



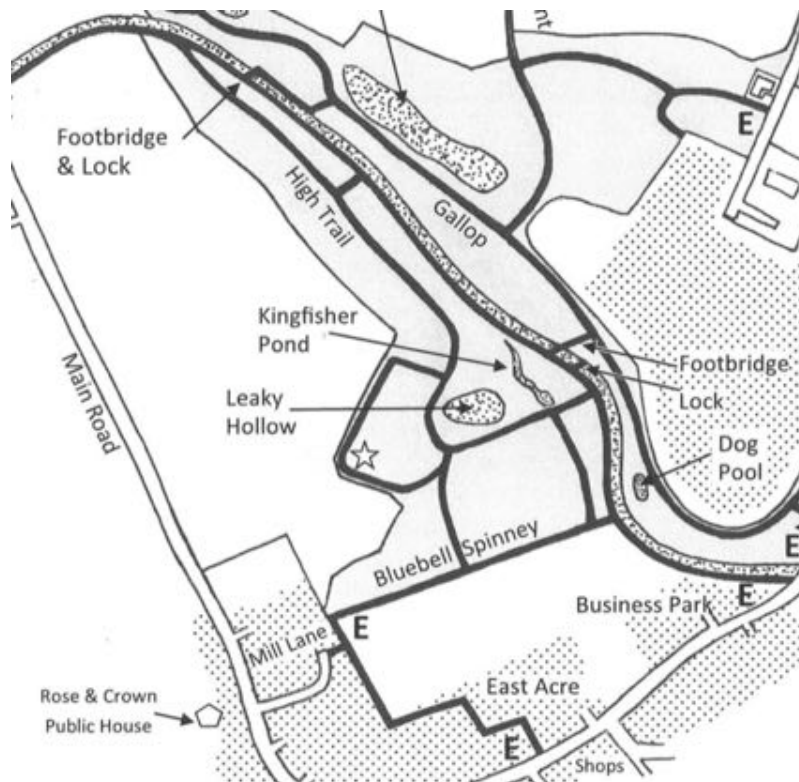
Cotgrave and District U3A

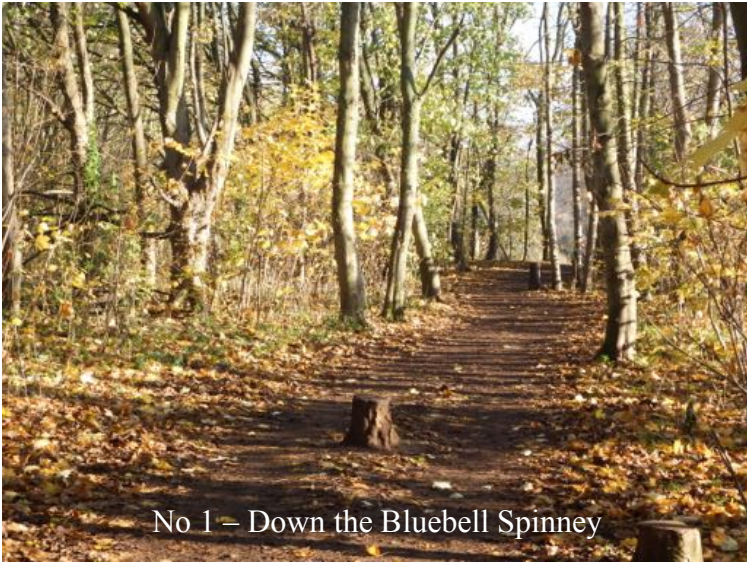
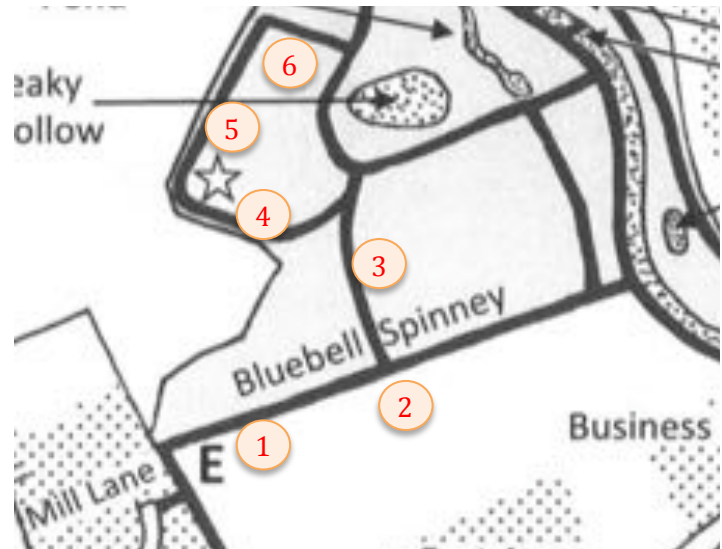
Keeping in Touch 37

