

# The Cultural Sisters

Annual Report from the strange year that was 2020

And we were 25 years old

# Words from the Co-Chairs and our trustees 2020

## Co-Chair's Report

Firstly, I thank all the organisations who have funded The Cultural Sisters whether through grants or working with us.

2020 was, as we all know, amongst the most difficult times for any organisation working face to face with people, writing in October 2021 things are only slowly improving, and could go back. We are living in a time which no-one could have envisaged and has probably changed the landscape for participatory arts for ever.

Throughout this Deborah has kept The Cultural Sisters going, we could have easily folded, so she deserves huge appreciation for her undaunted commitment; as has Jess Byron, who well deserves a special mention for the often unseen financial work she has undertaken in such trying circumstances; and many thanks to Sam Mace who took the reins during the winter months to enable Deborah to focus on the final months of her MA in Fine Art at Derby University.

For The Cultural Sisters to have reached twenty-five years of existence is also a major achievement. It is doubtful when they began, they would ever have thought it possible. The body of work during that time has been amazing and one of the most important artistic inputs into the North Staffordshire art community. The legacy they offer to both new and experienced artists is immeasurable. Thousands of people have gained invaluable arts experiences, improving lives.

Thank you to all who have participated, organised, shared during what has been a most difficult, and in the end, memorable year.

Tim Diggles, Co-Chair



# Our projects and people in 2020

We worked directly with about 70 people before lock down was announced and a further unknown number that accessed our online films via Cafag and Project eARTh in Buxton.

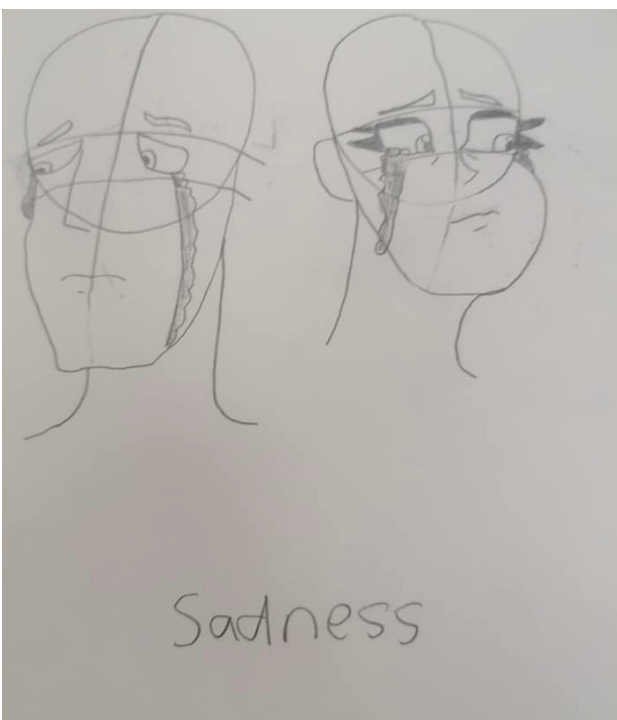
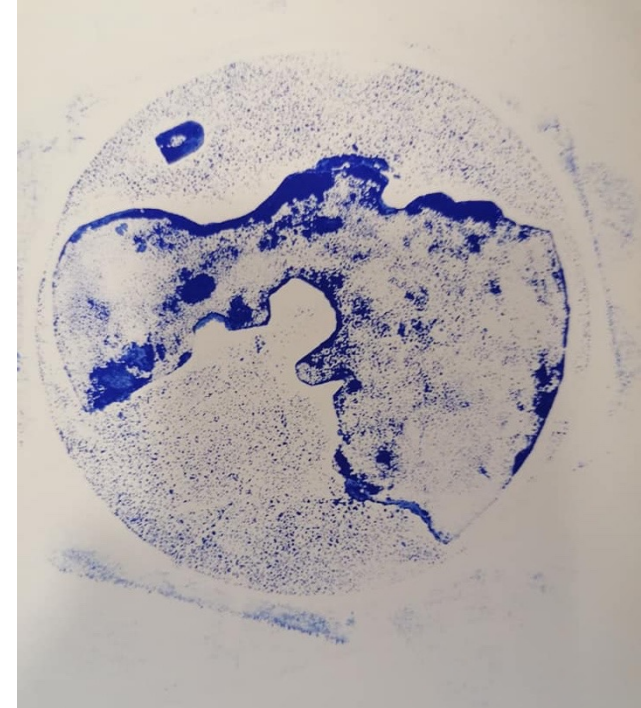
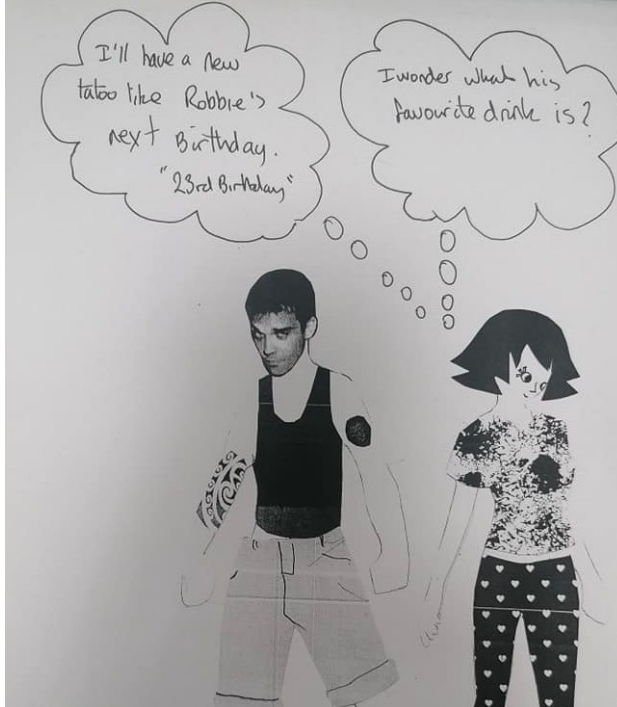
## Goodbye Creative Carers

