



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 24

Lionella Clay

Who, you may ask, is, or was, Lionella Clay? Well, she was an important inhabitant of Cotgrave in the Eighteenth Century and, as we have already made a point of looking at a little more of Cotgrave history to keep ourselves in touch with our background, we have good reason to examine the good lady's contribution to our collective ancestry. I am particularly interested in her because she once owned the house in which I now live, in Scrimshire Lane.

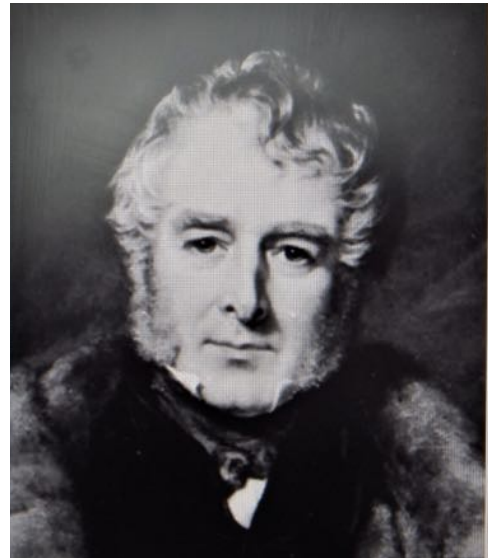


To understand Lionella's significance, we need a bit of background, and mention of Scrimshire Lane points the way to an important aspect of that background. The Scrimshire family, as I expect most readers will know, played a major role in Cotgrave's early history. It was round about 1560 when Harold Scrimshire bought land and property in Cotgrave which included both Cotgrave Place (now better known as the Nottinghamshire Golf and Country Club) and a manor called Rempstone Hall. This latter is not to be confused with 'The Manor House' at the corner of Risegate and Owthorpe Road. But was situated approximately where Green Platt is today and was surrounded by a stone wall, part of which ran along what is now Scrimshire Lane – a bit of it is still in existence in the shape of the 'bee wall', well known to anyone who has to walk past it during the early months of summer! The Hall itself is clearly shown on a map drawn up by the Manvers Estate at the time of Enclosure in 1791.

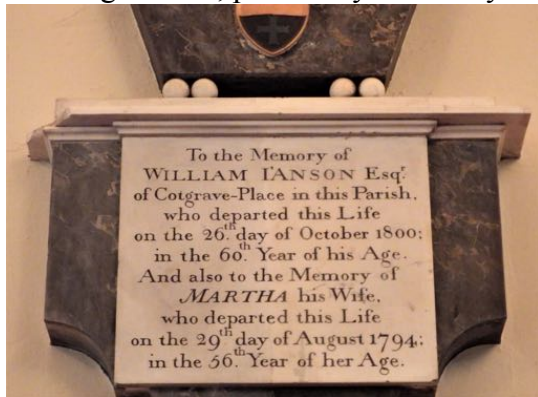


The Scrimshires flourished and took on the role of unofficial village squires, somewhat to the disapproval of the Earls of Kingston who were entrenched at Holmepierrepoint Hall and who owned much of the land in and about Cotgrave. What was more, they were keen to own even more of it and therefore resented the fact that the Scrimshires possessed something like 220 acres. One gains the impression that very little love was lost between the two families and this came to a head when, in 1759, John Scrimshire sold all his property, not to the Pierrepoints, but to a gentleman named Thomas Lambe of Southwell, who was related to the Coke family of Melbourne.

Lord Melbourne (the second Viscount) became Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister so they were important, though Thomas' branch of the family was probably an unimportant side-shoot! However, that is of no direct significance in our Cotgrave story – what is important is the fact that Thomas had no children and left his property to his niece, Lionella Lambe. In 1771 Lionella married a William Clay (also of Southwell), thus becoming Lionella Clay and, following their marriage, she and her husband chose to live at Cotgrave Place.



