

# Collingham & District



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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

## NEWSLETTER - September 2020

### Welcome to the September Newsletter

These unusual times have enabled us to experience the use of a variety of media that previously we may not have chosen to use. For example, as you know our AGM will take place on Zoom on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 2pm. You have already received the papers for the AGM either by email or by post.

If you are unable to join us on Zoom, we would still like to receive your votes. So please take the opportunity to vote on the decisions we will be making. You can do this by returning your completed voting form to Mary Hughes, the Business Secretary at: [mea.hughes@gmail.com](mailto:mea.hughes@gmail.com)

Earlier this month I attended an on-line tutorial offered by the Third Age Trust and led by members. It was about running AGMs on-line. I found this a positive experience but this may have been because I already had some experience of using Zoom. One hundred and twenty-two participants attended the tutorial. They were from U3As across the UK who, like us, will be running their AGMs on-line. I hope ours will go as smoothly as possible but I think we just have to be prepared for the unexpected.

Thank you to everyone who submits material for the Newsletter. I have had many positive comments about how valuable and beneficial the Newsletter has been to individual members over the last few months.

Best wishes,  
Jannet Wright, Chair, Executive Committee

# Can you help?



Dear Members,

As you may be aware, for the last 4 or 5 years our U3A has been sponsoring and caring for the 2 planters at either end of the village; 1 at the entry of the Medical Centre car park and the other by the old village memorial cross opposite the One Stop shop.

We would like to continue to do this as a gesture to our community and as a way of informing others of our presence in the village.

To do this, we would need a bit of your time and practical assistance so that we can form a team who would for example; change plants at the end of a season to keep the planters attractive, and ensure regular watering in very hot weather for the same reasons. However being part of the team does not necessarily require gardening expertise and any costs incurred are covered by our funds.

If you think you might like to help as part of a team then please get in touch with Sue on 893458 or email [susanfleet04@gmail.com](mailto:susanfleet04@gmail.com)

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# Groups

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## Art Appreciation

Lead: Chris Stothard, Telephone: 01636 894241  
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Hats have been a continuing theme this month.



A Northern race meeting by L S Lowry

This was painted in 1956 : a rare subject for Lowry who depicted other sports such as rugby, football and cricket, but rarely chose racing. This painting sold for £4.5 million in 2019 at Christies, testament to Lowry's enduring appeal.

The focus of the painting was not the actual horse races themselves but rather the characters walking through the ground and huddling around the bookmakers' stalls and news stands.

Set in the mid fifties at a time when one's hat denoted one's social standing [Bowler hat : Trilby : Flat cap]. Do the hats depicted here reinforce this?

The bowler hatted gentlemen in the centre both appear as obviously successful business men, cigar in their mouths, large girths, with self assured, smug stances. Of course bowler hats were the uniform of the business man until the decline in the 70's and complete disappearance by the 80's.

The large majority of men are wearing variations on the trilby : homburg : fedora hats – the differences are subtle, dependent on the brim, the height of the hat etc. I think the bookmakers are in Homburg hats, curved brims and centre dent crown. This style was introduced by Edward VII who bought one back from Germany. On his return many working class men adopted the Fedora [Homburg the more aristocratic version of this] and interestingly Edward VIII made the flat cap a fashion item for the well to do. Certainly by the 50's people of all classes were confident to wear hats with class. So it is not easy in this picture to make assumptions about social class?

We do however, have one flat capped chap on the left – who appears to be talking as he goes, using his hands to demonstrate something – perhaps it is the racing odds. He is animated, unlike many of the older men around. He almost appears to be on the make, the flat cap was very much the working class man's hat.

The second picture was painted much longer ago, but because it is a self portrait, could be from any era up to and including our own



Vincent van Gogh—Self Portrait with a Straw Hat

The next two paintings are by Vermeer.

Vermeer's short life is to some extent shrouded in mystery, which makes him extra interesting and appealing. I have chosen two hat portraits, one familiar and the other I believe less so. They are both described as a **tronie** (17th century Dutch for face), a typical style of portrait in the Dutch Golden Age, where there will be a rather exaggerated facial expression and/or an exotic costume.

The Girl with the Pearl Earring, painted 1665, is just beautiful.

Unusual in his paintings, Vermeer uses a dark background to compliment her lovely face with her half open mouth and liquid gaze. She has been dubbed "The Dutch Mona Lisa". She seems perfectly at ease, but who is she? Too old to be one of Vermeer's many daughters. A maid in the household? Her identity is unknown, but Tracy Chevalier wove a good story around speculations.

The painting was spotted at auction by a sharp-eyed collector in 1882 – he paid the equivalent of £1. It was subsequently identified as a Vermeer and given to the Mauritshuis – the government museum collection in The Hague - in 1903.



