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NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2026

From the Chair: Welcome to the April newsletter.

“Oh, to be in England now that April’s there” a heartfelt thought from Robert Browning. The summer migrants that he refers to are arriving and singing in our hedgerows and the trees are definitely starting to green, with leaf buds unfurling almost before your eyes. Sadly, their pollen has also had to appear leading to streaming eyes, runny noses and coughs for all of us sadly susceptible to such things. Doubtless those of us who will suffer later in the year from grass pollen are already stocking up on antihistamines and vowing definitely not to rub one’s eyes.

One way to stop feeling sorry for oneself is to get out and meet other people. We have had quite a lot of new members in the past six months – do remember always to talk to anyone you haven’t met before, either at a general meeting or at an interest group. We all know that it takes courage, even at our more advanced years, to go into a new situation where we don’t know anyone, so please help make it less daunting by making a first move. Even if it turns out you’re talking to someone who’s been a member since the start; if you don’t know them then it’s always good to meet new people.

Do remember that subs are due – many of you have already paid your 26/27 subs but if not, get on your internet banking app/website and pay by BACS or bring a cheque to the meeting on 22nd April when you can learn all about the volunteers that ensure that whole blood, fractions of blood or other tissues get to where they’re needed as fast as possible. Don’t forget your Gift Aid form if you can help everyone to have an even better experience of Collingham u3a for the small price of filling in a form and getting it back to us.

Enjoy the sun when it’s out, dodge the showers (or downpours) and appreciate the dawn chorus when you hear it!

Chris

General Meetings



Chris Stothard, the Chair of Collingham & District u3a, stood in at the last minute and gave a fascinating talk at the March General Meeting She spoke about her experiences in Colombia earlier this year while on an eco-holiday. She started with maps and photos of Bogata in order to situate her talk and told us about the buildings and museums she had visited while there.

Chris is a very keen bird watcher and volunteers for the RSPB. It was clear that this holiday provided an opportunity to see many different birds and animals. She described the surrounding areas which she had visited and outlined the agricultural activities of the area. The photographs she showed us of flora and fauna which she had taken were at times supplemented by those taken by other members of the holiday group.

When thanking Chris at the end of her talk the Deputy Chair, Rosie Szlumper, reassured members of the audience that it was not a requirement of being the Chair that you had to stand in when a speaker could not be there. Indeed, the committee would be grateful if members who have perhaps given a talk to their group would consider it being added to a reserve list to be called on should the circumstances arise again.

Speakers Corner

April 22nd **Nottinghamshire Blood Bikes**

Since its formation in 2013 Nottinghamshire Blood Bikes have saved the NHS £190,012, have carried 90,717 items, have 161 volunteers, with 9 blood bikes, 7 blood cars and travelled 82,084 miles.

A Blood Bike will be in attendance.

May 27th **“My Extra Life”**

Mike has been a television extra for 18 years and has encountered some interesting and strange people. He talks about the rules and regulations, the pitfalls, the jargon, pay and his experiences.

Presented by Mike Newbold

June 24th **Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance – Mission Impossible 2**

Every day crews from the Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance respond to an average of 4 life-threatening emergencies across a 3,500 square mile area. They are now on a mission to bring a second helicopter to the skies over Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, saving even more lives. Ten years on from their previous visit to Collingham u3a we find out what's changed.

July 22nd **On Parade – State Funerals and Coronations**

A unique insight into how large-scale ceremonial events of recent years were put together by the Principal Director of Music for the Royal Air Force

Presented by Piers Morrell OBE MVO

We were saddened to learn of the cancellation of the March meeting due to a family emergency. I can confirm Nottinghamshire Puddings: Fact or Fiction has been re-scheduled for April 2027.

When an event is cancelled at short notice, in this instance 24 hours, we need an emergency response. Thanks to Chris who yet again stepped in to save the day. If you have a presentation which might be suitable for a general audience and are willing to step in at the last minute, please let me know.

Many thanks for all the suggestions and contributions regarding Speakers. When making suggestions please supply a current email contact. We try to promote a varied programme and we know not all subjects will be appreciated. However, your attendance and feedback on recent events is welcomed.

dp

Groups

Contacting Group Leaders

If you need get in touch with any group leader, please use the contact page on our website:

<https://collingham.u3asite.uk>

Photography

This month's images are from Collingham and district in March. Next month we shall be showing Collingham and district in April. Paul



Collingham Daffodils by Pat Morgan

Play Reading

We next meet for Play Reading on April 21st for Act 2 of the Alan Ayckbourn play, Comic Potential. We can't wait to see how the situation between the "actoids" and human actors is resolved...

