



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 51

Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er dales and hills,
When all at once, I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils.

We're all familiar with Wordsworth's eulogy to the golden flower of early Spring and it really does lift the spirit to see their lovely yellow trumpets bursting forth in our gardens and public places. The photographs here were taken as I, myself, wandered lonely as a cloud past our local churchyard.

And then my heart with pleasure filled
And danced to see the daffodils.

(to misquote Wordsworth only marginally.)



Yet another sign of Spring – these two have been trying to mate for several years apparently but no luck so far. But don't they make a handsome couple?



.....

The Bentincks

I imagine that most readers will be familiar with Welbeck Abbey, some five miles south of Worksop, which, for something like three hundred years was the home of the Dukes of Portland. The first Duke was appointed in 1716 and the last died without issue in 1990 and the name Bentinck has been associated with the Dukedom for the whole of that period, If the name has something of a ring of the Netherlands about it, that is



because the first Duke did, indeed, come from Holland. The Bentinck family flourished in the eastern part of Holland (Overijssel) from mediaeval times, until, in 1688, William of Orange was ‘invited’ to become King of England – the so-called ‘Glorious Revolution’. One of the signatories of the Invitation was William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire and one of those invited was William Bentinck, a close adviser to his royal namesake. Needless to say, King William wished to reward his helper and, in the following year, took much pleasure in appointing him as first Earl of Portland. William’s eldest son Henry Bentinck then became the first Duke of Portland in 1716. There were to be nine Dukes altogether. Henry had the misfortune to lose a great deal of money in the South Sea Bubble of 1720 and felt obliged to accept the less than prestigious appointment as Governor of Jamaica, a role which led to his early death in 1726!



The link between Bentincks and Devonshires was further emphasised when the second Duke, William Bentinck married Lady Margaret Cavendish-Harley, their offspring being known as Cavendish-Bentincks. The escutcheon in our photograph shows quartering between the Bentinck coat of arms (the cross) and that of the Cavendish family (the three buck’s heads). ‘Craignez Honte’ translates as ‘Fear Dishonour’. This practice of adding the wife’s name to that of her husband was further extended, the fourth Duke being known as William Henry Cavendish-Scott-Bentinck. Partly as a result of such marriages, the family became

extremely rich, owning not only large areas of land in various parts of the country but also important properties in London, such as Great Portland Street and Cavendish Square. Various family members used their privileged position to further careers in Government, the most successful being William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck (a second son and therefore not a Duke) who became both a soldier and statesman, rising to the heights of being Governor of India from 1828 to 1835. He was also known for his contribution to several social improvement schemes.



Probably the best known of all the Bentincks was the fifth Duke, William John Cavendish Scott -Bentinck who was an eccentric of the first order. As all the Bentinck sons were named William, he was known as John. He was second son of the fourth Duke so was not expected to inherit the title but found himself obliged to accept it when his elder brother George lost his life in somewhat dubious circumstances (John himself being involved to some ill-defined extent!).



On the death of his father in 1854, Lord John threw himself into a frenzy of refurbishing, both of the Abbey and of its surrounding gardens. Trees were replanted to improve the view, high walls built to screen the view from outsiders, vegetable gardens were moved and redesigned, gas-fired heaters were installed to hasten the ripening of fruit, etc, etc. The inside of the house was similarly modified but what really fired the imagination was Lord John's love of underground rooms and passageways. Not only did he fashion a huge underground ballroom (not that he ever danced in it!) but he constructed a series of tunnels, wide enough to take two carriages, which allowed him to drive right out of the estate in secret. He would hide himself away behind curtains in his coach so that no one knew whether he was there or not, arranging for the coach to be loaded onto a train at Worksop station with a view to his travelling incognito to London.

