

It may become necessary to update some of the information that follows.

Please check the [Ashbourne & District](http://www.ashbourneanddistrictu3a.co.uk) website to contact a group leader or to see whether changes have been made to dates, times and meeting places.

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone, I hope you have all managed to find some shade in the last few weeks. Haven't the evenings been lovely? I think my Gold Star this month goes to the Petanque Groups and Crown Green Bowlers who have carried on regardless. Very impressive, well done all (and yes I have rewritten their Risk Assessments!).

Those of us from Ashbourne who attended the u3a Festival at York a couple of weeks ago thought it was great. With over 1,000 attendees and more than 200 workshops and activities to take part in, it really shows how vibrant the u3a movement is. We've come back with lots of ideas of what we could do!

During August, a small number of our groups take a break but the large majority carry on. So, if you have any doubts about meetings, please check out the website. Talking of the website, I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that Graham and Mavis (our web editor and web manager) are working hard with the group pages on the website to ensure everything is up to date. They will very happily help any group leader who, like me, finds it a challenge. Another possibility is that someone from within a group could help by either providing information or photos, this would also be wonderful for posting online by our PR and media person. Please just contact us if you are happy to help.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the Afternoon Tea at Tissington Hall on **August 19th** (2 tickets left).

Have a lovely Summer everyone. I must admit I'm hoping for a spot of family paddling soon.

Sue Hall

Monthly Meeting

There is no monthly meeting in August. Instead, there is the afternoon tea at Tissington Hall.



Beer Appreciation Group

The next meetings are as follows, all 5pm to 7pm at the Hug and Heave Ashbourne unless stated otherwise: Thursdays **30th July** (new format), **13th** and **27th Aug**.

Our meeting in early July was enjoyed by the group, including new member Tim. Along with beer drinking (see beer themed picture) there were lively discussions on world events.

Future meetings were discussed and various breweries were suggested, Thornbridge, Peak Ales, and Burton Brewery plus curry.

We'll organise these events for the autumn/winter period, after members return from their well-earned holidays.

For the meeting on **30th July**, we're trying a different format. Starting at the Hug and Heave, moving on to Smith's Tavern, followed by the House of Beer and return to the Hug and Heave.

Chris Robson

Book Group

In July, nine of us met to discuss *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey.

This climate fiction novel, only 150 pages long, won the Booker Prize in 2024. None of us were aware that there is now a climate fiction genre which aims, through great stories, to support societies to fully grasp the climate change threat and to embrace its solutions. This beautifully written book is full of mesmerising prose, impossible to read at speed, and tells the story of one day in the life of the astronauts (and 2 cosmonauts) on the international space station. At one level, nothing much happens. The crew go about their daily mundane tasks, they exercise, they carry out experiments, they track the path of a tropical storm and dwell on issues affecting their life on earth and how those issues affect them whilst in space.

The whole book has a dream like quality. It is not in any way a traditional sci-fi or disaster novel, but rather a quiet and hopeful look at humanity, couched in language which glorifies the wonders of planet Earth.

At our next meeting, on **4th August**, we will discuss *The Book of Longing* by Sue Monk Kidd.

Liz Hoof

Beginners' Bridge Group

We currently meet in the Library on **Mondays** from 1.30 - 4.30pm. As we are restricted on the number of tables we can have there, it means that, at the moment the class is nearly full. However things can change, so if you have not played bridge before and would like to learn, then please contact me via the u3a website as space may become available. Thank you.

Pat Dixon

Bridge Improvers' Group

We continue to have a mix of formats from week to week. This includes playing an 8 board session, using the Bridgemates and with crib sheets nowhere in sight. Other weeks, we look at a variety of topics such as how to open and play a hand with more than 23 points or opening a Weak 2 hand.

The group continues to enjoy the great location at the Brass Button.

If you have played Bridge before but are a little rusty and would like to start playing again in a friendly environment then please get in touch via the u3a website.

