



<https://u3asites.org.uk/collingham>

NEWSLETTER – March 2024

From the Chair:

Welcome to March's newsletter when we should be able to look forward to better weather – definitely hoping for less rain and more sun in the month ahead. Of course, we can also look forward to the end of the financial year, both nationally and for our u3a. As there were lots of details last month about how to renew your membership, I'm not going to reiterate that, but I do hope you've all kept it so that you have the details to hand if you haven't yet renewed.

From a procedural perspective, the most important reasons for renewing your membership are of course that it allows you to continue to attend your groups and the monthly meeting and vote at the AGM in June.

This is a vital meeting in the running of your u3a, but isn't, it has to be acknowledged, an intrinsically interesting event. However, we strive each year to give you an incentive to come and this year we have excelled as Fools Gold will once more be entertaining us after a brief (very brief if all goes well) business meeting. So do remember to get out those cheque books or go online soon.

After a fascinating presentation and a different way of going about it in February, we will be going further back in time to learn more about Victorian medicine. The nineteenth century laid the foundation for a scientific approach to medicine, though this didn't always translate into actual improvements in treatment. Although if you had to have an amputation, advances in anaesthesia were a definite improvement – success no longer wholly depended on the surgeon being able to saw very fast! Slower growth in successful medication laid the way open for charlatans – I'm sure we will be entertained with insights into the sales of snake oil.

Here's looking forward to another successful year with Collingham u3a as we enter our second decade.

Don't forget to check out our website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/collingham/home>

General Meetings



This talk was given our member Lesley Piper. It gave an insight to the tragedy and pain suffered by the bereaved families due to the way the White Star Line acted after the sinking of the Titanic.

The first thing to note, is that when the Titanic had sailed and docked for the first time, the crew had changed. This was important because the key for the binocular cupboard was taken off ship. The lookout on the fatal voyage did not have the correct equipment to spot the impending collision with the iceberg. It only took 2 hours and 40 minutes to sink. There were only 20 lifeboats onboard!

After the sinking, bodies were left floating upright in the water, due to the style of life jacket used. Ships that travelled between the bodies complained and the White Star line had to do something about this. They hired a boat called the CS Mackay-Bennett. This vessel was originally a cable laying ship but was commandeered to rescue the bodies from the water. Initially it was thought that 50-70 bodies would be picked up but it was soon clear that there were far more bodies than this estimate. The ship set sail with coffins and a church minister.

The unfortunate souls were piling up, so a decision was made to bury some people at sea. Firstly, the bodies were sorted into "classes." This was done by seeing what type of underwear they had. If it was silk, then you stayed onboard, if it was cotton then you were classed as middle/lower class and buried at sea.

When the Mackay-Bennett finally docked, four mass graves were dug for the people who could not be repatriated to their homelands. This is because the Titanic owners told the bereaved families that they must pay the full cost to have their loved ones returned home. To be even more callous, the Titanic owners even demanded full payment for uniforms of the crew and band members.

One poignant moment came when a child's body, of about 2 years of age was found and he was named "Our Babe" by the crew of the of the Mackay-Bennett. Many years later, due to DNA testing from clothes the child was found in, his name was finally known and he had been 1 year and 255 days old when he died.

The speaker gave us some facts about some of the people who survived and one even lived to be 97!

This was a very enlightening talk and gave a new perspective to the story of the Titanic which is rarely heard about or told. If you were not there, you missed a treat!

Richard.

Just a little extra note from Lesley.

Thank you so much for giving me such a warm reception when I gave the talk on "Titanic-the aftermath." Since then, and bolstered up with a renewed confidence, I made contact, via his website, with Christopher Ward, the author of the wonderful book "And the band played on" He got back to me within hours and we now have a dialogue going back and forth.

He tells me that he stumbled on the story of The Mackay Bennett by chance, whilst researching his own family history. I strongly recommend that you put his name into Google and look at his website, and especially the two small video clips that he has posted - both excellent.

Thank you again for the very warm applause and comments - I am still on cloud 9!