In May we start reading an Agatha Christie murder mystery - "Death on the Nile".

Sue

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.

We do provide bats and balls and new members are always welcome.

Do come along and give it a try!

For your diary the dates going forward are as follows:

April 23rd, 2026 from 10:00 to 11:00 am

May 14th, 2026 - “ -

May 28th, 2026 - “ -

June 11th, 2026 - “ -

June 18th. 2026 - “- NOTE: THIS DATE IS OUT OF SEQUENCE!!!!

So, you think you can drive

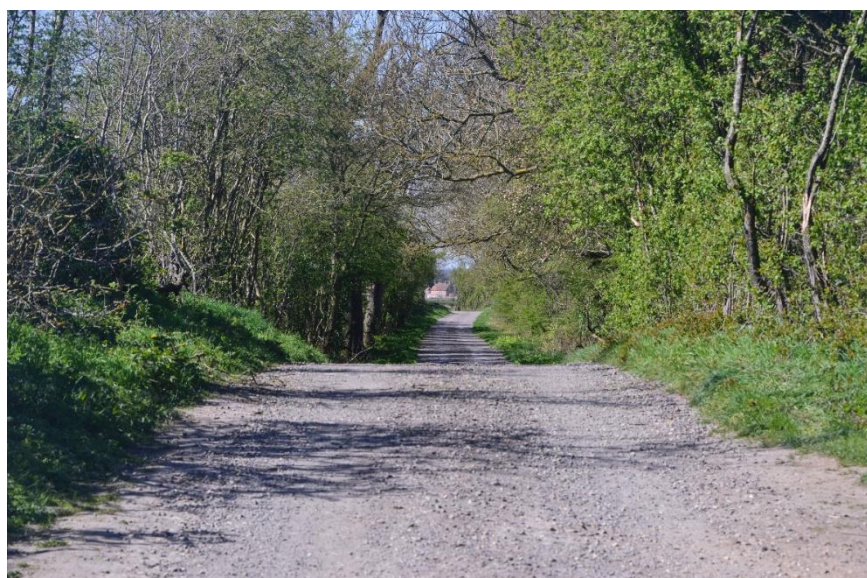
We've had falling numbers for the last few months so I've decided to halt the group for a while - no point flogging the proverbial dead horse! I think we all feel that we've achieved what we set out to do and I personally think that this would have been better as a “short course” - as Southwell u3a are now doing.

I will let members of the group know if I decide to reactivate the group-watch this space!

Lesley

Northcroft Lane

by Andrew Roberts



Drawing

Easter Monday may not be the best day to hold the session, but, nonetheless, 5 made it to Jackie's house for our drawing session.

The assorted objects and plants that Jackie had set out for us was a truly eclectic mix. After lots of chatting (we're a very friendly, chatty group) we settled down to the hard work of drawing. At the end of an hour, with a coffee and home-made biscuit break, we were joined by Keith, Jackie's lovely husband. He played his guitar and sang for the next 45 minutes as we tried to draw him - very difficult for us and him, as he tried to stay as still as he could!

We showed our drawings to each other at the end of the session - cue much praise and encouragement.

The next session will be on Monday May 11th at Pat Smedley's house - can't wait!

Lesley



At Rest among the Bluebells
by Jannet Wright

Creative Writing

Back to just 2 of us as our third group member was unwell. However, I just love these sessions with Alexis - she's such a superb writer.

As ever we shared our literary endeavours with each other - giving praise and encouragement. We would love others to join us in this tiny group, and meanwhile await the full recovery of our third member.

Lesley

Breakfasters

Breakfast at Windmill Farm, Whisby

It didn't start well.

Some of our group arrived a little early and were told that there was no group booking for that day-not a good start.

Once we had all arrived, we rearranged the tables to our liking and decided to go to the bar to put in our order. We were each given a hot plate and a cold mug (?) We duly waited for our allotted booking time (yes, I had booked for 14 of us and had been given the very specific time of 9.40) and took our (now cold) plates to the self-service buffet. The food was plentiful but could have been a lot hotter - and the promised yorkies were nowhere to be seen!

Making our own toast without any side plates was somewhat odd - but we struggled on. Our self-service hot drinks were also fraught with difficulty. There was just one pump flask for the hot water - which kept having to be refilled with hot, but not boiling water. The milk, also in a flask, kept having to be topped up - and they soon ran out of sugar as well - and marmalade.

There was also a large bowl of delicious looking strawberries for the continental offering, but as it was right next to the tea/coffee station and was uncovered (big gripe of mine!) no-one touched them.

This is obviously a venue for the many trades people who work locally, but possibly not for us.