Yowie Roberts

Bridge Group

Despite the hot weather and holiday commitments, all our bridge groups continue to be well attended and members enjoy the interaction and learning that accompanies this fascinating card game. It is interesting to learn that Bridge is played by over 220 million people world wide, is the most popular card game in the world and is played socially in the home, competitively in clubs (duplicate bridge) and on the internet. The game combines skill with fortune and offers multiple benefits to individuals. Over the coming months, we will highlight the benefits of bridge and share reasons as to why you should join us.

Bridge Benefit 1: Bridge is a popular social pastime and a great way to combat isolation. At any of our three bridge groups, you are assured to make a new network of friends and build partnerships. In the words of Martina Navratilova, tennis player and coach: *No matter where I go, I can always make new friends at the Bridge table.*

Geoff Glover

Canasta Group

The Canasta Group meets at Wyaston Village Hall at 2pm on alternate Wednesdays. New players will be made most welcome. It is an interesting and fun game. Do come along, even if you have never played before. Existing players are happy to teach anyone who wants to learn.

Please note that there are no meetings in August.

We re-start on **Wednesday 9th September** and dates for the rest of the year can be found on the website.

Sue Carpenter

Chatter Group

For our July meeting, twelve members enjoyed lunch at the Saracens Head, Shirley. Despite the hot weather, everyone caught up on news whilst enjoying good food.

There will be no meeting in August but I look forward to catching up with everyone for lunch on **Thursday 10th September** at a venue to be confirmed. New members always welcome.

Sheila Allen

Chess Groups

Our Chess Groups will continue during the Summer. The main Chess Group will be meeting on Tuesdays **11th and 25th August**. The Beginner Group will meet on Mondays **10th and 24th August**.

If you are interested in joining our developing Chess activities, then please make contact with me so that I can help and provide more information.

Duncan Meikle

Choir

We recently had our end of term, mini, informal concert. We sang the eight songs we've been learning since January. Most of them are in two parts, sopranos and altos, with the men singing the alto part an octave lower. We occasionally venture into three parts with a descant for some of the sopranos.

It was a joyful afternoon, with lots of chat and laughter. I was really proud of how well we sang; the dynamic contrasts in *Put on your Sunday Clothes* and *Turn, Turn, Turn* were very effective; the story telling and phrasing gave *Seashell Seashell Tell Me Your Tale* a wondrous feel; the changes in tempo and the descant in *Down by the Riverside* made for a professional performance; the alto harmonies and crescendos in *Bandyrowe* contrasted perfectly with the quiet lullaby sections, and the pauses in *Dashing Away with the Smoothing Iron* created a sense of fun. On our nemesis piece, *Dulaman*, with all the repeats, shall I say we all got to the end together and sang the last two bars with great gusto and relief! A big WELL DONE to everyone in the choir for your brilliant performance; several members of the audience congratulated us on our singing and spoke about our sense of fun and how well everyone gets on with each other.

The audience enjoyed singing along in the chorus of *Strawberry Fair* and earned their cup of tea and cake. There was a table full of glorious cakes, far too much I thought, but it virtually all disappeared.

A big thanks to Janet K who has been wonderful accompanying us on the piano for another year.

We won't be meeting in August but we will be back again on Thursday **10th September** at Wyaston Village Hall 2pm - 4pm. We'll be singing *Bobby Shaftoe went to sea* and making a start on some Christmas music. New members will be most welcome. You don't need to be able to read music as we sing through each part separately a few times first. No-one is ever asked to sing individually and there are no auditions. You just need to be happy to join in and have a go.

Janet Bunting

Creative Writing Group

A subject to write about this month was *The Letter Lay on the Mat* - this conjured up various reactions. Of course, I had to choose 'The Weather Forecast' during this heatwave but was surprised to learn that some people actually like our current weather - I think it's just not British!

We writers decided last year that we would continue to meet during August and one subject next time will be *The Phone Rings, an Unknown Voice Says.....* The next meeting is on Thursday **23rd July** at 2.00pm at Olive Keizer's house. Please contact me if you would like to come to have a taster session.