A Walk in the Country Park

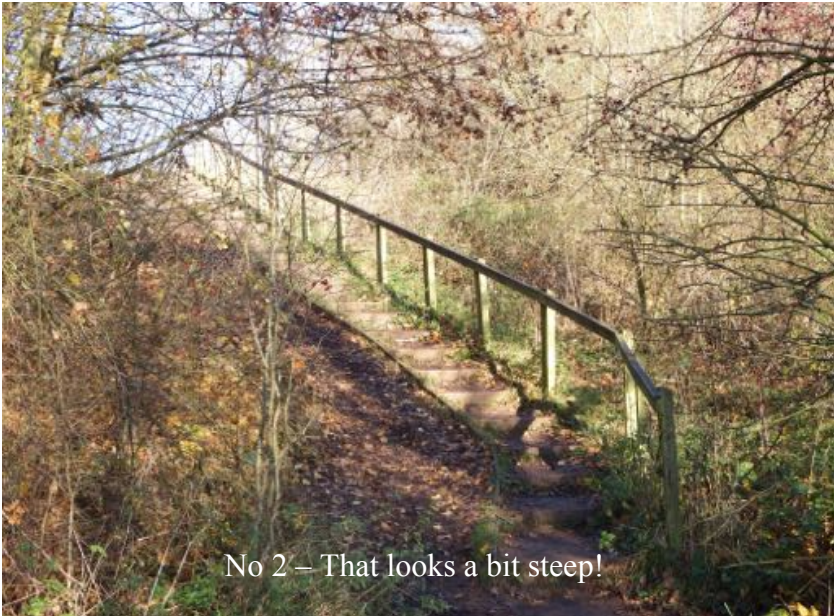
Last Friday was such a beautiful day that I just had to go for a walk round the Country Park – aren't we lucky in having it so near at hand (or, perhaps 'foot' would be more accurate?). I also did something that I have been intending to do for a long time – take a series of photographs to illustrate its attractions. In all, I took something like forty! Needless to say, not all of these turned out to be world-beaters but I managed to select fifteen which are of acceptable quality and which show off the Park in its autumnal beauty. The light was so fantastic that it was difficult *not* to produce something adequate! It then struck me that we might try something a little different in the organisation of this week's Letter and rely on images, rather than words – so why, you may ask, am I going on at length about it?

Here, then, are the photographs, with little more than a number of maps to show roughly where they were taken. Firstly, we have a general map of the whole park to set the rest in context, then a series of mini-maps to locate each photograph. I hope that will suffice to lead readers in an 'online' walk round at least a significant area of the Park. We start from the Mill Lane entrance and follow the trail along Bluebell Spinney, up the Steps, turn left to the High Viewpoint, down to High Trail, turn sharp right at the Canal, cross the bridge by the Lock, cut through to Heron Lake, turn right and walk towards the Hollygate car park (though not actually reaching it), cross back at the new Footbridge, take in the second Lock, then turn right to return through Bluebell Spinney again and home to a welcome glass of something. (An 'online' drink is an interesting concept but I can't offer it all round, I'm afraid!)





No 1 – Down the Bluebell Spinney



No 2 – That looks a bit steep!