It was certainly inexpensive (£8.49 + £1.99 for tea/coffee + free fill ups) but not really to my liking.

On the plus side, the staff were lovely and the venue was not bad either!

Next time we're going back to Downtown to try the newly refurbished Garden Centre cafe- last time we gave them 5 stars - so here's hoping.

Lesley

Advert for local breakfast at South Scarle Church

Sat 16th May 9-11, £8pp Booking advised 07760 106310

See The Fleet for more details.

Bridge

Bridge meets every Friday at 2 pm in Beyond Coffee

Chris D

Strollers



Wednesday April 8th saw 15 Strollers walking a 1.8-mile circular on tracks in Stapleford Wood. The sun shone and the weather was kind.



The walk was slightly awkward at the start as the leader, in her wisdom, felt we could manage the path that was, the week previously, water-logged! So, the first part of the walk proved tricky as we had to pick a route alongside the intended path avoiding branches, boggy sections etc.



Still, after fifteen minutes we had all negotiated our way to the main track!

From then onwards it was a pleasant stroll and twelve of us went on to have lunch at The Lord Nelson in Winthorpe.

Rosie and Marg

Rotting Wood

by Colin Smith



Family History

At our April meeting we heard two presentations. First up was Jenny and I will let her tell you in her own words what she told us.

How many of us asked our fathers about their service in WW2. 'My Dads war is about a father who was a watchmaker, drafted into the RAF and trained as an instrument technician. Far from sitting in a workshop making instruments we found after much investigation, that he landed in Europe just after D-Day with frontline squadrons flying Typhoons, a ground attack aircraft. They lived in tents frequently being bombed and worked in appalling conditions for the rest of the war. He came home never saying a word of this to his family.

The moral of the story is **Ask before it's too late**

The second piece was about a lead mining family in the North Pennines. At least three generations were involved in this industry in an area of natural beauty but harsh weather conditions. We heard of the men starting work as boys of ten on the surface before joining their fathers underground. We heard of Hannah, a daughter who had two boys before marriage and then married and had a daughter. Old Ordnance Survey maps showed the village of Garrigill where they lived and we could see the houses recorded as their dwellings in various censuses.

Charlie

More Daffodils by
Andrew Roberts



Thursday Talking Shop

The subject for the March meeting was: 'Protest - A Choice or a Duty? How Far Should it Go?' At a very lively and involving session we looked at examples from history including successful ones, such as: anti-apartheid, feminism and suffrage. We then went on to consider the effectiveness of protest marches, civil disobedience, labour strikes and art - for example cartoons and caricatures.

The topic for the next meeting on 23rd April will be: 'Determinism and Fatalism'. Anita

Sunday Lunchers

On April 12th, 14 members of Collingham's u3a Sunday Lunchers, travelled over to Reg Taylor's Garden Centre, Southwell, for a walk around the plants and then head into the Tea Rooms for our Lunch.



As with last year's visit, the food was top rate, with the home-made desserts, exceptional! The portions were generous, and the Staff, kind and courteous. Next month's Sunday Lunch will be on 10th May, with the venue to be arranged.

Margaret

History

At our last meeting in March, Pat introduced us to "Weary" Dunlop, (Sir Ernest Edwards Dunlop). Australian Surgeon and remarkable man who treated those captured by the Japanese in WWII. The conditions were terrible, men starving and ill, made to work building a railway! After the war ended, Sir Ernest had a long and distinguished career in surgery. Thanks Pat, for an interesting life story! At our next meeting on the 24th Gill will be giving us a short talk about Hertha Ayrton, which I'm sure will be most interesting. Guests always welcome to join us.

Ann.

Weekenders

Weekenders have enjoyed a few outings, The Pocket Choral Society at Coddington were excellent, and a lunch at Ole Ole in Lincoln was enjoyed by 8 people.

Our last 2 monthly meetings have been at the Inn on the Green in Coddington, but the next one on Saturday 25th of April will be at The Royal Oak Collingham, and hopefully future meetings will be held there.

Chris D

Local History

Charlie gave a very interesting slide talk on the 'Hall Letters', a series of letters exchanged between Canada and Collingham over the period 1837 to 1846. The letters were found in a leather wallet by a Canadian, Brent McCutcheon who sent transcribed copies to our local archives after making contact. Brent was a direct descendant of William Hall and it was William's relatives Samuel and Hannah who were the letter writers, covering day to day affairs of their life. Hannah was Samuel's daughter. Charlie said the interest for historians with this period was that quite a number of people emigrated from a small population in this area and made the journey to Canada to start a new life.