One of Yogi Bear's favourite quotes: *If you come to a fork in the road - take it!*

Pat Hall

Crown Green Bowling Group

We probably earned an u3a award last week for playing the full session on a very, very hot day! ☀️. Well done everyone that was impressive. 🤝 🤝. Our group leader even suggested an early finish but all 10 players, plus the 6 members of Ashbourne Bowls Club who acted as Coaches, played on. 🧠

We are really enjoying the sessions and we are all confident that the standard of play is improving with more bowls staying on the greens and less ending up in the ditch. We must be doing ok as Margaret (our chief coach) has suggested that in a couple of weeks we can start playing games and take part in a simple knock out competition. New members are very welcome to all sessions and can either play separately or join in our competition, as there will be a mixing up of players with different experience. Scorers very welcome too please.

Sue Hall

Current Affairs

At our recent meeting, led by Malcolm Boura, we discussed the surprisingly complicated topic of electoral systems. We started by asking "Why government?", "Why democracy?", and "What should an electoral system deliver?". We took a quick look at the House of Lords and then moved on to the elected bodies, the franchise, and the many inconsistencies across the UK. We reviewed the systems in use and the considerable differences between the various administrations.

We concluded that the direct link between citizens and representative is important and should be retained and that there is a pressing need for voter education on electoral systems. The problem of small parties sometimes wielding disproportionate power but often being seriously under represented, must be addressed. The elections bill currently before parliament will address some of the issues that we identified, but not all. The whole presentation stimulated lively questioning and discussion and was greatly enjoyed by those present.

Our next meeting will be after a summer break. On **10th September**, we will convene again at Mayfield Memorial Hall at 10am. We will have a new Prime Minister, so there may be a whole series of new policies and directions emerge which we can get our teeth into. Look out for next month's newsletter when a specific topic will be described.

Bob Hodgson

Cycling Group

On the July ride, nine cyclists (two on a tandem) went on a circular route from Weston Underwood with lunch at Newlands Farm Cafe near Hatton. The minority of us who were not electrically assisted, found the return journey tiring in the heat.

On **20th August**, we will be cycling from Ashbourne to the Crown Inn at Marston Montgomery for lunch.

On **10th September**, we will be cycling from Tissington to Parsley Hay on the Tissington Trail, followed by a road section to lunch at the Waterloo Inn. Afterwards, we will return on the trail.

Doug Billings



Disco Dancing and Social

We are having a summer break, so the next Disco evening is **October 23rd**.

The list of dates for 2026 are on the Disco Group website so please check them out.

I hope everyone is enjoying this lovely summer.

Tricia Barclay

Family History Group

At our July meeting, on a very hot afternoon at Wyaston Village Hall, Sheila did a very interesting presentation about the Bassetts of Mayfield. Unfortunately, we had a small turnout, not only because of the heat but also because of other commitments.

We won't be having a social event in August this year, owing to potential organisers not being available, and there will be no meeting in September either for similar reasons. So, our next meeting won't be until **Thursday 8th October**, at a venue still to be arranged (or possibly as a virtual meeting).

For more information about our meetings, please contact me via the group page on the u3a website. When we meet face to face we usually try to have a presentation, followed by refreshments, followed by searches to solve members' brick walls.

Vivien Tiano

French Group

On **Monday 3rd August** the group will have a garden party at my house, to round off the "year", and then we shall take a break until October, as I shall be away all of September. So, the first meeting of the new season will be on **Monday 5th October** at 2pm at Mayfield Memorial Hall, then every other Monday from then onwards.

We usually have a theme for the day, with vocabulary to look up linked to that theme, and

members come along prepared to talk about something connected to the day's theme. There is always a cuppa and nice biscuits, followed by the optional activity of reading a few pages of the book we are studying. I am hoping to add some grammar to the sessions in the autumn and occasionally we have a listening exercise.

If you would like to come to a taster session when we start up again – a very good time to start - please contact me any time over the summer via the Group on the Ashbourne u3a website.

Vivien Tiano

Gardens Group

We had a fantastic visit to Floral Media. After a warm welcome, the owners entertained us with humorous stories of how their business had developed. We had a tour of their lovely gardens which was followed by a demonstration of how to make a professional tied bouquet which was raffled off for charity. The lunch was delicious. The afternoon was then free to explore the gardens.