Speakers Corner Forthcoming Events:

March

Victorian Medicine: Challenges, Champions and Charlatans

An overview of how medical training changed, how the concept of disease causation evolved, the advent of antiseptics and general anaesthesia and how quacks exploited the gullible public to achieve fast and certain cures for their medical problems.

Presented by Professor Robert Wilcox

April

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was founded at the end of the First World War to ensure that those from the Commonwealth Nations who had lost their lives would be remembered in perpetuity.

This talk will look at the founding and history of the CWGC, its early work and the ongoing role fulfilled today.

Presented by Sarah Moody

May

A Driver's Workshop

Further details to follow

Many thanks to those members who have suggested topics for future talks and presentations. The aim is to provide a broad range of subjects and with as much interaction as possible. Following on from Lesley's talk in February and the format used that day the presentation in May will be similar.

David

Groups

Contacting Group Leaders

A full list of groups can be found on our website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/collingham/groups>

To contact one of the group leaders by e mail please use the contact link on the specific group page.

Family History Group

At our latest meeting Ivor introduced us to his grandfather, and it was quite a story! Robert Makepeace was born in 1860 but on his death certificate in 1924 his name was given as Robert M Carter-Steele. Ivor showed how this came about. Robert Makepeace joined the army in the 1870s and served in the Zulu war. Either on enlistment or during his service he seems to have added the name Steele. He married Florence Elmer in the 1890s, but in 1911 was calling himself Robert Carter and had a family with Ruth Carter. They did marry after this date and Ruth was the informant on his death certificate in 1924.

Ivor remembers playing as a boy with a Zulu spear from his grandfather's military collection, but this is long lost. He does have a Zulu campaign medal though. Group members were fascinated by the story and we now look forward to our next meeting on Tuesday 2nd April.

Charlie

History Group

At our February meeting Sheelah Reynolds gave us a presentation on the 'First Fleet.'

It was excellent, it's incredible to think that all the ships arrived unscathed in Australia and managed to successfully create a new nation. The lists of supplies taken on this enterprise was amazing and gave us lots to ponder and discuss. Thanks to Chris who provided technical support! The History group meet again on Friday 22nd March at 10.00am in YCC, new members always welcome.

Ann

Quiz Group

14 intrepid quizzers met in Lesley and David's house for the first full session of the newly formed quiz group.

Each person took a number and was thus randomly put into a team.

After a brief welcome by John Annis, (our esteemed leader) the group settled down and attempted to answer the questions, as set by David. Thankfully we didn't have to read the questions for ourselves as David read them out in sections of 10 questions on a specific theme, (geography, history etc).

After each set of 10 questions, he gave us the answers - with gasps, shouts, and lots of "I said that but you didn't write it down!" from various team members to each other.

After 40 questions and answers we were all ready for coffee/tea and biscuits.

The second half of the quiz followed the same format and we eventually finished, with one team declared the winners. The prize - the few £1's we'd all put into a box as we entered, a kit-kat and loads of well-deserved glory.

The group then discussed future sessions and decided that the venue would change to Girton Village Hall and would remain on the third Friday of each month, 10.00-12.00. We would take our own refreshments. One member of the group, on a rotational basis, would set the questions each month, with the next session in April being set by Lesley.

This lovely new group is already shaping up to be a very vibrant and good fun group, with laughter and education well mixed in. If anyone else would like to join us then please get in touch with John Annis. (e mail address is on the list of committee members u3a website)

Here's to next time on Friday April 19th, Girton Village Hall. 10.00-12.00.

Lesley Piper

Here is a sample of the questions from the inaugural quiz meeting:

Which town was capital of England for five weeks in 1013?

What are the names of the two large yellow cranes in the Harland and Wolff Shipyard in Belfast?

Which Newark born actor appeared with Peter O'Toole in the film Lawrence of Arabia?

Where would you find lift 109?

We've all heard of MI5 and MI6, who or what are associated with MI14?

Who founded the Open University?

What name is given to Franz Schubert's Symphony No 8?

Which country has the most Pyramids in the world?

What is the only country in South America whose official language is Dutch?

Which two men are waiting for Godot?

