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NEWSLETTER - March 2021

Welcome to the March Newsletter

In the last Newsletter I highlighted the activity of Groups online. I also know how many of you appreciate the monthly Newsletter which has kept people in touch with events in our u3a over the last year.

The Executive Committee has continued to meet monthly on Zoom. We are now able to plan for the future while continuing to monitor government guidance about the easing of lockdown. The Third Age Trust also sends us regular updates and guidance.

This month we were joined by Chris Hartny-Mills who has volunteered for the role of PR Advisor for the East Midlands region. He told us about his plans for liaising with the 116 u3as in the East Midlands. He has recruited 65 members who have agreed to be 'Newshounds' for their u3as. Liz Ball is our representative and will attend Zoom Meetings and Social Media Events organized by him and u3a.

After Chris left the meeting, one of our main items for discussion was Membership Renewal. Even though we have not been able to meet face-to-face over the last year we need to pay the Third Age Trust the fees we owe them for the magazine that members receive and Insurance cover.

Membership Renewal 2021

You may recall that at our AGM last year we passed an Emergency Temporary Amendment to our Constitution in the light of the situation caused by Coronavirus. The passing of this resolution means that the membership years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 will be counted as a single membership period. The Membership Fee for this time is £17.

What does this mean for you?

If you paid your membership fee for the year 2020/2021 you are covered until March 2022. You don't have to do anything. However, for members who didn't manage to pay last year we are now asking for your fees. Payment of fees by Bank Transfer would be much appreciated. The Treasurer and Membership Secretary have written helpful information on how to do this in this Newsletter. One of the advantages of paying by Bank Transfer is that you don't need to fill in a Membership Renewal Form.

Unfortunately, we can no longer accept payment in cash. If you wish to pay by cheque you will find information on Membership Renewal and where to send cheques to the Membership Secretary on the Members webpage. Further information about Membership Renewal can be found in the article by Graham Fleet and Barbara Wilson in this Newsletter.

I am afraid we were not overrun with volunteers to develop a Facebook page. Liz Ball has very kindly agreed to develop a page and post relevant information on it. If you would like to work with Liz on this I am sure she would be delighted to hear from you.

Best Wishes

Jannet Wright, Chair, Executive Committee

Membership

Hello everyone.

Membership Renewal – It's that time of year again!

Like most of us you must be looking forward to the country opening up again and being able to meet up with family, friends and u3a Group members.

You will remember that at the AGM last September, it was agreed that the £17 fee would cover the two years up to March 2022. As a result (i) members who paid last year will be renewed automatically without any payment for the year ahead and (ii) for those who did not pay last year, the majority, the Membership Fee of £17 is due to be paid in the next couple of months.

With current Government restrictions it **will not be possible to renew at the Memorial Hall General Meetings so we will be unable to accept cash**

Payment by Bank Transfer - (No Renewal Form Required):

If you are able to, it would be much appreciated if you could choose the Bank Transfer method as this reduces significantly the administration time for the Committee and avoids us having to go to the bank frequently.

Transfer Information - Collingham & District U3A at TSB Bank Nottingham Low Pavement:
Sort Code: 77-68-44, Account No. 00423860.

In the Reference Field insert your Membership Number and if the payment is for two people, insert both Membership Numbers using three digits for each. Examples: One Member: 001 or for Two Members: 123,132.

Payment by cheque:

Please send a completed Renewal Form (available on our website) to the Membership Secretary, together with your cheque **made payable to Collingham & District U3A.**

Membership Cards:

This year, as last year, we will not be able to issue the Membership Cards immediately. The plan is for them to be collected at the first General Meeting after April. However, if you are unable to be there please arrange for someone to collect it for you or alternatively send a stamped, addressed envelope to the Membership Secretary at Cleve Lodge, Besthorpe Road, Collingham. NG23 7NP

Contact the Membership Secretary on 01636 892662 if you are finding difficulty with any of the above.

Many thanks

Barbara Wilson, Membership Secretary & Graham Fleet, Treasurer

Groups

Art Appreciation

Lead: Chris Stothard, Telephone: 01636 894241
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This month the Art Appreciation group have been looking at landscape painting with an emphasis on non-European landscapes. We started in South America, with a large landscape painted by an American who came out of the European tradition. The Heart of the Andes was a huge success in New York, but gives an idealised, composite view of the Andes.