In June, one of our members, Carolyn Keeling, opened her beautiful garden to the public and raised over £4000 for charity.



In July, we spent a lovely day exploring Easton Walled Garden, famous for its sweet peas.

Future visits are planned to Arley Hall on **August 10th** and Powis Castle on **September 3rd**. If you'd like to go on any of these trips, please put your name down by contacting us on Beacon.

Sandra Holmes and Mary Marshall

Give it a Go Group

We are now up and running officially following a glider flight at Seighford Airfield in June. A great experience which we plan to repeat in 2027, so look out for updates.

Forthcoming events are:

Drypoint Printmaking Workshop on **23rd July** at Hopton Hall, 10:30 am, £25pp (+£7.50). Materials and equipment are provided. No artistic or printmaking experience needed.

Give calligraphy a go on **11th August** at The Brass Button from 10:30 am - 12:30 pm, £49 + (£5) or Tea/coffee etc. Pen Modern Calligraphy for Beginners Workshop. Learn a new skill and receive a kit to take home.

Try Dive/Scuba Dive on Thursday **10th September**, Ashbourne Leisure Centre from 8pm – 10pm, £15. All you need to bring is a towel, swimwear and a T-shirt to wear in the water. Certificate given on completion.

Abseil Millers Dale Viaduct on Tuesday **6th October** 10.30am-1.30pm, £69pp. All training and support given. We may have time for multiple abseils.

Clare Hamilton

Hiking Group

The hikers had a wonderful adventure in July when Malcolm led us on the most challenging part of the Steel Cotton Trail, from Chinley over the tops to Edale. We caught the train from Edale, where we parked, and the route back brought us over three Ethels: Mount Famine, South Head and Brown Knoll, before joining the Pennine Way back to Edale.



PLEASE NOTE OUR WALK IN AUGUST WILL TAKE PLACE ON **TUESDAY 18th**, NOT 11th AS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED. We will start at 9.30 from Bowden Bridge car park near Hayfield. We will be climbing Lantern Pike.

Judy Harrison

Intermediate German Group

We are taking a well earned break until **September 15th** when we plan to meet again at the Elim Centre from 10.30am until 12 on alternate Tuesdays. There will be the usual mix of listening, speaking and reading activities with a scattering of grammar revision and vocabulary learning, along with coffee and chat. All details are on the website.

Rhona Hunt

Landscape and Heritage Group

We had a very hot day for the visit to Tatton Park in June but those who went enjoyed it. Our visits to Bolsover Castle in July and to Derby in August are both fully booked.

There are places still available for a visit to Bakewell on **18th Sept** when we will be going to the Old House Museum and will also have a guided walk round the town. On **16th October**, we will visit Coventry. This includes guided tours of both St Mary's Guildhall and the Cathedral and a cream tea. Please contact me via the website for further information.

Pamela Boura

Line Dancing Group

There is a bank holiday on 31st August so there will be **no** dancing on that day. On all other Mondays, we will meet at Yeldersley Hall at 7pm for a couple of hours of exercise, fun and a chat in the break.

If you are interested, check out our page on the website for more information.

Sue Edmonds

Natural History Group

Thursday **20th August** will see us at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Willington Wetlands and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Tucklesholme. Willington comprises 40 hectares of wetland habitat within a beaver-proof fence. The wetlands are teeming with bird life all year round, dragonflies and damselflies are plentiful here too. Tucklesholme has a variety of different habitats, wetland, the River Trent and open scrub. In between the visit sites, we will have lunch in Willington.

Future trips include a visit to Majorca in late September. New members always welcome, see the group's page of our website for more information.

Sheila Crawley

Padel Group

We're looking for more members! Our current schedule is **Tuesday** at 2pm, 90 minute session. In addition we have a WhatsApp group which can be used to look for playing partners any time you fancy playing.

Padel is a mix of tennis and squash, played in doubles with a paddle on a small, enclosed court with walls that are part of the game.

No equipment required except a good pair of trainers. New members welcome, and as with all u3a groups, you're welcome to come along to watch and / or have a go before you commit.

Please consider your fitness level before taking part.

