

# Collingham & District



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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

**NEWSLETTER - August 2020**

## Welcome to the August Newsletter

It was only last month that I wrote thanking Liz and Martin for their excellent work in producing our Newsletter. This month I would like to say how much we appreciate Liz's work in putting the Newsletter together after Martin's death on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August. When Martin and Liz offered to take over the Newsletter from Harry Constantine they developed their own style and increased output to a monthly edition. As a member of the Executive Committee Martin's good humour, generosity and willingness to help were apparent in any activities he undertook. We will miss him very much.

The Executive Committee continues to monitor the current situation regarding Coronavirus and our activities in the light of the advice from the Third Age Trust and the Government. As yet no groups can meet in anyone's house and we are not yet planning to restart General Meetings.

### AGM

We have therefore decided that this year we will hold our AGM on-line using Zoom. This will happen on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 2pm**. We will send out the papers, as we usually do, to all members of Collingham & District U3A. We will do this at the beginning of September. We will also let you know how to register to join us at the Zoom AGM. We are aware that not everyone will want or be able to join in this way and for some the time will not be convenient. However, we hope members will be able to attend and that everyone will have the opportunity to read the relevant documents .

One such document will be a proposal to temporarily amend our membership arrangements. We are aware that some members managed to pay their renewal fees for this year April 2020 to March 2021 before the lockdown started but other members were unable to make their payments in the usual way. As an Executive Committee we decided that we didn't want anyone to lose their membership because of this situation. So all members have continued to receive the Newsletter and the Third Age Trust Magazine. Thirteen Groups have maintained contact or carried out activities on-line.

If the proposal is accepted, it will mean that those of you who have already paid for this year will not pay again until April 2022. Members who have been unable to pay because of the current circumstances will not be asked to pay for this current year. These members will pay a single membership fee of £17 in April/May 2021 in the usual way. We believe that this is the fairest way to proceed as it enables us all to continue being members of Collingham & District U3A while taking into account some of the issues we have all faced in the last 5 months.

Best wishes

Jannet Wright, Chair, Executive Committee

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# Information from the Civil War Centre

The National Civil War Centre and Newark Museum currently have a knitting project on the go. They are knitting the Battle of Naseby, including horses, pike-men, cavaliers and the fields it took place in. There is something for the novice knitter and the most accomplished, all of the patterns are on the link below and you can see examples in the palace theatre window.

The Palace Theatre also has a community project. This year is the 100 year anniversary of the theatre. Before we were all locked down there were many events and activities planned to celebrate this. As we can no longer participate in these activities we have decided to create a memory quilt. A "Patchwork Palace". The idea is for everyone to create a square on which they sew a memory of a time they spent in the theatre or something to do with the theatre. I am sewing a square with the stained glass windows on it, a colleague has made a fantastic pantomime dame and there are many other memories in the making. If you could let your members know via your newsletter or facebook page. I would be very grateful. We want as many people as possible involved in this so if you fancy a go yourself feel free.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this I look forward to hearing from you soon With Kind Regards Donna Hall Learning and Participation Assistant National Civil War Centre and Newark Museum P.s The Museum is free at the moment to Newark and Sherwood Residents you just have to book online.

<https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/palace/covid-19,show,updates/self-isolation,survival,kit/>

^ <http://www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com/craftycorner/#d.en.117230>

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Reply to Donna Hall <[civilwarlearninguk@gmail.com](mailto:civilwarlearninguk@gmail.com)>