We can only assume that the old Scrimshire manor was abandoned (possibly as a result of a fire?). Lionella certainly owned it at the time of Enclosure but she chose to exchange her village property, piecemeal, for land outside the village centre, previously owned by the (now) Manvers family and, in this particular sale



document, it is made clear that she would be responsible for clearing the site. I haven't been able to discover when William died but Lionella was apparently a widow at Enclosure and, in 1790 she arranged for most of her property to be sold to an ex-London lawyer, William I'Anson. Judging by the nature of the sale, they must have been close friends – Lionella was not to receive a lump sum of money but took payment in the shape of an annuity for the rest of her life. As she only lived a matter of three more

years, this was clearly very favourable to I'Anson and, what was more, in her Will, she left the rest of her belongings to him, as well.

Just to complete this complicated story, we might note that I'Anson demolished the Cotgrave Place house and rebuilt his dream house in the Georgian style at a cost of £5,000 – indeed, that is the house which still exists next door to the golf club-cum-restaurant today. I'Anson died in 1800, leaving the property and land to his son Thomas and in 1807 Thomas finally sold it all to the Pierrepoints – at last they had their wish!



.....

Be Vigilant

Now for something a little lighter. Many localities appear to enjoy the care of local vigilante groups – all, of course, well-meaning but sometimes less than wholly helpful. The following story came from last Saturday's 'Times'. One such group had spotted an old lady desperately trying to start her car and immediately sped to her aid. After something of a struggle, they eventually managed to see her on her way and left, feeling a well-earned glow of satisfaction. It later turned out, however, that the lady in question was suffering from dementia and her family had taken the precaution of disabling the car to save her getting irretrievably lost! It took them hours to find her.

.....

The Sheer Size of Sheep

Yet another story from the 'Times' which, though funny to a non-participant, sounds serious enough for those involved. Did you know that Australian sheep are now nearly double the size of English? Apparently, considerable effort has gone into developing a strain of sheep which can produce both wool and meat and this has meant an increase in their weight. Whereas a typical English sheep weighs in at 45 kg, its Australian counterpart scales as much as 90 kg. All very well, you may be tempted to argue – what's wrong with that? Well done the Empire! Yes, to a point but the real point is that this increase in bulk is combined with a corresponding increase in strength and causes serious problems at sheering times. Needless to say, the sheep-shearer is obliged to hold the protesting animal in some kind of lock while relieving it of its wool and, while holding a 45 kg sheep was merely hard work, the corresponding challenge of dealing with a 90 kg animal is an altogether different matter. The net result is a rapid exodus of Australian sheep-shearers from their far-flung sheep farms. Crisis point has been reached! What is to be done? Perhaps someone will come forward with an algorithm which controls a pair of remote clippers so as to follow the wriggles of each sheep, while held approximately still in a wooden sheep pen! Watch this space. But don't hold your breath.



Whatever you may think, I certainly didn't make all that up – but I did make this up:

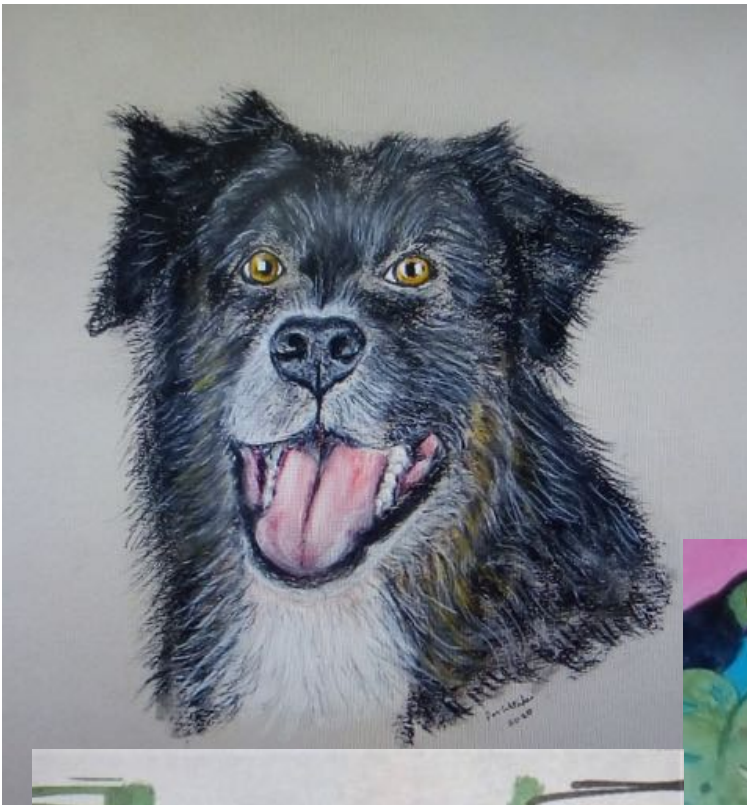
The Ausies have problems with sheep.
Their weight has gone up with a leap,
And it now would appear
That effecting a shear
Leaves the shearers in all of a heap!