Sheila Crawley

Park Garden Volunteers

The original bed is looking lush and verdant, a pleasure to see in the Memorial Park. The new bed is coming on with plenty of finished flowers on the rose bush that hopefully will be covered in rose hips at the end of the season.

We have, hopefully, a new volunteer for the rota which will spread the load a bit more. More volunteers are always welcome, so if you would like to share your practical hands on experience please come and join us.

Ashbourne Park has received the internationally recognised Green Flag award, a fantastic testament for all the hard work, passion and dedication for those working in this green space to ensure it is maintained to a high standard for residents and visitors to enjoy. Well done everyone.

An update on Carolyn Keeling's open garden for the NGS is that she and her team of cake bakers and washer uppers raised a whopping £4,300 for charity. Well done Carolyn!!

Lynne and Maria

Petanque

The Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday Petanque groups have all managed to carry on through the recent hot weather, though we aren't really used to it as it's usually blowy and a tad nippy at Hognaston. So sunhats, T shirts and sun cream have been the order of the day. How very French we've become!

If you'd like to join us, there are several spaces in the Friday group and they'd be delighted to see a few new faces. Just contact us through the website and we'll arrange for you to have a taster session, to see if you like the idea. You don't need your own boules initially, we can loan you some. An incentive is that the lunches at The Red Lion, Hognaston (where we play) are fab! C'mon, give it a try, you know you want to!

Sue Hall

Photography Group

We meet on the first Thursday of every month at Mayfield Memorial Hall at 10:00.

The theme for July was *Bottles* and there were lots of different ideas for displaying bottles. A photograph from each member can now be seen on the website.

Next month's meeting will be held at Mayfield Memorial Hall on **Thursday 6th August** at 10.00

when the theme will be *Letters of the Alphabet*.

Please contact me via the website if you are interested in joining the group.

Helen Bluff

Pickleball Group

We have 3 sessions each week, Monday and Wednesday at 9 to 11am, and Thursday 11am to 1pm. However, our Wednesday session is only during term-time. All are at Ashbourne Leisure Centre. No equipment required except a good pair of trainers. Please consider your fitness level before taking part.

New members welcome, and as with all u3a groups, you're welcome to come along to watch and / or have a go before you commit.

Sheila Crawley

Quiz Group

Quizzes are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 2 to 4pm, **Tuesday 18th August** will be the next. Turn up on the day, no need to pre-book. Entry is £2 cash per person on the door. Cubley Village Hall is in charge of catering and provides interval drinks and cake at an additional cost of £1 per person per item (so £2 for a drink and cake).

The address is Cubley Village Hall, Derby Lane, Cubley, DE6 2EY. All the information for the group is on its page on the website.

Richard McLachlan

Science and Engineering Group



In June, group members visited a company that is a global leader and is proudly based in Ashbourne, with a full, in-house design and manufacturing operation. The company is MasterMover which designs and manufactures electric tugs for moving wheeled loads of up to 700 tons, in warehouse and manufacturing environments. The company was founded in 1997 and is on target for a worldwide turnover this year of fifty million pounds! Customers include many major blue-chip companies.

Many of MasterMover's tugs can be remotely controlled, some can be fully automated or electronically linked to work together as a team controlled by a single operator. We enjoyed hands-on demonstrations of some of the simpler tugs and were delighted to find a world-leading company on our doorstep.

On **30th July**, Phil Ruffles will present "300 years of Innovation in Propulsion and Power", in which he will show how advances have changed people's lives.

Steve Butler

Spanish Group

This month, we have been continuing our Spanish journey with reviewing our verb tenses and practising giving commands. Bingo and fizz buzz games have challenged our number skills.

We have also learned about the bull running in Pamplona and read a Mexican fable about Popocatepetl. The term finished with a game of Spanish Cluedo.

Next term begins on Monday **7th September**. Felices vacaciones!

Shirley Loveridge

Strollers



We have two lovely and interesting circular walks planned for August. Both walks show what a beautiful part of the world we are fortunate to live in:

TISSINGTON CIRCULAR **3rd August 2026** Time: 1:30 pm

Organiser: Karen Tallant Note that booking is required.