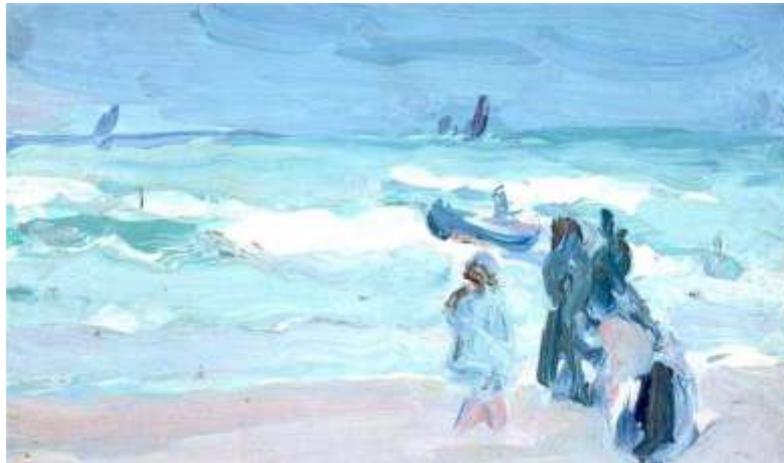
# Groups

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## Art Appreciation

Lead: Chris Stothard, Telephone: 01636 894241  
email: cstothard@gmail.com

The painting below, by Samuel Peploe is of the north coast of France, but will, I'm sure, remind us of summer holidays in Britain when the beach and the sea called but the weather left something to be desired. The people who know talk about the Scottish colourists as being influenced by the fauvist movement, but I can't help thinking that the colours used here and that often work for Britain, are not the strong colours associated with fauvism which developed in the much hotter climates of southern France.



On the French coast 1907 Peploe

Peploe worked on the north coast of France several times between 1904 and 1907, often alongside fellow Scottish Colourist, John Duncan Fergusson. This fresh and direct painting is typical of the small panels on which he worked, en plein air, in an Impressionist manner. Thick, long brush strokes capture the essence of the beach scene, rather than its details, using a limited range of colours to convey the varying natural light of the scene. Peploe studied art in Paris in 1890s and lived there from 1910-12 following his marriage.

Having had the disappointing weather of northern Europe, I thought we should venture further afield and so have headed to Australia. This is a key painting in Australian art history and shows the Sydney Harbour Bridge under construction - an iconic tourist destination .



Bridge in curve Grace Cossington Smith

Below are two works of art by Vigee Lebrun, both show Marie Antoinette but her clothing couldn't be more different. In the first, she wears what was expected of a woman of her station. It is made of silk which was very expensive but was made by the French and was thus economically important to them. The second is much simpler, though to our eyes, still a rather fancy dress made of cotton. Cotton was at that time an Indian export, although the British were about to corner the market in cotton cloth. It was, therefore, unpatriotic to wear cotton, especially for the aristocracy.



This portrait was deemed quite unsuitable to show by the French Academy and was removed. This did not, however, stop cotton becoming a very fashionable, and more importantly, an affordable fabric in the later part of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries.

Increased demand led to increased production, not in India but in the southern United States because Indian production could not be stepped up. Increased production and mechanisation of production meant cotton cloth became even cheaper and the only way to make this economic was to greatly increase the number of slaves in the southern US, with an outcome we're still living with today. So everything is Marie Antoinette's fault, just as the French revolutionaries always thought.

Whilst it is convenient to say this, it does absolve the men who made all the decisions in this long chain of events rather nicely, so sadly she lost her head whilst at least the British and American men made lots of money and really set us on the path to the place where people are still dying but protesting injustice.

Magritte was apparently interested in painting mystery: not to explain it but to evoke it. His use of one image superimposed on another and so partially hiding it, encourages the viewer to want to see what is hidden, rather than concentrating on what is plain. I guess at the moment we perhaps focus on what is in plain sight and not what might be hidden.



Son of Man by Rene Magritte

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# History

Lead: Anita Maunsell, Telephone: 01636 892928

email: marriott40@live.co.uk

Peter Brauer, p.brauer@btinternet.com

A contribution from Sheelah Reynolds

## **THE GREAT STINK 1858-and how it was solved**

In the course of the 19th century London's population soared from one million to six million. This booming centre of commerce and industry while at the heart of the greatest empire ever known, was also infamously filthy, resulting in air that was heavily polluted with soot and the sulphurous fumes from overflowing gutters and cesspools, and cemeteries bursting with stinking corpses. The streets were coated with noxious black mud and rotting rubbish clogged its alleys.

Along with the smell of dung-strewn streets and rotting refuse there was another stench, one that pervaded homes and even such grand establishments as Buckingham Palace, the smell of human waste. London's ancient sewers were designed for rain water, and until 1815 it was illegal to use them for human waste.

The responsibility for ensuring the cleanliness of the city's streets fell to London's vestry councils, that is parish committees, famously christened by Charles Dickens "Bumbledom". Crossing sweepers, like Jo in Bleak House, tried to preserve pathways through the rubbish.