Due to a change in commissioning, we finished working with the Telford and Staffordshire Creative Carers projects just as lockdown began.

We were able to bring together 10 members of two Telford Me Time groups in February and we were very happy that some of them continued to meet online to work with the fabulous Shropshire based visual artist Caris Jackson.







## Anime and Me

### exploring identity through animation

We were able to complete the fabulous Anime and Me project just before lockdown, using animation inspired techniques to develop confidence, recognise and celebrate skills and explore identity with students from Strathmore College.

Students were also able to think about gender identity and experiment with alternative identities.

Jess Byron produced a beautiful set of postcards of their work for the students to remind them and others of their skills and positive attributions.

Two Cultural Sisters artists, Deb and Jess, and animation artist Poppy Kent worked with 6 students, their therapist and support workers.





Strathmore College card images





## Fused Glass work to combat isolation and grow confidence

We begun two lovely new fused-glass projects with community members early in 2020;

One for CAFAG in Stoke on Trent tackling isolation and developing confidence whilst learning fused glass making skill; And another for High Peak Community Arts Project eARTh, with people with mental health and physical disabilities making fused glass clocks for Buxton based GP surgeries.

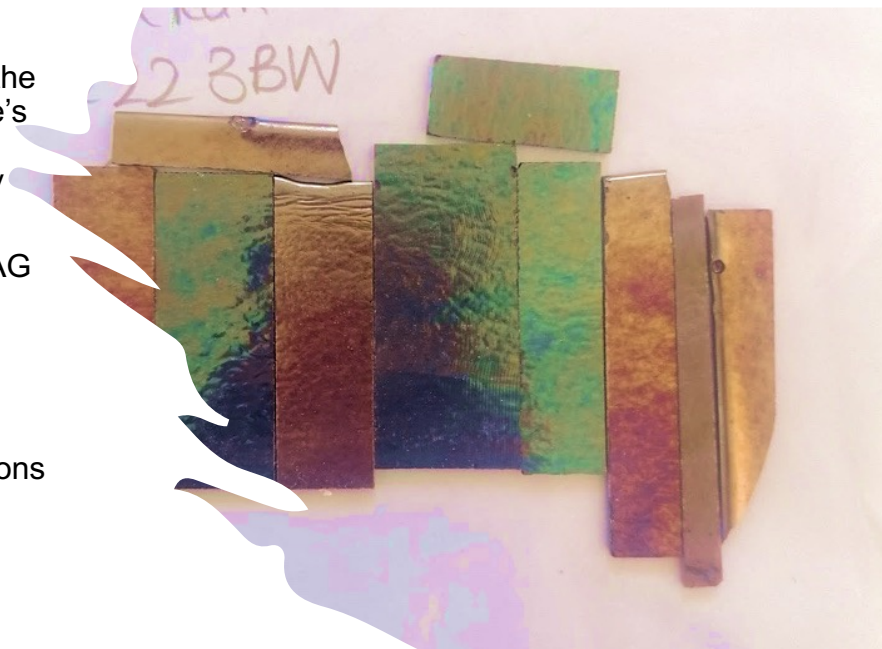
We worked face to face with a group of 7 people at CAFAG over 4 weeks and a group of 18 at Buxton.