David produced a work-in-progress report on his efforts to research the early history of the house called the Old Hall in North Collingham. His theory was that it had Tudor origins and had at one time been called Elton Hall, named after a former influential priest called John Elton who had leased out his rectory at Staunton in the Vale in the 1500s to come and live in Collingham. The research continues on what happened next.

David



Low Street Splendour by Jannet Wright

The Critics (a new group)

Our first meeting at the Allotment went well with 7 participants. The recommended books were 'A Hymn to Life: Shame has to Change Sides' by Giselle Pericot, 'A Place of Execution' by Val McDermid and 'Hamnet' by Maggie O'Farrell.

Films and TV that people had enjoyed were 'I Swear', 'Hamnet', and several series available on TV including 'A Hospital through Time' with Alice Roberts, 'AI Confidential' with Hannah Fry, 'Captured' and 'Yellowstone'. Some of these are screened only on Netflix.

The conversation covered topics as diverse as living with a disability, the advantages and fears of new technology, the prevalence of sexual abuse and how disconcerting it is to find that periods of your own life now count as history.

No preparation needed before a Critics meeting just read a book, or watch a film or TV, go to the theatre.

On 16th April 2026 five people attended, with two apologies. Our discussion was wide ranging, the television programmes about Huw Edwards triggering the exploration of thoughts about manipulation by people in positions of authority, and whether we should expect higher standards from those in the public eye than from 'ordinary' citizens.

We then moved on to trusting 'experts', with particular reference to a programme on Sky Arts, Beyond the Brush, where six well known paintings were examined in detail. We ultimately decided that although details within paintings might culturally be given significance, we didn't really have any way of knowing what the intention of the artist was, unless they had specifically explained it.

John Clare's poem, Love Lies Beyond the Grave, made us think about the use of punctuation in written work, and whether the absence of punctuation left room for individual interpretation. Other novels without punctuation were referenced. We all felt that the lack of punctuation initially made things difficult to read, but some felt that when the 'voice' of the author came through, the problem almost disappeared.

Talk about the film of Brideshead Revisited brought back many memories of the TV series. The person who had seen the film said they were not quite sure whether or not the author, Evelyn Waugh, had been trying to put across a particular point of view about Catholicism or the aristocracy. This merged with a report of Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver. The book is a retelling of David Copperfield, a book in which Dickens was exposing the issue of poverty. Barbara Kingsolver's book sets the story in modern USA, and is really a polemic about the iniquities of the opioid crisis. We did not come to any conclusion about whether the intention of the author to put across a particular point of view made a book better or worse.

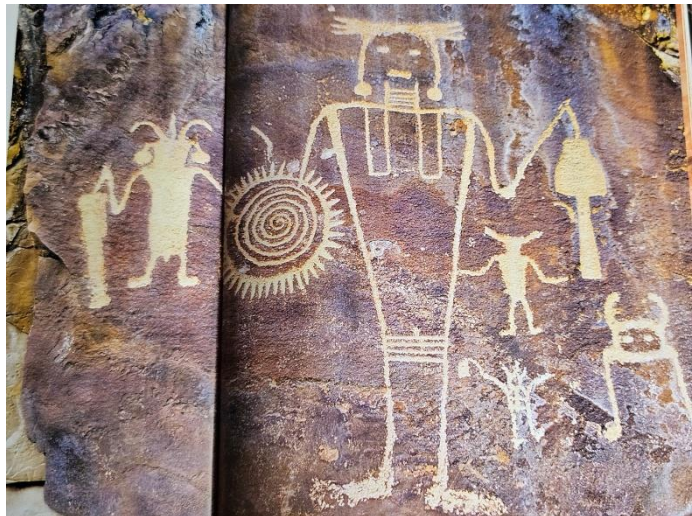
At the end of the meeting Lucinda Riley's books on The Seven Sisters were recommended, along with the film of The Faraway Tree, which could be of special interest for those with young grandchildren. The film The Hail Mary Project was not recommended, even for science fiction lovers, as having huge gaps in plot development, a sloppily concocted alien, and being excessively long.

The next meeting will be on 21st May.

Pat H

Art Appreciation

At our meeting in March, Carole Barker introduced the group to Rock Art of the American South West. These included petroglyphs and pictographs. The petroglyphs were carved or incised into the rocks whilst the pictographs were painted with pigments and so suffered from time and weather. The images included abstract designs such as spirals and lines as well as human and animal figures.



She also showed us how the images and symbols were still used in modern pottery and jewellery.



This image is of Kokopelli, a Native American fertility deity who appears in many examples of the art work.

Carole brought books and art objects to show us that she has collected over a number of years.