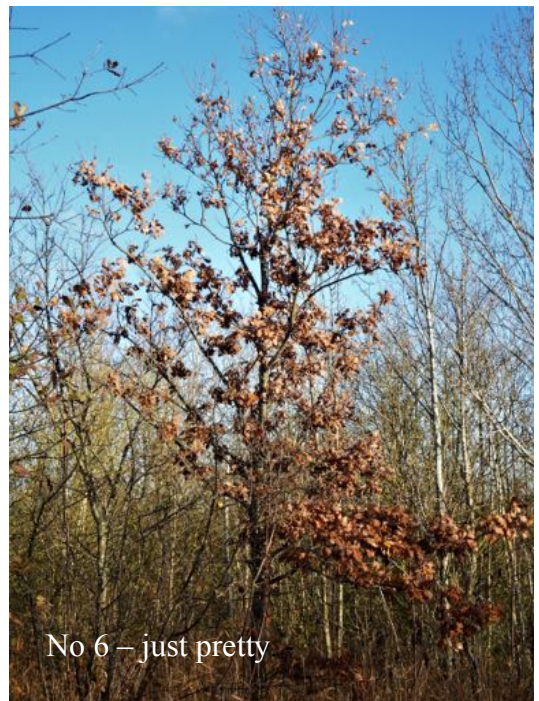
No 3 – towards the View Point.



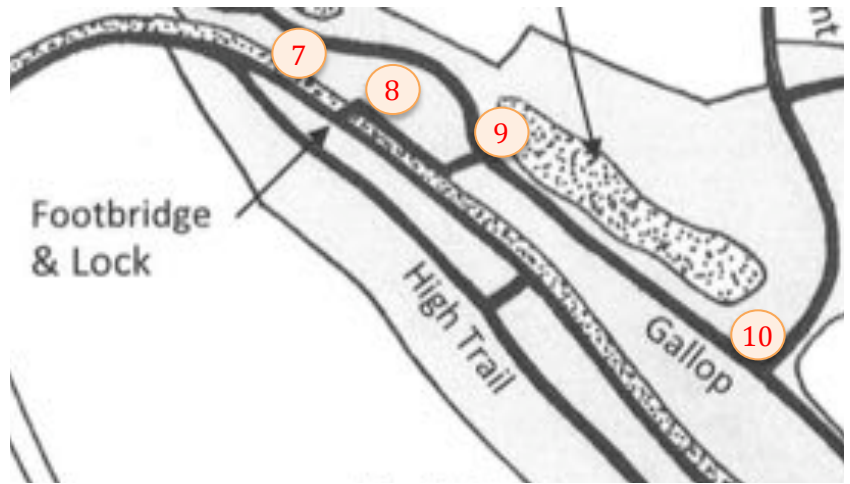
No 4 – view towards Ratcliff P.S.



No 5 – Artistic view of Ratcliffe P.S



No 6 – just pretty



No 7 – Grantham Canal



No 8 – Cotgrave Lock (No 6)



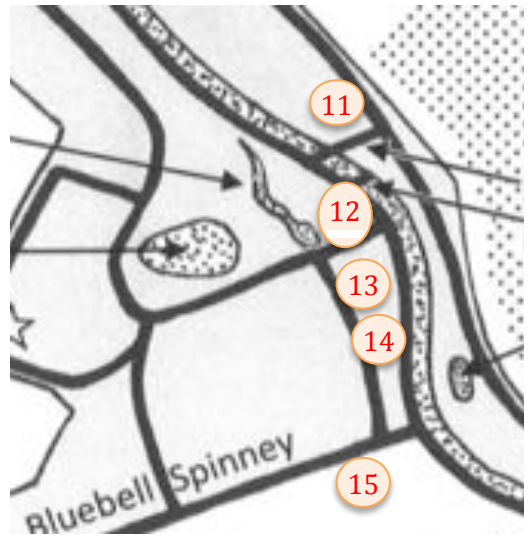
No 9 – Which way today?



No 10 – Heron Lake



No 11 – New Canal Footbridge



No 12 – Lock No7



No 13 – Just enjoying the water



No 14 – Was the lake named after me?



No 15 – Maybe time for a rest

One final thought: it was good of the Heron to sit still for several minutes whilst I took several photographs of him. Come to think of it, I have never before seen a heron in the Country Park. They are often to be seen along that stretch of canal from the Canal Car Park, near Shepherds towards Nottingham but not (in my experience) in the Country Park itself.

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Pastoral Matters

While the U3A may present itself to the world as an educational body, those of us involved at the working level can be in little doubt that it also serves to offer help and caring for many of its members – indeed, it would probably not be any exaggeration to say that this is one of its principal functions. Such a sentiment is very well illustrated by an article which we received a few days ago from a Cotgrave member, who, though wishing to remain anonymous, has asked us to publish this account of their personal experience on joining the local U3A Branch.