Girl with the Pearl Earring

The second **tronie** – Girl with a Red Hat is a bit more controversial. The expression of the sitter is similar - mouth open, half-turning and looking directly at the artist. As with Pearl Earring it is thought to have been painted in 1665. It appeared on the art market, out of the blue, in 1822 attributed to Vermeer and as such it hangs in The National Gallery of Art in Washington DC.

But there are a few oddities that have divided scholars as to its authenticity a la “Fake or Fortune?”.

It is painted on a wood panel. X-ray analysis of the panel shows a Rembrandt-style portrait underneath, possibly by Rembrandt’s pupil, Fabritius, also of Delft and the paint is of a type used by Vermeer. Therefore, the material of the painting fit the period and possibly the artist. However, detractors say that it would be out of character for Vermeer to either paint on a wood panel or to over-paint. The brush work is also, for him, unusually free and the chair is awkward and unrealis-



Girl with a Red Hat

This next painting is very well known and has suffered the fate of Constable’s Hay Wain in becoming something of a chocolate box cliché



The Laughing Cavalier by Frans Hals

The Laughing Cavalier (1624) is a portrait by the [Dutch Golden Age painter Frans Hals](#) in the [Wallace Collection](#) in London, which has been described as "one of the most brilliant of all Baroque portraits".

The title is an invention of the [Victorian](#) public and press, dating from its exhibition in the opening display at the [Bethnal Green Museum](#) in 1872–1875, just after its arrival in England, after which it was regularly reproduced as a print, and became among of the best known [old master paintings](#) in Britain. The unknown subject, possibly a wealthy civilian is in fact not laughing, but can be said to have an enigmatic smile, much amplified by his upturned moustache.

The composition is lively and spontaneous, and despite the apparent labour involved in the gorgeous, and very expensive, silk costume, close inspection reveals long, quick brush strokes. There are many [emblems](#) in the embroidery: signifying "the pleasures and pains of love" are "bees, arrows, flaming [cornucopias](#), lovers' knots and tongues of fire", while an [obelisk](#) or [pyramid](#) signifies strength and [Mercury's](#) cap and [caduceus](#) fortune.

In general, commissioned portraits such as this rarely showed adults smiling until the late 18th century, but Hals is an exception to the general rule and often showed sitters with broader smiles than here, and in informal poses that bring an impression of movement and spontaneity to his work.

The effect of the eyes appearing to follow the viewer from every angle is a result of the subject being depicted as looking directly forward, toward the artist's point of view, combined with being a static two dimensional representation of this from whichever angle the painting itself is viewed.

This next portrait of Baldassare Castiglione by Raphael is in the Louvre.



The son of a painter, Raphael worked with Perugino at an early age Raphael's feeling for colour and his ability to convey a sense of emotional tranquility led to his talent being quickly recognised. This portrait of Baldassare Castiglione ( 1478-1529) was probably painted in Rome in 1514 or 1515 and it has often been observed that Raphael, as in some of his other portraits, has kept in mind the pose of the Mona Lisa. Called " The best knight in the world" by the Emperor Charles V, Castiglione was a humanist and a man of letters. Raphael shared his ideal of aesthetic and spiritual perfection and he illustrated it directly in the way he portrayed Castiglione, transforming his likeness into the embodiment of a moral attitude . The profound affinity , both intellectual and emotional, linking the painter and his model explain this symbiosis .

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# Gardening

Lead: Ingrid Wiggins, Telephone 07805 975456  
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Collingham Garden Group continue to keep in touch with one another. We have shared plants as we thinned out large clumps in our gardens. We have also shared fruit and vegetables from our gardens. Members have placed their offerings outside for others to collect and this has worked well. We have all enjoyed seeing photographs of each other's gardens shared amongst the group. Here is the most recent photo shared from Sue whose prolific cucumbers have proved very impressive. We all are aware of how much watering and care has gone into this crop. Thanks also for the colourful crab apples. We are now ready to plant bulbs for autumn .



# History

Lead: Anita Maunsell, Telephone: 01636 892928  
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## **A Brief History of Blue Plaques**

'tweets on a building'?

A contribution from Sue Fleet

London began its scheme of displaying blue plaques way back in 1867, following an idea of MP William Ewart in 1863, to commemorate historical figures, an event, or organisation of note. The first commemoration placed, was on the home of Lord Byron in Cavendish Square by the Society of Arts, which was later removed when the building was demolished in 1869. The blue used in the early plaques proved difficult to use over time, and brown became an easier option, until London County Council took over the making of them at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1921 the iconic blue of today was initiated and English Heritage ( EH ) which took over the scheme in 1986 continues its use today .

Currently there are over 950 plaques on buildings in London, commemorating such diverse figures as; Marie Stopes, Edith Cavell, Sir Alexander Fleming, Nye Bevan, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Bob Marley and John Lennon.