London's short-lived Metropolitan Commission of Sewers ordered that all cesspits should be closed and that house drains should connect to sewers and empty into the Thames. Water companies took their water from the Thames and by 1827 people in places like Westminster were being supplied with this polluted water for drinking, cooking and laundry. As a result, a cholera epidemic (1848-49) killed 14,137 Londoners. Followed in 1853 by another epidemic killing 10,738 people.

Merely staying clean was a major challenge. The "great unwashed" became a condescending description of the working classes from about 1830, but many ordinary people struggled even to find clean water. Many tenements didn't have a tap. Women had to fetch water from the parish pump or buy it from a publican by the bucket. Bathing was very much a minority pursuit in the 19th century, even among the wealthiest in society.

From this time, public baths and wash-houses began to be built, becoming a source of civic pride, like museums and public libraries. Apparently, Victorians invented "sanitary science", and turned cleanliness into one of the hallmarks of civilisation. A poster advertising the George Street baths from 1848 proclaimed that cleanliness was essential for those desiring to raise themselves "to the proper position in the social scale": "Remember, a filthy person indicates filthy habits; dirty in his apartments, he will be dirty in his mind; profligate in his amusements, unfit for a higher sphere" and, of course, cleanliness is next to Godliness.

At this time the health risks of drinking such filthy water were not understood. It is hard to believe, but it was generally thought that miasmas, or bad smells, spread disease. Edwin Chadwick, the influential leader of the "sanitary movement" that swept the nation mid century, believed the solution was to eliminate "miasmatic filth" from the streets and homes. He also campaigned for a universal clean water supply and for adequate sewer systems..

In 1856 London's Metropolitan Board of works was established. The board was the first organisation to supervise public works in a unified way over the whole city, and championed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel JOSEPH BAZALGETTE (28 March 1819 - 15 March 1891) was appointed Chief Engineer (a post which he retained until the Metropolitan Board of Works was abolished and replaced by the London County Council in 1889).

Joseph Bazalgette began his career as a railway engineer, gaining considerable experience in land drainage and reclamation. As chief engineer of London's Metropolitan Board of Works his major achievement was the creation (in response to the "Great Stink" of 1858) of a sewer network for central London which was instrumental in relieving the city from cholera epidemics, while beginning the cleaning of the river Thames. By 1866 most of London was connected to a sewer network devised by Bazalgette.

By 1870 both the Albert and the Victoria Embankments had been opened. These replaced the tidal mud of the Thames shore with reclaimed ground used for riverside roads and gardens behind their curved river walls. The 'mudlarks' mentioned in Mayhew's London and by Dickens were deprived of their hunting ground. The Victoria Embankment protected Bazalgette's low-level sewer, as well as a subway and the underground railway. The Chelsea Embankment was completed in 1874, reclaiming over 52 acres from the Thames.

Throughout this busy time, Bazalgette continued to train young civil engineers and provide independent advice to other British towns and cities - as well as places as far apart as Budapest and Port Louis, Mauritius.

His scheme required major pumping stations such as those at DEPTFORD 1864, on the ERITH marshes, in the RIVER LEA valley 1868, and on the CHELSEA EMBANKMENT 1875.

Bazalgette's foresight may be seen in the diameter of the sewers. When planning the network he took the densest population, gave every person the most generous allowance and came up with a diameter of pipe needed. He said we're only going to do this once and there's always the unforeseen and so he doubled the diameter to be used. His foresight allowed for the unforeseen increase in population density with the introduction of the tower block; with the original, smaller pipe diameter the sewer would have overflowed in the 1960s, rather than coping as it has done until the present day.

BAZALGETTE'S capacity for hard work was remarkable; every connection to the sewer system by the various Vestry Councils had to be checked and Bazalgette did this himself! The records contain thousands of linen tracings with handwritten comments in Indian ink on them "Approved JWB", "I do not like 6" used here and 9" should be used. JWB" and so on. It is not surprising that his health suffered as a result.