Several years ago I moved to Cotgrave under very difficult and traumatic personal circumstances. Although I had family and friends elsewhere, I had no local support network. I had to somehow cope on my own and find a way to make a house into a home with very little help.

Fortunately I was still working and I was able to throw myself into my career to give my life some sort of positive focus. I travelled around the country a great deal and came home at weekends before setting off again. My social life was practically non-existent. Although I knew of the U3A I decided that joining wouldn't help me get to know anyone in Cotgrave. Then I heard that we had just started our own branch - I joined immediately.

Very quickly I settled in and, I hope, became an embedded and pro-active member. I became involved in several diverse groups and formed some acquaintanceships with other members. 2020 has, of course, put a temporary halt to many activities but I am one of the lucky ones as three of my groups have continued to run remotely.

Recently I have again gone through a very difficult and traumatic personal loss when a very, very close family member died in October. This time, however, I haven't had to cope on my own. I have been totally overwhelmed by the support, generosity and kindness that I have been shown by U3A members whom I no longer consider to be my acquaintances - they are my friends! I cannot thank them enough and nor can I name them. But I will always remember who they are! I am sure many members will have had similar experiences to be grateful for.

What a blessing the organisation has been - and will continue to be.

I, and others like me, owe a huge thank you to Peter Shreyhane and Barbara Bullin who have carried out their voluntary Pastoral Care responsibilities during this extraordinarily difficult year with dedication, sensitivity and kindness. Their occasional friendly telephone call has reminded those of us who live alone that we are part of a wider, much valued and caring community. Thank you.

And finally, writing, if I may, on behalf of all of our members, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking John Orton and John Haskell and all of the contributors to the weekly newsletter. What a fabulous job they have done. I know that I am not alone in looking forward to opening my emails each Friday morning and finding the newsletter waiting to keep me informed, enlightened and entertained. A great big thank you to everyone involved.

We are always aware that members, particularly those living alone, may be in need of an occasional cheering phone call and both Barbara Bullin and Peter Shreyhane have done sterling work in fulfilling this function. However, it is obviously far from easy to learn of all those who may need a little reassurance in these trying times, so we would ask you, whoever you may be, not to hesitate in asking for help. Peter is more than ready to offer this. The same applies if you happen to know of a friend in need. Peter's contact details are as follows:

p.shreyhane@btinternet.com

07722562760

Don't be embarrassed – we are very well aware what it can be like!

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A Significant Occasion

We always welcome contributions from members on any subject – it need not be a childhood memory! People of our generation must surely have recollections of numerous dramatic occasions such as the one described for us here by Mary Myles. Thanks, Mary – we are more than happy to incorporate it.

Cast your mind back, if you will – and are old enough – to November 1963. More specifically, to 22nd November 1963. The whole world was shocked and devastated to learn, more slowly than we would today, of the brutal assassination of the President of the United States of America, one J F Kennedy. No-one could talk of anything else: the fairly limited TV programmes all covered the news. The radio, which our family listened to more than the TV was in meltdown, trying to cope with the impact that his untimely death would have on the USA and the rest of the world.

What had this got to do with one 21 year old girl, living in Ickenham, Middlesex? I hear you ask with vaguely disguised non-interest! Well, I was to be married the next day!!! Saturday 23rd November 1963!

So, was I particularly shocked and stunned at the news? No! I was busy having last-minute fittings for my dress, my bridesmaid and I were giggling and getting excited and I was spending far too much time (according to my father) on the phone to my Fiancé. As you can imagine, Friday passed in a bit of a whirl, then THE BIG DAY arrived! In those days the Postman not only knocked twice, he came early in the morning, and on this day brought a brown envelope with fantastic news inside it! I had passed my Final Nursing Exams and could now call myself Mary B---d, soon to be Mary I---m, State Registered Nurse! Wow, what a wedding present that was!

Our wedding took place in the village church where I had been confirmed and fallen madly in lust with a bell ringer (that's another story!). The Wedding March, well, actually The Grand March from Verdi's Aida, played as my father and I walked up the aisle and it was a lovely ceremony. My new husband, his Best Man, my Bridesmaid and our parents then duly went to the Vestry to sign the Register. When the Vicar asked for my Occupation I proudly said "State-Registered Nurse". My Husband, not quite so proudly, said "Banana Salesman!"