Following London's example, other areas throughout the country began placing memorial plaques of their own local historical figures, events or organisations, using a variety of colours and shapes. However, today there is a coordinated effort to provide a consistent approach, through EH, which works in partnership with local and regional organisations; in the East Midlands, this partnership commenced in 2005.

Anyone can nominate a person, an event or organisation for consideration to the EH 'Blue Plaque Panel', who then consider, using experts and research into the nominee's history, to decide whom is a suitable candidate. No more than two plaques for one nominee are allowed and the decision can take between two and five years to be approved. There are three basic requirements for a plaque to be placed; the nominee must have been dead for at least 20 years or to have passed the centenary of their birth; no-one living can be nominated. Plaques have to be placed on the actual building where the nominee lived and not just the site where a building stood, and the marked buildings must be visible from a public highway. Other criteria are: the nominee needs to be considered eminent by their profession or calling and have made an important contribution to human welfare or happiness, and be recognisable to the well-informed passer-by. They should also deserve national recognition and have resided in the stated building for a substantial time period.

Notable recent members of this select group here in Nottinghamshire include: Bendigo, a champion bare knuckle fighter, John Clifford an evangelist, Thomas Barton of Barton transport services. The site of the 'Chilwell Explosion' of 1918, Beeston Lads' Club and the home of the Queen's jester, William Walle, Queen Victoria's fool, are also included.

In Lincolnshire members include; Sir Isaac Newton, Captain Albert Ball V.C. and Lance Corporal Joseph Ball V.C. at the Kings School in Grantham. Charles Dickens' plaque is at the George Hotel in Grantham, and commemoration of the site of 'The 1381 Lincolnshire Rising', is in Louth.

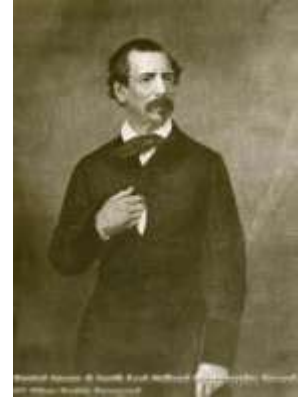




Bendigo



Isaac Newton



William Walleet

## JOSEPH BAZALGETTE AND THE RISE OF 19TH CENTURY LONDON Part 2 from Sheelah Reynolds.

Joseph Bazalgette (top row, right) surveys works on the Northern Outfall sewer below the Abbey



Mills pumping station, Stratford, London, in 1862.

In his capacity as Chief Engineer for London's newly-formed Metropolitan Board of Works in 1856, Bazalgette was involved in the planning and construction of the following:-

Albert Embankment (1869)  
Victoria Embankment (1870)  
Chelsea Embankment (1874)  
Maidstone Bridge (1879)  
Albert Bridge (1884; modifications)  
Putney Bridge (1886)  
Hammersmith Bridge (1887)  
The Woolwich Free Ferry (1889)  
Battersea Bridge (1890)

Bazalgette was knighted in 1875, and elected President of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1883. Dulwich College has a technology scholarship in his name.

A monument on the Victoria Embankment commemorates Bazalgette and his achievements, and a Blue Plaque marks his home at 17 Hamilton Terrace, in St. John's Wood.

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# Italian for Beginners

Lead: Mary Hughes & Jannet Wright

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Over the Summer months we continued to enjoy the short Italian phrases sent to us on email by Andrew, one of our group members. The English translation is sent the next day along with a new Italian phrase. We are now able to understand the Italian for phrases ranging from 'I must clean the house' to those where we fantasize about trips to Italy. Phrases such as 'Kindly fasten your seatbelts, Where's the boarding gate and even 'I am going to buy a new swimming costume'.

Our memories were tested this month when we started using Zoom for our meetings as Andrew checked our recall of some of the phrases we had dealt with over the last few months. It was a salutary experience! We hope that Zoom will help us maintain our verbal skills using picture cards to trigger sentences and everyone preparing a short spoken piece about their activities.

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## Kurling

Leads: John Geeson, Telephone: 01636 893306  
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Terry Walters, Telephone: 01636 643834  
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Hello Everyone,

It has been a long, difficult time for all of us since lockdown began. In some ways it has given us all time to reflect about how we fill our time and the activities we choose to engage in.

Kurling is one of the casualties of coronavirus. We cannot safely meet as we did, and enjoy our game, and it seems it will not be possible to meet for a game any time in the near future.

Some of our members are enjoying the company of others, in small groups and managing to to keep in touch with others via zoom, a very new concept for most of us!

We send you our best wishes and hope that you are all keeping well and managing to maintain contact with a few friends and family.