At the height of all these modifications, he had literally hundreds of workmen scurrying about doing his will, chopping and changing things as and when he came up with each new idea. He was a thoughtful employer, providing donkeys to carry his workmen to and from their homes, providing them with food, encouraging them to row on his lake and enjoy the sweeping vistas of his large estate. At the same time, he had a singularly eccentric attitude to his in-house staff, insisting that they should always ignore him. If any of them came into near-contact with him, they were to pretend that they had not seen him, simply walking past without so much as a glance!

He never married – and, in view of his attitude to his staff, this is probably not altogether surprising. However, there was a more serious reason, as made clear by the following letter which he received from his father (it was not unusual for them to communicate by letter, even though they lived in the same house!).

My Dear John,

You're approaching the age when ideas of courtship may be entering your head, if they have not done so already. Something you must understand, as must your brothers, is that the normal gift of married bliss cannot be for you. The strain of madness that ran in my mother's family is more than likely to appear in any offspring you might produce, bringing disgrace on the family name and untold burdens on yourself and whomsoever you may have decided to inflict your seed upon. Rest assured that, as you grow older, you will find many pleasant distractions in life, far more diverting and worthwhile than the production of mewling infants.

Your father,

William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck

So, when Lord John eventually died in 1879 the Portland title passed to a cousin, William John Arthur Charles James Cavendish-Bentinck but, associated with this transfer was a quite remarkable series of court cases which arose as a result of an equally dramatic story. In order to understand it we need to meet with another rather strange individual named Thomas Druce. Druce appeared out of nowhere when he visited a small Suffolk village and, rather forcibly(!) married a sixteen-year-old girl Elizabeth Crickmer who lived there. They had three children and he became involved in various village matters but suddenly abandoned them and disappeared, leaving them impoverished. However, when the children grew up, he made contact with them again and set them up in some degree of comfort – though doing nothing for the poor woman whom he had so imperiously married. We next meet up with him as the owner of a rather grand department store in London, The Baker Street Bazaar. He was now living with a woman called Annie May, though they were not married because Elizabeth was still alive in her miserable hovel in Suffolk. However, in 1851, she did die, so he was free to marry Annie May and they had a son Walter.

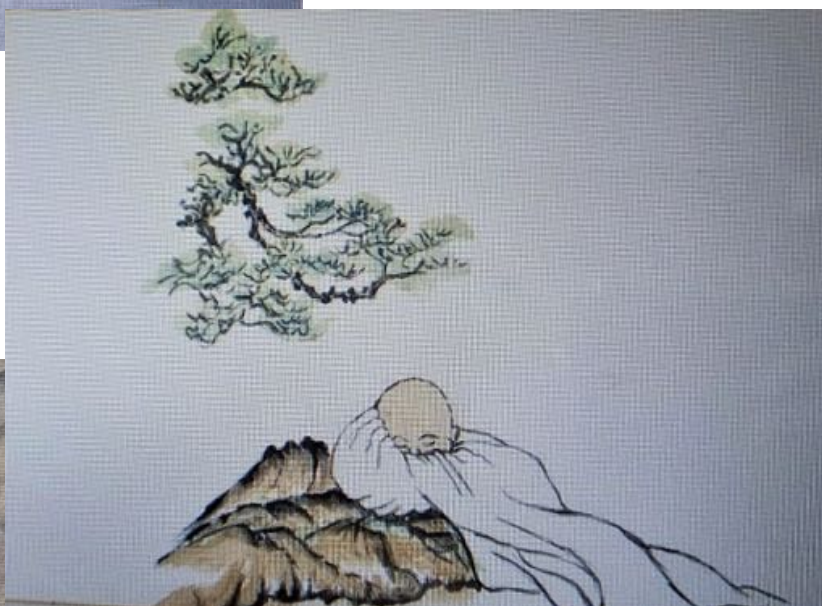
Druce, however, seemed to come and go rather a lot, disappearing for quite long periods, as, indeed, did Lord John, the 5th Duke of Portland, a pair of observations which led to the idea that Lord John and Thomas Druce were one and the same person! In other words, Lord John had been living a double life, on the one hand enjoying his wealth in refurbishing Welbeck Abbey, on the other, enjoying a sex life which would avoid any contamination of madness in the Bentinck family. Now Thomas Druce apparently died in 1864 and was duly buried in a mausoleum in Highgate but the idea emerged that this was nothing more than a charade, designed to relieve Lord John of the complications associated with his second life. In particular, his second wife, Annie May realised that, if this were true, her son may well be the true recipient of the Portland Title – together with its millions! Walter, himself, was not much interested but she became ever more determined to prove the point and therefore demanded that the coffin, supposedly containing Thomas Druce's body, be opened, believing it to be empty! What was more, one of Elizabeth's children, George Hollamby, now living in Australia, heard of the possibility that he might be the true heir to the Portland dynasty so he took the decision to return to England to claim his birthright.