That was the end of a perfect day, until ---- we returned from our Honeymoon in darkest Sussex and saw the wedding photos! Dear Readers, can you imagine our

dismay when we noticed that all the photos taken outside the church had the Union Jack flying at Half-Mast!!! How would the Church Warden know that, sadly, 20 years later our Marriage was to die in the Divorce Courts?? No, of course he wouldn't and neither did we but the whole world knew that a very charismatic World Leader had died at the hand of a deranged sniper and that, of course, is why the Union Jack was flying at Half Mast!



That is not quite the end of this Significant Event, you will be glad (sad) to hear! In order to practice my chosen profession, I had to change my name on the Register of the General Nursing Council, an august organisation with a formidable Head of Service whom I shall call Miss H. On receiving my Marriage Certificate and noting that under 'Occupation of Spinster' it said 'SRN', she wrote a very snooty letter to me, telling me that, as my new status was not yet on the GNC Register, I was unable to call myself SRN! I won't bore you with all the details but, suffice it to say, the lovely Vicar who married us wrote to Miss H. stating that, as it was his, i.e. the Church of England's, Register and Certificate, he could write what he liked on it, so go and think on that, Miss H.

So, a Significant Occasion in World history and, on the whole much happier, Significant Occasion in my life history occurred 57 years ago and I shall certainly never forget either of them,

Mary Myles.

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Puzzle Corner

Here are the answers, (together with the questions), from the general knowledge quiz from last week that was set by Peter Shreyhane.

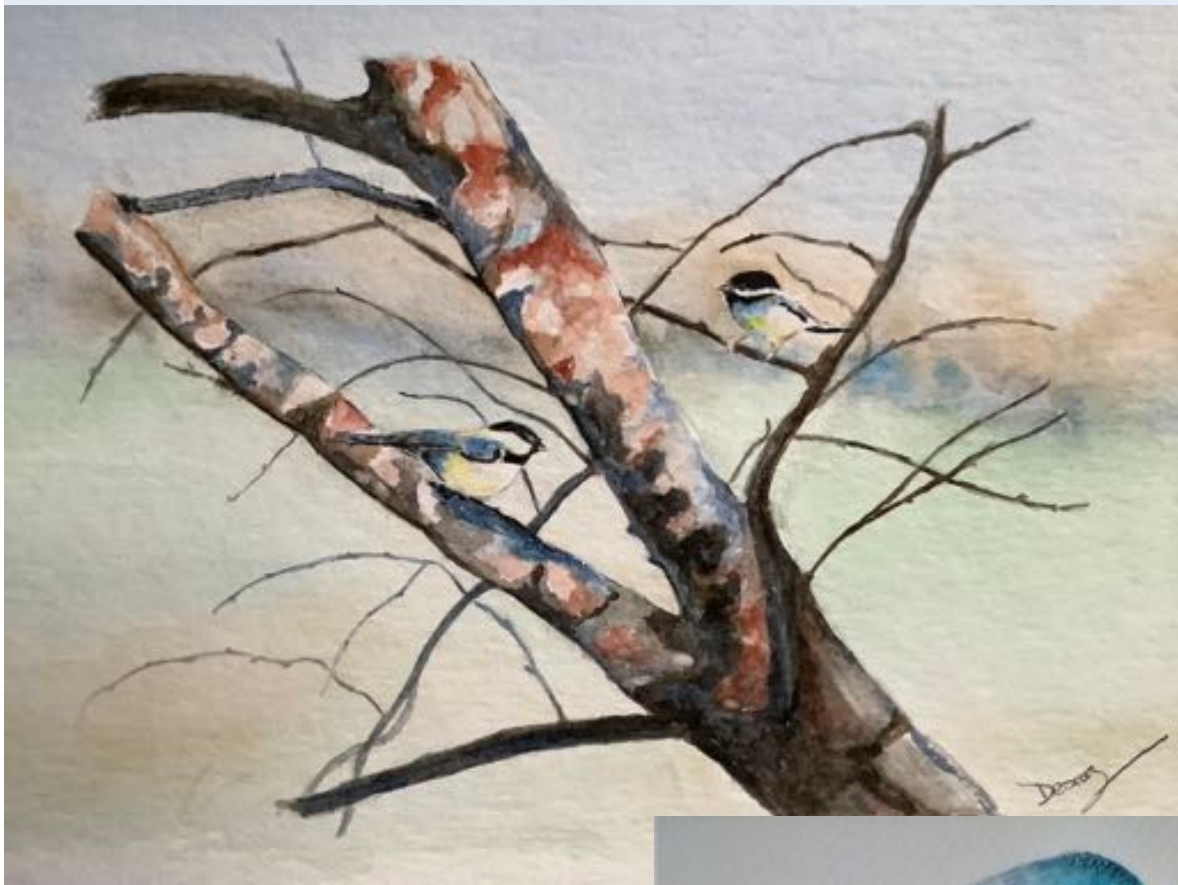
1. **Argentinian** (What is the nationality of Pope Francis?)
2. **Last of the Summer Wine (295)** (Which UK comedy series has had the most episodes broadcast (not counting repeats?)
3. **Oxford (1096)** (Which is the UK's oldest university?)
4. **Marilyn Monroe** (Who sang happy birthday to President Kennedy on May19th 1962?)
5. **Canada** (If you travel due west from Paris which is the first country you would come to?)
6. **Japanese / Japan** (Which language/country does the word EMOJI come from?)
7. **Heart** (In 1965 Dr. Christian Barnard carried out the first transplant of which organ?)
8. **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation** (What does N.A.T.O. stand for?)
9. **Downton Abbey** (Which country house was the home of the Earl and Countess of Grantham?)
10. **Bread** (Which type of food is pumpernickel?)
11. **Jim Callaghan** (Who did Margaret Thatcher succeed as Prime Minister?)
12. **1926** (In which year was the Queen born?)
13. **BEA (British European Airways) and BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation)** (In March 1974 two airlines were amalgamated to form British Airways. Name one.)
14. **Pup or whelp.** (What is a baby otter called?)
15. **Canada** (Which country has the most lakes?)