Both projects were postponed part way through due to lockdown, but both organisations worked with us to develop alternative ways to engage with their communities. This was a fabulous task for us to get our creative heads round. We learnt about the pros and cons of writing clear, simple instructions and how much time this took in comparison to face to face working as well as how to edit films ensuring they met the needs of the community.

We learnt that data and digital exclusion were issues for a lot of the people we worked with, along with motivation and time as people's roles changed at home. We recognised the creative restrictions creating packs for people to work with at home and how to safely design, fill and deliver the packs.

You can see our instructional films on The Cultural Sisters, CAFAG and HighPeakComArts You Tube Channels

At the end of the year, we went back to work directly with people from High Peak Arts Project eARTh and developed a 5 ways to wellbeing bunting project that members could make during sessions or at home for those still shielding. This linked with a High Peak NHS led project to help support and connect people during yet another lockdown.





# Arts, Health and Participation in a time of a pandemic

It is no surprise that we worked a lot less directly with fabulous people in 2020 on a range of needs led, confidence building projects that support wellbeing.

But we did keep exploring and supporting new ways of helping people to engage with the arts and if possible, with us and with each other.

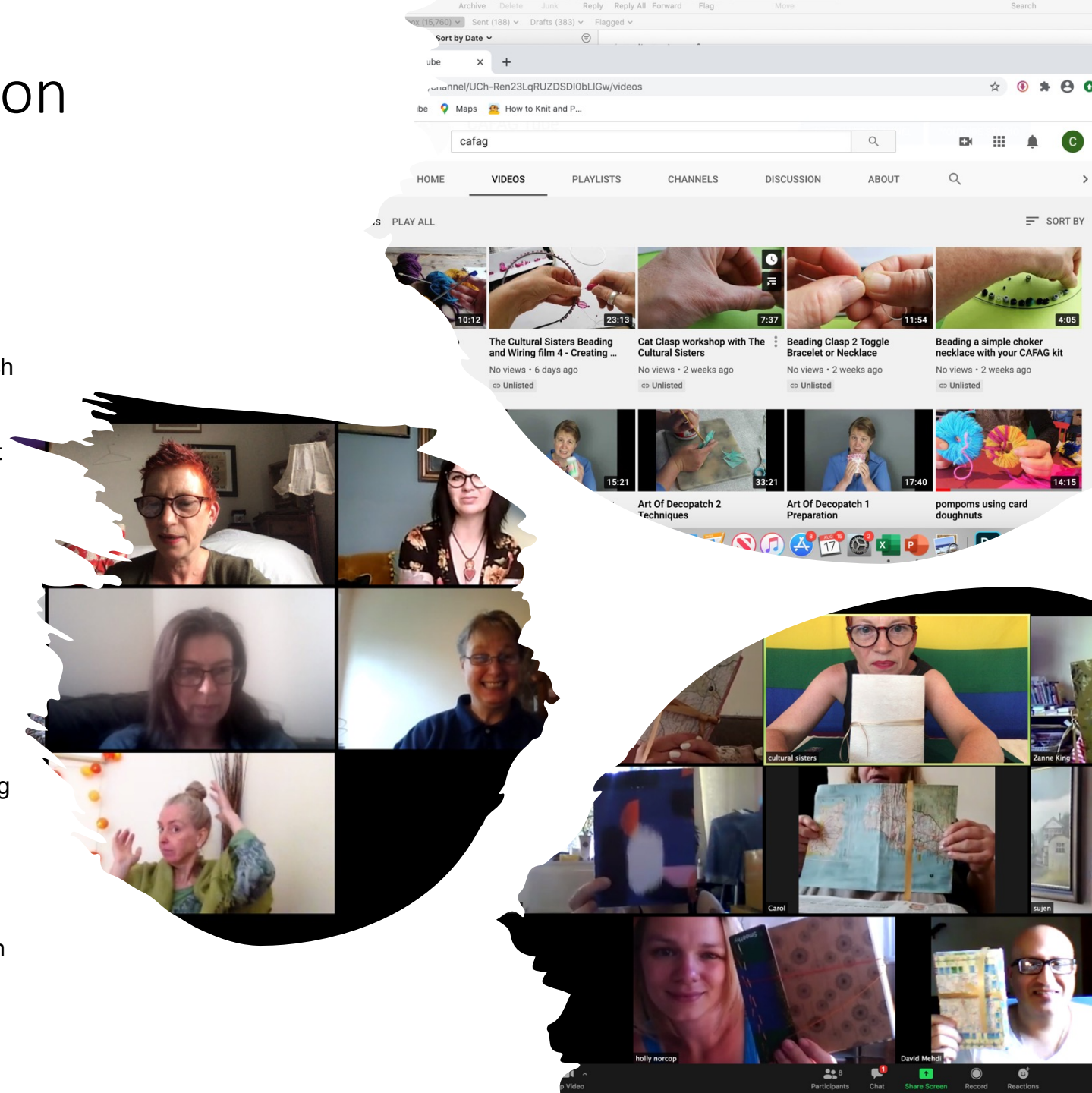
We received 2 small, but very important grants from Stoke on Trent City Council - £8k and The Arts Council England - £6k.

