visible - this time Parva! Only a herd of cows now between us and lunch so we advanced resolutely to arrive back at The Shires after 6.75 miles for some excellent food.

Medium walks – Leader Carole Harriman

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

12th June

11 members met at Ticknall Village Hall car park for a 5 mile walk around the tramway except it was actually 6 miles. We set off at a good pace into Calke Park as far as the tramway. We then followed the tramway in a SW direction away from the long tunnel. We admired the next tunnel on that stretch and the sample track on display on a seat. I am led to believe these are not original. We carried on to the point where the tramway from Calke lime kilns met the one from Dimminsdale. We took this track until Dimminsdale and then bore left to follow the path back into Calke Park. Here we took the path to the new cafe where we stopped for a drink and snack.

After a short break we set off across the large field to discover we had missed the path I had intended to take by going too far left - not to worry. We ended up at Betty's pond, crossed the road and through the wood into the field frequently used for parking and games although it was fairly empty on the day we were there. Near the entrance kiosk is a path back to Ticknall crossing the tramway at the point we had joined it earlier and then across the A514 back to the car park. A slight delay before leaving for people to get a closer look at the poppy field we had seen in the distance as we headed back to the village.

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 June

Lount nature reserve was a coal mine complete with slag heaps and the nature reserve now has display boards showing what it was like and identifies some of the plants, birds and insects etc. We took the longer trail and even left the reserve and walked towards Ashby.

The reserve is heavily wooded with occasional concreted areas where the pit workings were. Part of the walk involved climbing up the slag heap, as was, but there was no indication that it had been a slag heap. We saw a common spotted orchid.

We all adjourned to Breedon for coffee and cake.