Then we moved on to a painting by the Ecuadorian artist, Rafael Troya of Cotapaxi and the avenue of volcanoes that can be seen from Quito. Whilst this is a realistic representation of the view, the main market for artists like Troya was still in Europe and so his works must have been aimed at that market.



We then travelled to New Zealand for a nineteenth century view of Rotorua. He painted this just in time to record the extensive terraces before the whole landscape was altered by volcanic action, though he continued to paint versions of this view to sell to tourists.



We were then going to go to China, but put that off for a week to appreciate the winner of the John Moores Prize, which will, I'm sure, speak to all members of the U3A.



The Common by Kathryn Maple

Gardening

Lead: Ingrid Wiggins Telephone: 01636 892928
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The garden club are welcoming spring. So many flowers are now in bloom and the prospect of warmer weather to come is certainly up lifting. Unfortunately weeds have also welcomed the sunshine and so us gardeners will be kept busy over the next few weeks. Some of us have lost plants to the frost and will have to plant new again. That's the thing about gardens , they are never finished. Visits to the garden centre will become essential. We continue to share photos of progress.

Keep well and safe
Ingridx





History

Lead: Anita Maunsell, Telephone: 01636 892928
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Peter Brauer, p.brauer@btinternet.com

This month's contribution reminds us that we could be living in worse times.

A Potted Version of the Lives and Deaths of the First Twelve Caesars

With apologies to Suetonius, the Roman historian who wrote 'The Twelve Caesars', a vivid account of the scandalous lives of the early rulers of Imperial Rome.

Following the disastrous civil wars of the Roman Republic, **Julius Caesar** (afterwards deified), came to power in 44 BCE. During his two years of control he assumed the title of 'Father of his Country' and accepted honours including a life-dictatorship and a statue of himself among those of ancient kings. Things then began to fall apart. Although not officially designated 'Emperor', conspirators suspected that was his aim and his reign ended with 23 dagger thrusts on the steps of the Senate House.

Augustus (afterwards deified), a great-nephew of Julius, was the first Roman Emperor. His rule was a rare era of peace. After 41 years in power, (the longest of the 12 Caesars), he died in 14 CE at the age of 75, probably from natural causes. However, there were persistent rumours that his wife Livia poisoned him. Her son, Tiberius, had been adopted by Augustus and pronounced his heir, so there may have been suspicion that Livia hastened Tiberius' advancement.

Tiberius gave a promising start to his 23 years of power but in his last years he became a tyrannical recluse inflicting a reign of terror against major personages of Rome before being disposed off. Many believed he had been poisoned by Caligula. News of his demise was greeted by the people of Rome with joy and cries of "To the Tiber with Tiberius".

Next came the infamous **Caligula**. He lasted less than four years as Emperor meeting his fate in 41 CE at the hands of his own guards. He believed himself to be a living deity and had busts of his own head replace those of statues of different gods. The terror inspired by Caligula's reign of crazed blood-lust and depravity was such that people were reluctant to believe he had really been assassinated, suspecting that he had invented the story to discover what people thought of him.

Claudius (afterwards deified) succeeded his nephew Caligula in 41 CE. He was little known and probably had some type of physical disability which may have protected him from the dynastic ambitions of his murderous relatives. The story goes that on the assassination of Caligula, the guards found him hiding behind a curtain and dragged him out proclaiming him Emperor. He was responsible for extensive public works and Britain was conquered during his 13 year reign. He adopted his wife's son, Nero, and she, now secure in her son's future killed her husband with a poisoned mushroom. Suetonius was rather dismissive of Claudius' achievements; no doubt reflecting attitudes of the time toward disability.

Nero, with his obsessive dramatic and musical ambitions, took power in 54 CE. He gave concerts which upper class citizens were compelled to attend. These performances could go on for hours and no one was allowed to leave before the end. It was rumoured the women gave birth during them and men faked death to escape. Nero's list of crimes included perversion and

atrocities such as killing family members and kicking his wife Poppaea to death while she was pregnant because she dared to complain when he came home late from the races. In 68CE, after 12 years in power, he committed suicide when he heard that soldiers were on their way to dispatch him.

Galba then came in to power and held on to it for a mere seven months before his death in 69 CE, later known as 'the year of four Emperors'. His demise was arranged by Otho who promised financial rewards to the military in exchange for their support. They declared Otho Emperor and then assassinated Galba.

Otho Committed suicide after just 95 days in power following the defeat at the battle of Bedriacum in northern Italy between his supporters and those of Vitellius. He realised he was likely to be murdered so stabbed himself to death.