Which provides me with an opportunity to tell you the wonderful news. I have come across an article by Miles Kington all about limericks – I'm not going to spill the beans today – you will just have to be patient until next week (think of the anguish if the Letter were a Monthly!) No doubt many readers will be familiar with the wit of Miles Kington – but I'll tell you all about him in due course.

.....

The Art Group

I've been advised to ration your consumption of our Art Group's work so there will only be two art works this week but there's one by David Hockney to make up for it.



Puzzle Corner

Here are the answers to Paul Childs' quiz of last week.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 13. Sandy | John Travolta was in love with her? |
| 14. Suzie | Guy Mitchell sang about a 'black-eyed' girl? |
| 15. Jolene | Dolly Parton was pleading with another girl about her man? |
| 16. Lula | Gene Vincent rocked about a 'be-bop' girl? |
| 17. Clair | Gilbert O'Sullivan sang about a little girl? |
| 18. Cathy | The Everly bros 'clowned about' this girl? |
| 19. Georgia | Ray Charles sang 'bluesy' about this girl? |
| 20. Dolly | Louis Armstrong 'gravelled this voice' about whom? |
| 21. Nikita | Elton John went Russian for this girl? |
| 22. Nadine | Chuck Berry sang about this girl? |
| 23 Annie | Musical based upon this lady? |
| 24. Ruby (Tuesday) | The Rolling Stones a gem of a hit with this Tuesday girl? |

We need more puzzles – anyone willing?

.....

Creative Writing Group

This week the contribution from the Creative Writing Group takes the form of a poem by Sue Hillyard. Thanks again Sue.

M y little patch of Heaven
Y ou'll always find me there

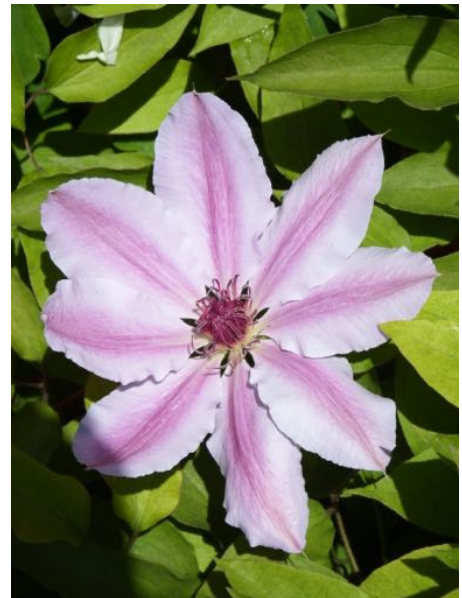
G rowing lots of flowers and fruit
A pple, plum and pear
R oses abound around my door
D elphiniums tall and blue
E ven worms and bugs and bees
N ature, good and true

I never cease to be amazed
T hat plants can surely show

I n the tiniest of corners
S eedlings simply grow

H aving a space to place my pots
A nd borders for flowers too
R eally means a lot to me
D oes yours mean the same, to you?

W aking to beautiful birdsong
O verwhelmed by sweet perfume
R eminds me that it's God's good grace
K eeps me here, in my outdoor room



.....

Keep well and sane – next week we shall celebrate our quarter century.

All the best,

John