The detailed legal conflicts involved are far too complicated to describe here but the key to the whole matter was, of course, the opening of the tomb to ascertain whether the body of Thomas Druce did actually exist and this was finally agreed upon in 1907 and, in a word, the answer turned out to be that it did! Thomas Druce was NOT Lord John and the Portland succession could proceed without further complication. There were four more Dukes to come before the line eventually came to an end in 1990. But what a story! I hope you have enjoyed it.

.....

The Art Group

This week we are happy to concentrate on Maggie Spencer's wide range of artistic skills. Here are three examples of her work.



.....

The ECO Group

Brenda has once more sent in an update to ECO Group matters. There are some very interesting websites to explore.

1. **The problem with waste.** You may have seen and read various plans proposing a huge incinerator on the site of Ratcliffe-On-Soar power station. In the TV programme on Ch4 last week with Lucy Siegle, large incinerators were under scrutiny; there is also a printed article: [Revealed: why hundreds of thousands of tonnes of recycling are going up in smoke | Incineration | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/07/revealed-why-hundreds-of-thousands-of-tonnes-of-recycling-are-going-up-in-smoke)
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/07/revealed-why-hundreds-of-thousands-of-tonnes-of-recycling-are-going-up-in-smoke>
2. **Nuclear Fusion:** Rushcliffe Borough Council has made a submission to the Government indicating its interest in hosting the first UK plant to generate power from nuclear fusion: the proposed plant (known as STEP) would also potentially be based at the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station site. The proposal raises a number of issues, which can be summarised as follows:
 - a) The technology is new and not like the nuclear power stations we have used in the UK since the 1950s. The scientific principles are entirely different.
 - b) An advantage is that fusion power stations will not produce large amounts of radioactive ‘high level’ waste or be at risk of catastrophic meltdown and release of large amounts of radioactivity. Therefore a fusion power station is theoretically inherently much safer than conventional fission.
 - c) The technology is still relatively early in the development process and implementation at Ratcliffe is at least 20 years away: having said that, fusion power has been “twenty years away” since at least the 1960s! Furthermore, a number of other local authorities will have expressed an interest in the new proposal and there is no indication yet that Ratcliffe will be a leading candidate, or even a contender, for the development.
 - d) There is no doubt that fusion power is a vital technology for the future and a possible long-term and very important aid in our efforts to combat global heating. Hosting the UK’s (and just possibly the world’s) first fusion power plant would potentially be enormously valuable to the economy of Rushcliffe.
 - e) There is a strong case to be made that existing and well-known renewable energy technologies such as wind, solar photovoltaic and hydro power generation are more practical and better-proven alternatives for the vast amount of investment which will be needed to bring fusion power to fruition. And they are available *now* rather than in (perhaps) 20 years time.
[Nuclear fusion is 'a question of when, not if' - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-50267017)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-50267017>
[UK fusion experiment used in hunt for clean energy - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54741375)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54741375>
['UK first' nuclear fusion plan for Nottinghamshire power station - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-56256144)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-56256144>
3. The newly-announced enquiry into the proposed coking-coal mine in West Cumbria sprang onto the agenda, following a surprise announcement the previous evening that there will be a Government Enquiry. The main points are summarised here: [Climate change: Six questions about the Cumbria coal controversy - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55766306)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55766306>

.....