Vitellius was next on the scene. When he took power in Rome, he had already been proclaimed Emperor by troops in Germany while Otho was still alive. After eight months, he met his end by being tortured, killed and dragged by a hook into the Tiber.

He was succeeded by **Vespasian** (afterwards deified), who set about restoring the city of Rome after its wealth had been depleted by years of civil war and poor leadership. He oversaw imperial expansion in Britain and the building of the Colosseum. He is said to be the first to start the system of public education. In 79 CE, after 10 years in power, and unusually for the times, he died of natural causes.

Vespasian was succeeded by his elder son, **Titus** (afterwards deified). It was during his reign that Mount Vesuvius erupted and Rome experienced a great fire and a disastrous plague. He lasted a little over two years, dying in 81 CE; possibly poisoned by his brother Domitian.

Domitian, brother of Titus, then took power and ruled as a complete autocrat. Assassinated in 96 CE by a group widely believed to include his wife Domitia Longina and possibly his successor Nerva. He was so unpopular that the Senate had his memory erased.

Of the 12, only two died of natural causes and, in the case of Augustus, there has always been doubt.

Italian for Beginners

Lead: Mary Hughes & Jannet Wright Telephone: 01636 892415

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It is now seven months since the nine members in the Group started meeting on Zoom. We meet twice monthly for just over an hour.

In the last few sessions we have been telling each other about our favourite things including, holidays/le vacanze, books/i libri and films/ i film.

On the agenda for the next meeting will be a popular topic for everyone – your favourite food/ il tuo cibo preferito!

Literature

Lead: Sheelah Reynolds, Telephone: 01636 892348,
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We did after all pull ourselves together and chose 'North and South' by Elizabeth Gaskell to read this month. In this novel Gaskell skilfully fuses individual feeling with social concern, and in Margaret Hale created one of the most original heroines of Victorian literature. Margaret is taken from the 'unmercantile' South - educated, refined, with a taste for virtue, beauty and comfort - and thrust into the ugliness and conflict of the North. Although Ms Hale is originally the symbol of the South in all its detachment and superiority, she is transformed by her life in the North into a different person both as an individual and as a woman. Miraculously, she embodies the unbreakable link between southern prosperity and northern misery.

It is hard to believe this novel was first published in 1854 and here we are in 2021 still battling over the same geographical, economic and class differences. A great read.

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## The Road Not Taken

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Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

ROBERT FROST

Local History Research

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

Once again the group enjoyed a Zoom meeting which was well attended. We used this occasion to review all the posters we have created for the Exhibition : Collingham in the Second World War – *'and the sky was full of planes'*. Unfortunately this will not be taking place in May as planned and it is increasingly likely that we may have to delay this until next May 2022 when hopefully we will enjoy another May Day Fair. We will work hard to finish off the details for these posters however, so that if we have to postpone again, they will be ready and waiting for us when the time comes to prepare for our show.

The group is planning some summer activities from May onwards when hopefully we will be able to meet in groups up to 30. There are already suggestions of guided walks around our graveyards and a tour of the Collingham pub buildings. Watch this space!

Motorsports Enthusiasts

Lead: Dave Watson, Telephone: 01636 893775
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Motorsports Enthusiasts Group revs up for April meeting!

The Motorsports Group have arranged an appropriately socially distanced meeting for 10.00am on Thursday 15th April at The Lord Nelson pub in Winthorpe. A full turnout is expected as the group looks forward to a non-Covid return to activities as diverse as museum visits to go-karting. All members contribute with their suggestions for upcoming events.

Any non-group member who wishes to attend should contact Dave Watson on watsonswb@hotmail.co.uk prior to the meeting.

Photography

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

The group met as usual this month by video conferencing. Our theme was "Signs of Spring". Next month our theme will revisit the theme "Isolation". It will be interesting to see how this will be interpreted after a year of Covid restrictions.

At our meeting this month, we discussed how things might get back to some form of normality. It was thought unlikely that we, as a group, will not be having face to face indoor meetings before September. There is a possibility that the group will be able to have some outdoor photography excursions from late May onwards, if the government's Covid roadmap does not change.

Paul Bass



Following the plough by Jannet Wright



Hellebore bloom by Colin Smith



Rainbow by Phil Leckenby



Icicle forming by Jenny Mcpherson



IPaint Brush at the ready by Les Murray



Primulas by Gill Bass



Town Lock garden by John Geeson



Snow Melt by Paul Bass

Scrabble

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

Five of us are now playing weekly on a Thursday afternoon via Zoom. If anyone is interested in joining us we can set up a second session. You just need your own Scrabble set and access to Zoom. We're hoping to meet in gardens soon if the weather and the guidelines allow.