Photography

The group met this month and reviewed our "Happiness" theme images, some of which are shown below. The meeting ended by showing a 1955 documentary film that showed how much the work, safety and weather has changed since then.

Our theme for next month is "Clouds"

Paul Bass



Coffee and Cake by Colin Smith



Enjoying my hobby by Paul Bass



My Happy Place by Gillian Bass



Music Makers by John Geeson



Fabric Heaven by Gillian Bass



It makes me smile by Jenny MacPherson



Planning the next trip by Jannet Wright



Waited Months for this Meal by John Geeson



Summer walk in Wales by Jannet Wright



I Picked These by Paul Bass

Mouth Watering by Jenny Macpherson





My Passion by Colin Smith

Play Reading

After fun and games with Toad and his pals amongst the willows, our next play is “Kes” adapted from his novel by Barry Hines, and which will, no doubt, prove to be a grittier read. But we are nothing if not adaptable ourselves.

Several of the group are looking forward to visiting the Robin Hood Theatre at Averham next month to see “Sherlock Holmes, the Sign of the Four”.

The group meets at the YCC on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10-12.

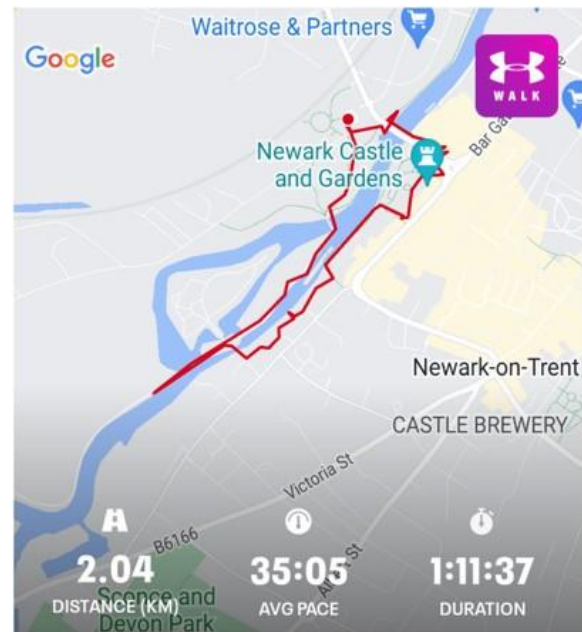
Sue

Thursday Talking Shop

Our topic for the next meeting on March 28th will be 'Looking at the Generations'. This will be focussed around the reasons and objectives for the naming or branding of different age groups, from what is now known as The Greatest Generation in the early 20th century, on to The Baby Boomers, and up to more recent tags such as The Generations X, Y, Z and today's Alpha or Snowflake.

Annie

Strollers



This month we walked on two Wednesdays, the first and second Wednesday. This is to give the group greater flexibility, and ensure the numbers walking are not too large.

We parked in the Riverside car park in Newark and walked by the canal to the weir. The water was high and the weir was in full spate. The amount of water was leaving large amounts of debris by the banks.



It was interesting to see the converted warehouses, housing and the lock. After crossing the bridge near the weir, we walked back towards the Castle along part of the Civil War Trail.

We stopped by the otter sculptures and then walked through the castle grounds. We had refreshments at Stray's at the Ossington.

Table Tennis

Our friendly table tennis group usually meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at the Winthorpe Community Centre for 1 hour from 10 – 11 am. Afterwards many of us enjoy a cup of coffee and the occasional cake at the Lord Nelson in Winthorpe. We do provide bats and balls and new members are always welcome.

Do come and give it a try!

The dates going forward are as follows:

March 28th

April 2024 11th and 25th

May 2024 9th and 23rd

June 2024 13th and 27th

Italian Group

The group meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

In our first meeting in March, we focussed on Speaking and Listening. We started as usual with a warm-up activity. Number cards were placed face down of the table and members took it in turn to pick up three cards and tell the rest of the group the number their cards created, such as 967, 462, 101. We then increased it so we picked up four cards and had to tell the group what the numbers were, for example 1,495 or 2,057 or 9,514. This made us listen carefully to what each group member said as well as remembering the rules for saying hundreds and thousands in Italian.