The Definite Article

Chris Soar has been musing again – need I say more?

Good morning. First, let's be clear! This is definitely not a definitive article on the definite article- I am just trying to articulate some musings on the definite article and on the digraph th (or should I write it “th”?).

Let's start with the digraph (not diphthong, which I first typed!). Th (or “th”) can be pronounced two different ways – one by gently breathing, as in this, there, and than; or by more forcibly breathing as in thought, think, and thigh.

(That word always reminds me of a humorous (supposedly) sentence, I heard as a boy – “I'm not a very good danther” she lisped, heaving a thigh.)

I always thought that the former pronunciation sounded a bit like a v, and the second like an f, and that appears to be borne out by the vernacular as in “I ain't done nuffink wrong, Bruv!”, and as, of course, wiv Joe Brown & the Bruvvers.

Anyway, to get back to the musings – is there a word for the different sounds of the th?

Yes, there is – the v sound is a Voiced Dental Fricative, for Goodness Sake! – the other a Voiceless one. So now you know!

..... but to get back to the definite article, there are two ways of pronouncing that – either thuh, or thee.

What prompted me in these musings was that I watched a program with Ben Fogle when he pronounced the “the” as “thuh” in front of a word beginning with an a (albatross, I think it was) and it sounded strange.

Therefore I decided that “the” should be pronounced thee in front of a vowel.

Whether that is so or not, I am not sure.

In addition, of course, the pronunciation “thee” can be used for emphasis.

Allow me to sidetrack (I'm prone to this)....

In former years, firms of solicitors had to have the names of all the partners in the title of their firm – hence some rather long names.

There is the story about a firm called Smith, Smith, Smith, & Smith, of course.

In case you haven't heard it - one day a client decided to be funny and when the phone was answered, he asked the gentleman,

“May I speak to Mr Smith, please?” – to which the reply came “I'm sorry. Mr Smith passed away a few years ago”.

“Ok, then may I speak to Mr Smith?” – “Unfortunately no, he is presently on holiday..”

“Then what about Mr Smith?” – “Ah, he is with a client right now, and can't be disturbed”

“Mr Smith, then?” – “Speaking!”

Anyway, in the 80s, firms started trying to be trendy (though not as trendy as they are today!), and a friend of mine and his partners decided to rename their firm “Jones – the Solicitors” (it wasn’t Jones – it was another name).

However, another firm of Solicitors complained about the “The” on the basis that it implied that they were **the** ones to go to, and amounted to “advertising”, which was of course illegal for solicitors at that time.

The Law Society required that they change the name by removing the offending definite article, despite their argument that it was meant to distinguish them from Jones the Butchers, or Jones the Cobblers, for instance.

Now I’m not sure whether the “the” was “the”, or “The” in their title, but, when written, you don’t know whether the “the” was to be pronounced “thuh”, or “thee”, whether the “t” was a capital letter or not.

See what I mean – I hope so, ‘cos I don’t - I’m confusing myself!

Sadly then, there is no definitive conclusion in thuh article wot I am writing, but I thought I would just share these musings since we tend to go through life without noticing or considering them and, if it haven’t been for Ben Fogle with his ”thuh” in front of “albatross” (or whatever), I wouldn’t have thought about it either.

So that’s it! I did say at the beginning, that there would not be a definitive answer (though, with his penchant for doing more delving, don’t be surprised if John O comes up with some comment, or maybe even an answer (supposing there was/were a question, of course!).

All I can say at present is that the above is definitely an Article! I’m out of breath trying to articulate all the ‘thuhs’ and ‘thees’. But thanks Chris – we know that we shall always feel stimulated by your musings on whatever topic.

.....

Quiz Corner

Firstly, we have the answers to Mike Seymour's 'Nottingham Place Names' quiz.