Our next session is on Tuesday 28th April. Chris Stothard will be talking about the Pitman Painters.

Jannet



Threads

Threads group members continue to work on individual projects at Beyond Coffee next to the Co-op on the first Thursday in the month and would welcome anyone interested in similar, clean crafts using a variety of threads.



Two newly finished knitted items for you to admire this month – one is a shawl collar jacket for a lucky five-year-old grandson; the second is simple v-neck jumper in a wool/acrylic yarn which has been rescued from the WIP cupboard. Now time to find something new to work on.

Our next meeting is on 7th May at Beyond Coffee at 2 pm.



Happy crafting!

Barbara

Italian

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

In the grammar session at the end of March, we used photo cards to make up sentences. We had to work in pairs and create ways to describe the pictures using verbs in a simple past tense, the present tense and the future. When we had completed the task in our pairs, we then read our sentences to the rest of the group.

We started a new book for our reading task; it is a guide to the Giants Causeway. Mary had bought the Italian version of the guide on a visit last year as we are always on the lookout for items to use with our Italian group. We already had the English version so we have a good way to check our translation skills.

Jannet and Mary

Shower Going Through

by Paul Bass



Fantasy Football

Thirty-two Game Week's gone and six more to come - that stage of the season where it's no longer a marathon but not yet quite a sprint.

Millers11 managed by Charlie Stothard - Collingham's answer to Carlos Ancellotti - is still setting the pace and will take some catching but then again that's pretty much what they were saying about Arteta's Arsenal a few weeks back. Football, you never know. It's a funny old game.

Behind millers11 there's a whole raft of teams fighting it out for the minor places. Will it be Andrew Roberts's Steve Zodiac XI (incidentally hot favourite for the much-coveted Badge of the Year award) or maybe Louis Lovegrove's team Chelsea Louis will cling on to second place. Still all to play for as we approach that part of the season when it actually does become a gut-busting sprint for the finishing line. Only time will tell.

And to finish with a bit of football wisdom from that Wales and Liverpool legend, but geographically challenged, Ian Rush

"I couldn't settle in Italy - it was like living in a foreign country"

And something ever so slightly more profound:

"Of all the unimportant things, football is the most important" Arrigo Sacchi, former manager of the Italian national team and far too many club teams to list.

John



Lambing Time by Pat Morgan

Literature

We have been reading 'Clock Dance' by Anne Taylor, who comes highly recommended having won the Pulitzer Prize in 1994, and was nominated by Roddy Doyle and Nick Hornsby as 'the greatest novelist writing in English'.

This is the story of a gentle, obliging - some might say wimpish - person who's allowed herself to be borne along by life, taking a path dictated by the demands of others. But offers the satisfaction of seeing that complaisant bubble of obligingness punctured by something a whole lot brasher - some might say trashier - not to mention more complex and chaotic and alive.

We had a very interesting and jolly discussion when we got together again at The Lord Nelson in Winthorpe.

We are now reading 'At the Edge of the Orchard' by Tracy Chevalier.

Sheelah



Langford Nature Reserve by
Colin Smith

Quiz Group

u3a quiz group started on time but some of the brains needed a bit of time to warm up. They did start up; everyone had some amazing answers and some of them were correct. It was another great session; Gill had some good questions and some tough ones. Here are some that challenged our group. If you know the answers, maybe you should join us next month on the 15th of May in the Girton village hall at 10am.

1. Which classic novel was originally titled The Sea Cook?
2. In which US state is Fort Knox?
3. What is the name of Paddington Bear's aunt in Peru?

Answers below!

John

Singalong

During the Month of March, our group continued to fully focus on the golden oldies as well as various different musicals.

As I mentioned a couple of months ago, the friendships and communication continue to progress extremely well indeed. All of our refreshment breaks are of extreme great quality and excellence. Another person has also now officially joined the group.

During the month of April, due to the Easter break, we did not meet on Bank Holiday Monday. We next meet on Monday 20th of April and we aim to continue with all we have accomplished to date. There is a definite continued bright and fantastic future for our group.

Louis



Carlton Ferry Lane by Paul Bass

Quiz answers: 1. Treasure Island 2. Kentucky 3. Lucy

From the Editor: You will no doubt have noticed that not all groups have contributed this month! I'm afraid that this happens when the first of the month falls on a Wednesday! Groups that meet at the beginning of the third week of the month can't make the newsletter deadline. I am sure that we will get full updates next month!

The deadline for the next newsletter is **6pm on Friday 22nd May**, but please send your items to me as soon as you can after your group meeting. Before then, why don't you volunteer to come to our stand on May Day to chat to people about all the things you do in our u3a?

Pat M