John, Terry and Linda

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# Literature

Lead: Sheelah Reynolds, Telephone: 01636 892348,  
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The group have fallen a little out of sync, but hope to be together again virtually with another Muriel Spark. 'A Far Cry from Kensington' follows on in time from 'The Girls of Slender Means', and is expected to be just as unsettling and exhilarating.

The library is now open on TUESDAYS, 1.00pm - 4.30pm and THURSDAYS, 9.30am - 1.00pm. Books newly arrived are quarantined for 3 days before they are available to the public. The telephone (892083) is only answered during those opening times.

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This caught my eye as apparently the shooting season is about to begin:

## I SAW A JOLLY HUNTER

I saw a jolly hunter  
With a jolly gun  
Walking in the country  
In the jolly sun.

In the jolly meadow  
Sat a jolly hare  
Saw the jolly hunter  
Took jolly care.

Hunter jolly eager -  
Sight of jolly prey.  
Forgot gun pointing  
Wrong jolly way.

Jolly hunter jolly head  
Over heels gone.  
Jolly old safety catch  
Not jolly on.

Bang went the jolly gun.  
Hunter jolly dead.  
Jolly hare got clean away.  
Jolly good, I said.

## CHARLES CAUSLEY

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"Every man  
Is surrounded by  
A neighbourhood of  
Voluntary spies."

JANE AUSTEN.  
-NORTHANGER ABBY

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# Photography

Lead: Paul Bass, Telephone: 01636 892057  
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This month photographs are on the theme of "Social Distancing". The theme for next month will test our ability to compose an image. The theme is "S Curves". The group members will be looking for compositions containing S shaped curves that ideally lead the viewers eye into the image.



Four more allowed by Jenny Mcpherson



No stag do by Gill Bass



It isn't me by Roger Davis



The Pharmacy by Paul Bass



We are in the same bubble by John Geeson



Wheal Coats mine by Colin Smith

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Not talking by Phil Leckenby



Social distancing sheep by Jannet Wright

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# Scrabble

Lead: Margaret Orchiston, Telephone: 01636 894027  
email: m.orchiston@btinternet.com

Four of us are playing weekly on a Thursday afternoon over Zoom. If anyone else would like to play please let Margaret know, and we'd be happy to try and set up a second session. You just need your own Scrabble set and access to Zoom.

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# Strollers

Lead: Margaret Lewis. Telephone: 01636 892552  
email: margellen@googlemail.com

On Friday 18th September, the Strollers decided to do a socially distanced walk of " friends" as the U3A were still not able to open up this activity

There were 11 of us Mags Hanson, Margaret Cotton, Carol Butterfield, Christine Stephinson, Marg Lewis, John Lewis, Marion Wilson, Carol Whittaker, Rita Lodge, Liz Ball, and Keith Musson. We decided to split the group into 6 and 5 and do a very simple Collingham village walk which didn't include the use of cars. We did a circular 2 mile route from Co.op, along Station Road, through The Hedgerows, then along the dyke to Woodhill Road, we then took Low street up to Temperance Lane and back to the Co.op.

Half the group did this walk in a clockwise direction the remainder did the walk in an anti-clockwise direction to keep within the Government guidelines. We also managed to answer some of the virtual Collingham show numbers trail along the way

Each group took a mid walk stop off for coffee and cake one group at Liz Balls garden, the other group at John and Marg Lewis's garden. Some of us hadn't been out for a walk in a long time, so it was very enjoyable to finally have a safe catch up with others, and the sunny weather made the day even more enjoyable

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# Ukelele

Lead: Susan Fleet , Telephone: 01636 893458  
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## **Tuesday Ukes 3-4pm Mayfield Room**

Finally after months of playing only to ourselves at home, a few of us met for the first time since the pandemic hit.

Adhering to recent Government guidelines and our own Covid safe checklist, 5 ladies got together at the recently opened Mayfield Room, following its deep clean, and spent an hour trying to recoup those evasive chords and tunes we learned pre lockdown. Despite our stiff fingers and hazy memories we enjoyed an hour of play whilst wearing masks, and maintaining 2+mtr distances and open ventilation which helped us to feel safe and cool in 27\*. We will now continue to meet weekly until Government guidelines might change again.

If anyone would like more information about using the Mayfield Room please get in touch.  
Sue

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# Wine Appreciation

Lead: Graham Eaton, Telephone: 01636 893895  
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Sadly we have cancelled our trip to the Western Loire Valley which should have started on September 27<sup>th</sup>. However we are gluttons for punishment and are in the process of re-booking for September 2021. It is a long way ahead but we need something to look forward to!

There will be a change of emphasis when we visit the Loire valley next year for in addition to the wine tasting we will be looking at chateaux, the Bayeux tapestry and the D-Day beaches.

In the meantime we are meeting for wine tasting in small groups in members gardens so as not breach any rules. These get togethers are much less structured than the pre-covid meetings but it is a good way of staying in touch.

Graham Eaton

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