Honey-maker's weight	Beeston
White Christmas Off the bone	Bingham
Cattle drink	Bullwell
Rabbit country	Bunny
Gone for a lady's name	Burton Joyce
A racing cycle	Carlton
Cold Deep Water	Chilwell
Burnt rise	Cinder Hill
First bed to final bed	Cotgrave
Army landing	Dunkirk
Sun rises in potteries	East Stoke
D H Lawrence country	Eastwood
Pop star John's first name	Elton
Batman and Robin's city	Gotham
Hello, boy colourful city grass	Hyson Green

.....

Then we have another quiz from Paul Childs on colour in film titles:

1. The colour -----
2. She wore a ----- ribbon
3. The ----- mile
4. The ----- Pimpernel
5. The -----shoes
6. The man in the ----- suit
7. A clockwork -----
8. ----- Finger
9. The ----- lagoon
10. Mrs -----
11. ----- Narcissus
12. The woman in -----

Extra bonus point for anyone who can remember a film star from each of the films.

.....

Creative Writing Group

This week's contribution from the Creative Writing Group is by Elsie Warby. It had to contain the following words: banana, potato, owl, penguin, light-bulb and cake, which it clearly does very naturally. Somewhat less naturally, perhaps, we can also do it pictorially so I thought we might help by providing appropriate illustrations.

A Shopping Trip

My sister Marion and I and our two children, my daughter Helen and her son Paul, aged 3 were planning a trip to town. They'd both had birthdays recently and we'd promised them that they could spend their birthday money. The two cousins enjoyed getting together and regularly got up to mischief, we certainly had to keep our eyes on them.

Our first stop was M&S where we wanted to buy some new pyjamas for them both but as soon as our backs were turned they ran off running in and out of the clothes rails. We both chased after them but just before we reached them they headed for the emergency door! The high pitched alarm set off by them falling into the door sent several members of staff running to see what had caused it. With many apologies we quickly left the store vowing never to go in there again with the children.

Our next visit was to Woolworths, to look at the toys to see if there was anything they would like to buy. Needless to say they couldn't decide what they wanted,

"Can I have this, can I have that?" they squealed excitedly about everything they touched.



Eventually Helen chose a toy owl, I wasn't surprised as she loved soft toys and had a bedroom full of them. However I was just relieved that she had stopped pestering for anything else. Paul meanwhile liked toys that moved and we found a wind up penguin which he loved. We queued up to pay, both children clutching their new toys and the money to pay for them in their sweaty hands.



"Thank goodness nothing went wrong in here" observed Marion after the purchase was completed. I was just about to agree when there was a loud noise, like an explosion. A fluorescent light bulb which had been propped against some shelves had fallen down and exploded. The noise was startling and set the children off crying. Once again we hurried out of the shop but this time to comfort them both.

By now we were all ready for a breather so we made our way to a coffee shop and found a table in the corner. So long as the children had something to eat and drink they sat relatively quietly. The waitress brought our coffee, soft drinks and cakes and we told her about our shopping trip so far. As Helen reached for a cake she knocked over her drink which spilled everywhere, soaking our cakes and us. The mess was cleared up and fresh drinks and cakes were produced. We were able to finish our repast in peace.



Our next foray was to the local market. Surely nothing else could go wrong today could it? We wandered round the fruit and vegetable stalls, I bought some potatoes,



Marion some bananas. Suddenly we noticed the children had disappeared! Horrified we shouted their names and spread out around the stalls looking for them. Could this day get any worse? Then we saw two little people on the next stall, they were hidden behind taller people. The children were engrossed watching the stallholder, an elderly woman sitting on a stool carefully peeling a carrot for each of them. What a relief!

Who could have anticipated so many things happening in one short shopping trip. We felt relieved to arrive home safely without further incidents. It took Marion and I several days to recover. As for the children. Their highlight of the day was setting off the alarm in M&S!

.....

Cartoon Corner

Once again, we can enjoy the wit of the Telegraph cartoonist.



.....

And once again, that's all for the moment – keep well and look out for our first annual edition next week.

John