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# Literature

Lead: Sheelah Reynolds, Telephone: 01636 892348,  
email: sheelahreynolds@btinternet.com

We have been reading 'The House Behind the Cedars' by Charles W. Chesnutt and it has been described as an historic gem, but also as a possible Mills and Boon of its time (1865, following the abolition of slavery).

'The Girls of Slender Means' by Muriel Spark is also set in an interesting historical period after WW2; "Long ago in 1945 all the nice people in England were poor, allowing for exceptions. What a wonderful first line of the opening chapter. 'Reading this novel is to encounter the rarest of fiction and appreciating the early and enduring genius of Muriel Spark'.

PRAYER by CAROL ANN DUFFY

Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer  
utters itself. So, a woman will lift  
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare  
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.

Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth  
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;  
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth  
in the distant Latin of a train.

Pray for us now. Grade I piano scales  
console the lodger looking out across  
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls  
a child's name as though they named their loss.

Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer -  
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD by W.B. YEATS

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
And slowly read, and dream if the soft look  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty with love false or true,  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

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# Local History Research

Lead: Pat Smedley, Telephone: 01636 892292  
email: patsmedley@googlemail.com

Some of our group had planned to meet informally on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August to go on a mini field trip to explore the River Trent around South Clifton. We have been studying the local OS map of this area over the summer, focusing on anything of historical interest. Of course the River Trent is THE important geographical feature of our area and is the reason for the development of the villages bordering it's flood plain.

There are some good vantage points at South Clifton to view the river and we were looking forward to our trip. Sadly however, it poured with rain and we had to cancel. We will try again on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

From September the group will focus again on our work for the exhibition on Collingham in the Second World War, with a view to exhibiting our work in All Saint's Church over the May Fair weekend.

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## Motor Sport

Lead: Dave Watson, Telephone: 01636 893775  
email: watsonswb@hotmail.co.uk

The group was shocked to hear that one of its members, Martin Ball, died in August. Martin was a keen member of the group and we enjoyed his company and dry sense of humour. He will be sadly missed.

As a result of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions on outdoor events the group has unanimously decided to abandon all meetings until the New Year. We look forward to a resumption of events in 2021 including karting, museum visits and Cadwell Park to name but a few.

Dave

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# Music Making

Lead: Phil Leckenby, Telephone: 07483 296822  
email: pjeckenby@gmail.com

Well, not much has changed during the month. We are where we are, as they keep on saying.

*Cue BBC Breakfast reporter walking towards camera, wagging hands frantically, breaking news of emerging musical sensation from Collingham. Fans go mad, upcoming concert dates leaked to the tabloids, unprecedented clamour for tickets, website crashes – etc.*

By way of an experiment, the link below should give an idea of how our home recording has progressed during this long confinement:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEJuTod31dQ&feature=youtu.be>

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# Photography

Lead: Paul Bass, Telephone: 01636 892057  
email: bass.ps@gmail.com

The group met successfully again in August using video conferencing. Our theme for images was "Food" and samples of these are in this newsletter. We shall continue to use Video conferencing until social distancing regulations are lifted. On this theme, our September images will be on the subject of "Social Distancing".

Paul Bass



Fruit Platter by Phil Leckenby



Odd one out by Paul Bass



Raspberry reflection by Jenny Macpherson



Pineapple by Gill Bass



Lunch is served by Colin Smith



Vegetable dish by Jannet Wright



Tomatoes posturised by Roger Davis

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# The Bucketeers

Lead: Lesley Piper, Telephone: 01636 892795  
email: [lesleypiper48@gmail.com](mailto:lesleypiper48@gmail.com)

The Bucketeers

The very saddest thing to write is the passing of good friends.

Our group has lost 2 of the finest in the recent weeks.

Bea was gentle, kind and a superb friend to all-she is much missed.

Far more recently I was totally shocked to hear the very sad news that Martin had also died. He was a wonderful man with a quiet manner and superb sense of humour-I shall miss him. My thoughts and prayers are with Liz and the family.

As for The Bucketeers-I am wondering if we could have a suitably socially distanced picnic at Besthorpe Nature reserve?-e-mail me to let me know your [thoughts-lesleypiper48@gmail.com](mailto:thoughts-lesleypiper48@gmail.com) -is it too early to think of this? let me know.

Keep safe

Lesley

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