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The Art Group

We have no new pictures from the Group but there are lots of past pictures of birds, so this week will see a re-cap on our birds:





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Creative Writing Group

This week's contribution from the Group is about Ghosts – another somewhat unnerving account of something which, at least in part, really 'happened'! It was written by Elsie Warby.

A ghost story

After a hectic day shopping, Debbie wanted nothing more than a long soak in the bath with a large glass of Merlot. She lowered herself into the bubbles and lay back letting the hot water wash over her aching muscles. She closed her eyes but then the bathroom door opened. "Go away Darren" she shouted, she just wanted to be left in peace to enjoy her bath. There was no response but she could feel someone staring at her, then the water in the bath turned ice cold!

Debbie flew out of the bath, grabbed a towel and raced into the living room. There was Darren slouched in front of the television, can of beer in hand, watching football!

He quickly sat up when he saw the state Debbie was in.

"What's wrong Debbie, you look as if you've seen a ghost."

"I.. I.. Oh Darren I don't know what happened," Debbie stammered. She sat down and cuddled up close to Darren and haltingly told him what had just taken place.

"I think your flat is haunted" she whispered.

"I don't think so," Darren replied "It's your imagination playing tricks with you, we were only joking about this flat."

It was true, until recently both of them had been living at home with their parents. Darren had found this flat advertised for rent and when they came to look at it they'd joked that it might be haunted as it was situated above a funeral directors! Nevertheless the flat was in good condition and the rent was reasonable. They were also relieved to discover that it was just the offices of the funeral directors rather than the chapel of rest.

Darren moved in the following week. Debbie wasn't quite ready to commit to moving in as well as they'd only been together a few months. However she had spent the occasional night there and this was the first weekend she was intending to stay.

Debbie couldn't stop shaking and was so upset by her experience that she decided to go home. She quickly dressed and gathered up her shopping ready for Darren to drive her home.

As he drove back to the flat Darren thought about Debbie. Was her imagination playing tricks on her? He was quite laid back and didn't believe in the supernatural so wasn't overly concerned about what had supposedly happened with Debbie. Nevertheless he was disappointed that she was too frightened to stay in the flat with him.