Next, we had action picture cards, for example, of someone running, sweeping or reading. Members of the group took turns in producing short sentences in Italian about the pictures. This was good for vocabulary revision and producing longer sentences.

Using the same cards we then worked in pairs, each pair having two cards about which they had to make up short stories. People then took turns to tell the stories to other members of the group. Era molto divertente!

Jannet and Mary

Local History Group

Barry led off the meeting with his review of book about Laxton village he had just read. Barry's background in the village made it particularly meaningful. Indeed, his grandfather gets a mention. In his day times were hard and it was difficult to make a living on the smaller farms giving rise to farmers migrating to Nottinghamshire's coal fields in search of better livings. Picking up on the enclosure theme from the last meeting, David gave a slide presentation on how the perceived threat of enclosure could cause civil unrest. A potential example was the 1531 riot over grazing rights between the inhabitants of North and South Collingham that took place in the then called Southmarsh field. Using the later 1790 enclosure map as a basis he was able to demonstrate that the 'field of combat' lay west of the river Fleet and was bisected by the present Trent Lane. Although Southmarsh field was totally situated in North Collingham the grazing had always been communally and peaceably shared until the riot. In discussion the question arose as to whether or not South Collingham ever had sufficient grazing in its own right. At present there is no known documents to help with an answer. A future research topic?

Although free of charge it was apparent that the JR as a meeting venue was now cramped for current members. David undertook to explore the possibility of moving venue to the YCC, if we accepted a small monthly charge for the facility.

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 10 April, usual time 2.00 - 4.00.
David

Weekenders

This month we have seen Wicked Little Letters at the Everyman and at the Odeon; Taken advantage of the £10 lunch deal at the Lord Nelson in Winthorpe, more than once; seen The Great Escaper at the Methodist Church; heard a Rod Stewart tribute act at the Terry O'Toole theatre in North Hykeham and seen One Love at the Odeon.

We meet on the third Saturday, 10:30, in Pennell's, contact me via the website if you are interested in joining us. Liz

Bridge

We meet every Friday 2-4pm at Beyond Coffee.

We usually play a few 'difficult' pre-set hands to test our ability, and finish with dealt hands which also test our ability. Chris

Art Appreciation

In February members spoke about one of their favourite pieces of art and why they would take it with them to a Desert Island. Examples included:



The Seal by Brancusi 1943



My Front Yard by Georgia O'Keeffe 1941



Bride, Russian Beauty by Kandinsky 1903

I wonder what piece of art you would bring to a Desert Island?

This friendly, stimulating Group meets at the Youth and Community Centre (YCC) on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

At our next meeting on Tuesday 26th March Carol Barker will be talking about Native American Art of the Southwest.

Jannet

Literature Group

We have been reading 'The Beekeeper of Aleppo' by Christy Lefteri. This is a book of our time; a novel that puts human faces on the Syrian war with the immigrant story of a beekeeper, his wife, and the triumph of spirit when the world becomes unrecognisable.

At our meeting on Thursday, we found many points to fuel our discussion, which was very lively and worthwhile. A member of our group has lived in Syria, and gave us an extra insight into this far off country.

SPRING

Somewhere

A black bear
Has just risen from sleep
And is staring

Down the mountain

All night
In the brisk and shallow restlessness
Of early spring

I think of her,

Her four black fists
Flicking the gravel,
Her tongue

Like a red fire

Touching the grass,
The cold water.
There is only one question:

How to love this world.

I think of her
Rising
Like a black and leafy ledge

To sharpen her claws against

The silence
Of the trees.
Whatever else

My life is

With its poems
And its music
And its glass cities,

It is also this dazzling darkness

Coming

Down the mountain,

Breathing and tasting;

All day I think of her—

Her white teeth,

Her wordlessness,

Her perfect love.

MARY OLIVER, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, is one of the most celebrated and best-selling American poets.

Footnote: This is my first attempt at editing our Newsletter, under the watchful eye of Liz, so if contributors have any issues with this issue, please let me know!

Pat Morgan