We are continuing with our Brain Teasers.

A man stands on one side of a river, his dog on the other. The man calls his dog, who immediately crosses the river without getting wet and without using a bridge or a boat. How did the dog do it?

Answer at end of newsletter.

Strollers

Lead: Margaret Lewis, Telephone: 07754771610
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Government Guidelines are changing for the better so we have decided on 2 walks assuming the Government guidelines do not change meantime.

We are allowed from 29 March to have 2 households or 6 people in 1 garden

Also from 12 April we are allowed in pub gardens

1. We thought of a walk around the perimeter of the village on Tuesday 30 March splitting up into 2 separate groups if necessary starting 10.30am at the Co-op (just like we did in the Summer), ending up in 1 or 2 gardens according to the numbers. Liz and myself are happy to provide the gardens weather permitting

2 Next we thought we could do another local walk, 10.30 at the Co op on Tuesday 13 April so we don't have to share cars. We would end up in the Royal Oak gardens this time which I understand will have undercover areas if needs be. We will need definite numbers for this so I can book, and again we might be split into 2 tables. If the weather on this day is rainy we could still just do the undercover tables for a get together at mid day without the walk. I think the Royal Oak have advertised they are thinking of providing Tea and Scones etc. in the afternoons.

Let me know as soon as possible which, if any walks you are interested in so we can get the numbers to book the Royal Oak, and work out if we need 1 or 2 gardens.

The Bucketees

Lead: Lesley Piper, Telephone: 01636 892795
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Bucketees

I'm going to start with an apology to all Bucketeer members.

It was suggested to me recently that we should have been having zoom meetings during lockdown. I totally agree that this would have been great, but for one salient point-I've only just found out how to set them up.

So, -very sorry to everyone, and if any member wants to get in touch and set one up I'll try my best to log on and be with you all. My computer skills have been shown to be very old and rusty, and although I've now got a new lap-top which can actually do these things, my learning curve has been huge!

May I also use this message to send out a huge wave of love to Roger who is currently in hospital. (not Covid related) Please come back home soon if you can, and remember all of us out here who are thinking of you and sending loads of goodwill and best wishes your way.

Otherwise life is plodding on as we wait for lockdown to ease off a bit more. I really can't see us being able to go on any group trips for a long time but I know that many of us are enjoying life in different ways and completing our own challenges. I'm now reading my 7th Dickens book on my way to completing his full works. (so a long, long way to go!) This is as well as still doing my longish distance walks every day:-so life is different but still great.

Just one other matter. Roger had been trying to get refunds for all those who paid ahead for a trip on a steam train, (with fish and chips for supper.) Sadly the company has been ridiculously slow and has still not repaid the debt. This matter has now been taken over by Graham Fleet-good luck with this one Graham.

Keep safe everyone.

Lesley

Ps on one of my walks recently I came across a little, fluffy chicken -chaser. Very funny to watch-any guesses as to what was going on?

Wine Appreciation

Lead: Graham Eaton, Telephone: 01636 893895
email: eastlound@btinternet.com

Our February Zoom meeting involved each household tasting the same four white wines while eating nibbles and talking about each wine in turn.

The first three wines were purchased as half bottles so that too much wasn't being consumed at once. (We are all responsible drinkers you see). The fourth wine was a 'mystery' kindly donated by one of our courier drivers (no name or company so that he doesn't get pestered by the rest of you). All I can say is that it pays to be on good terms with them!

All the wine was popular although the least liked was the Muscadet. It was a good quality version but we felt the after-taste wasn't pleasant.

Our second bottle was from the Douro region of Portugal, but the favourite was the Italian Verdicchio which resulted in some re-ordering!

Lastly came the 'mystery' wine, supplied in unmarked jars. Its appearance caused some mirth as it was a deep yellow colour. Comments such as 'What did that horse die of?' and 'Shouldn't you go to the doctor with that?' were common. It actually turned out to be a very enjoyable sweet Muscat (hence the colour) from Eastern Europe.

Our March foray into the world of wine tasting will include three rosés from different countries and a 'mystery' red which hopefully won't elicit any dubious comments as to its provenance.

Answer to Scrabble brain teaser— The river was frozen.