He arrived at the flat, put his key in the door and switched the light on. Nothing happened. “ A bulb must have blown” he thought. Using the light from his phone he started to climb the stairs. Suddenly the temperature dropped and Darren felt something push past him, but there was nothing there! He flew upstairs, ran into the bedroom and threw some clothes into an overnight bag.

Darren ran out to his car and looking back saw a ghostly shape looking at him from the window.

Darren drove as quickly as he could to the warmth of his parent’s house. He told them what had happened to him and Debbie even though he could hardly believe it. He rang Debbie, they were both in a state of shock.

“I can’t go back there” said Darren and Debbie agreed.

Although neither of them wanted to go back they both had possessions there that they needed to collect.

Darren contacted the letting agent who’d originally shown him the flat and she agreed to accompany him to collect his belongings. She met him on a bright sunny day and they both entered the flat, unsurprisingly Darren was very nervous. The flat felt normal and Darren began to wonder if they’d imagined everything, however he started to pile his belongings into black bin bags.

When they were back outside he told the agent why he was giving up the flat even though it meant he would lose his deposit.

The agent didn’t look surprised and was quiet for a moment.

“I’m sorry Darren, we thought this had been a one off “

“What are you saying, has this happened before?” shouted Darren.

“Yes it has, a previous tenant wouldn’t stay. We checked the flat out and renewed the heating and decorated, thinking that might be enough to banish whatever evil was there. Clearly that wasn’t enough and I can only apologise, we will obviously return the money you have paid us so you’re not out of pocket.”

Darren was relieved to hear this but wondered who was haunting the building and why. Was it a restless spirit who didn’t want anyone to live there?

The story didn’t end there. Several months later the whole building was destroyed by a massive fire and had to be demolished. No one was hurt in the fire and no reason for the fire was ever found.

The ghostly events that Debbie and Darren experienced actually happened to my daughter and her then boyfriend. The rest of the story is fiction.

Elsie Warby. 8/11/2020

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The Church with the Opera Box

On a slightly lighter note, I was recently reminded of a 'Church Crawl' I made some years ago looking at Mediaeval Churches in the Yorkshire Dales and I thought you might be interested in a story concerning Holy Trinity Church in Wensley. Wensley might claim to be the 'Capital' of Wensleydale but is little more than a tiny village and a not very remarkable one, at that but its church really does have a legitimate claim to fame.

Firstly, we need to reacquaint ourselves with the Scrope family – I say 'reacquaint' because we met them a long time ago when we looked at the history of Langar in our eighteenth Weekly Letter. You may remember that one of Langar's famous names was that of Admiral Lord Howe and that he had a slightly dubious connection with the Scropes. One of the Scropes (Emanuel) had no legitimate children but several of the other sort and one of these inherited Langar Hall and married a member of the Howe family, a union which led eventually to the birth of Admiral Howe.

The Scrope family were based in Yorkshire, at Bolton Castle, near Leyburn in Wensleydale. Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned there for several years, before being transferred to her long-term resting place at Tutbury in Staffordshire. But, of more importance to our tale, we should note that the eldest of Emanuel Scrope's illegitimate daughters inherited Bolton and (in 1655) married Charles Powlett, 1st Duke of Bolton. Their grandson, another Charles Powlett, 3rd Duke of Bolton fell madly in love with an opera singer, Lavinia Fenton, had several children by her, then, when his wife died, asked her to marry



him. This she agreed to do on condition that he purchased for her the opera box from which he had first set eyes upon her. Having acquired it, he had it installed in the local church at Wensley and from which he and she could look down on the unfortunate minister as he presented his weekly sermon to the assembled congregation. It is still there in all its glory and I'm sure that you will agree with me that she and it make an admirable couple!

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I thought this must merit a Limerick

An opera singer called Fenton
Made hay with what e'er she was bent on,
So it wasn't a fluke
When she married a Duke
And the Box, too, that he'd been intent on.

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Knitting Appeal

Come on ladies from the knit and natter, Sue has set a trend and would like some help with knee blankets for the Elderly people's home in Cotgrave. Made up from different colours, do your own stitch, if I can do it anyone can, and once started, it's addictive, but rewarding.

Boyes in Bingham should be open this week for wool if you need more.

Thank you.
Judy Bullock



That's All for This Week. Look after yourselves and be careful about Christmas.

John