3 mile circular walk from The Old Dog at Thorpe. Karen will lead this walk assisted by Jill and Peter, especially in the fields from Spen Lane! Fabulous views over Thorpe Cloud (without climbing!) from this walk, as well as the lovely countryside round Thorpe and Tissington. There is a short flight of uneven stone steps. Some stiles. Care must be taken when we cross the A515 at Tissington Gates and have a short stretch along a lane. Refreshments at The Old Dog following the walk. Meet at The Range end of Waterside to car share and leave at 1.30pm prompt for The Old Dog. Please let Karen know if you wish to join the walk.

CALTON CIRCULAR **17th August 2026** 1:30 pm Organiser: Karen Tallant

Booking: Note that booking is required.

3 mile circular walk kindly led by Margaret and Warwick. There is a long gradient at the start of the walk which we can take at our own pace. The views are amazing on this lovely walk. Do it ourselves refreshments at Calton Village Hall following the walk. Meet at The Range end of Waterside to car share and leave at 1.30pm prompt for Calton. Please let Karen know if you wish to join this walk.

Karen Tallent

Tabletop Games Group

The group will continue to meet at Ashbourne library during August but with some minor time changes. The start time will be delayed until 2:30 on **14th and 21st**, but back to 2pm on **28th** August.

If you think you'd like to join us, you can find out more on our page on the website.

Sue Edmonds

Table Tennis

We continue to meet every **Friday morning** at Ashbourne Leisure Centre from 9-11 o'clock. We are a very friendly group who play mainly doubles, but where numbers allow, we play the odd singles match.

Elaine Beard

Travel Group

The Travel Group have been very pleased to welcome another joiner to our group going to Cambridgeshire from **12th-15th October**. We are planning a get together in September for everyone to get to know each other before we travel. This has proved really successful on previous trips, especially for those of us who are travelling alone and don't know many in the group. It's also a good chance to talk through the itinerary and find out a bit more about what we'll be doing, especially on the day touring Cambridge and the following day visiting The Imperial War Museum Duxford. These will be busy days and one member of the group is organising mobility assistance if necessary.

If you are interested in joining the group, we still have 3 places available. Deposits will be paid soon though, so please contact us quickly to ensure the cost remains at the quoted amount.

Sue Hall

Weekend Lunch Group

The first Sunday in July found us at the Jervis Arms in Onecote. The views on the drive there are really stunning and well worth going an extra mile for. **August 2nd** will see us at the Bluebell in Kirk Langley, a bit closer to home. If you would like to join us, please get in touch through the website and we'll get you booked in. Don't forget to bring your appetite!

Lynne Wood

Wine Appreciation Group

Our latest meeting took place in two venues, in both Ashbourne and Oakamoor. The theme was a world cup knockout when we sampled some excellent wines from South Africa, France, Greece, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina. As usual, it was difficult to choose but a wonderful sparkling rose came out on top for both groups. The real winner is the fact that members, old and new, were

able to enjoy each other's company outside in beautiful weather! If you are interested in joining us, then please contact Jan via the website.



Jan Dodd

Yoga Group

The group is now in the last block of four sessions before the summer break at the end of July. Classes will restart in September.

Numbers are still at a good level but three places have been released from the waiting list for the present period. Anyone wishing to go on the new list for September please contact Sue via the website.

Dru Yoga is a gently flowing style suitable for most abilities. Venue remains as Mayfield Memorial Hall. Sessions are held on **Thursdays** from 3pm to 4.30pm. Fee is £3 per session. One free taster session!

Sue Copson

Online Opportunities

The following online sessions, created for the Third Age Trust, are available free to members who are interested. Use the following links to book your place:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ai-news-july-ai-futures-tickets-1991180785330?aff=oddtcreator>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staying-safe-online-a-u3a-presentation-with-qa-tickets-1991178923762?aff=oddtcreator>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/digital-hobbies-for-the-third-age-tickets-1992481177839?aff=oddtcreator>

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/deepfakes-demystified-understanding-the-risks-and-staying-safe-tickets-1992113282454?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true