They not only helped pay for our running costs, which was a lovely relief for our mental health and helped assure us that we are an important service in the City, but very importantly we could pay our artists for all postponed and cancelled work.

We were able to bring our artists together, online, to share how we felt, how we were managing and explore what could help us move forward in this strange time.

We shared our knowledge to learn; filming and editing skills; making up packs for participatory creative activities at home; running workshops online and accessible film platforms.

We shared our concerns and supported each other. We were able to join online events and discussions for artists across the country and share our learning. We had time to reflect and work on our own creative practice and creative thinking.



# What have we learned from the work in 2020?

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The ability to work in a blended way – online and face to face.

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Forced me to think about how I work.

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Limited creativity/ choice of materials and methods for participants.

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Very challenging to stick rigidly to strict covid-safe approaches. Is it sustainable?

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The grants enabled us to hide away and avoid some of the challenges.

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When we were asked to do stuff e.g., sending packs out, we have risen to the challenges.

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Deb has encouraged us to have a can-do attitude and find a way.

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Really hard to make new contacts as we are restricted to small numbers and short sessions.

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However, feedback from participants is that it's more relaxed, not in crowds.

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More time to reflect. Focus on quality rather than quantity.

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Work with Strathmore really stretched our processes.

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Learned new skills e.g., photo editing, film editing.

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Time for my own research and expanding practice.

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Online courses which improved my life and practice. E.g., Trans allyship. Black History, Black Lives Matter & white supremacy.

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Keeping in touch with other artists.

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Learning Zoom and Teams.

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Perspective shifts.

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Tough working in one small office, no change of threshold/ space. Lack of stimulation.

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Internet at Art Stop very challenging.

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Q . How has your confidence level changed?

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A. Anxiety, but been ok once we've done it. Mainly COVID anxiety. Questioning myself having had an enforced break from it.



# Statement of Financial Activities 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Analysis</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
Invoices	£12,214	£11,310
Grants	£14,320	-
Other	£2	-
<b>Total</b>	<u>£26,537</u>	<u>£11,310</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Fees/Materials	£12,101	£11,693
Running Costs	£2,401	£3,794
Other	£321	£1,037
<b>Total</b>	<u>£14,832</u>	<u>£16,794</u>
<b>Income from:</b>		
Income	<u>£26,537</u>	<u>£11,310</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>		
Expenditure	<u>£14,832</u>	<u>£16,794</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<u>£11,705</u>	<u>(£5,483)</u>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<u>£291</u>	<u>£5,774</u>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<u><b>£11,996</b></u>	<u><b>£291</b></u>

Due to Covid 19 we were unable to use our office and workshop space for most of 2020 and our very generous landladies agreed to halt our subscription costs for 6 months. This has left us with additional funds to help us remain sustainable into 2021 and 2022 as we are unsure about the future of participatory arts. The grant from ACE and Stoke CC bought us zoom and enabled us to meet and support artists and we are researching what is it we should invest in to really support us to move forward in 2021/22.

Cafag paid us in full we owe them fused glass sessions in the future.

A full set of accounts can be viewed on application to The Cultural Sisters

# The Cultural Sisters 2020

## Address

The Cultural Sisters, Art Stop, 72 Hartshill Rd, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 7RB

**Phone:** 07979 238067    **E-mail:** [info@theculturalsisters.org.uk](mailto:info@theculturalsisters.org.uk)    [facebook.com/theculturalsisters](https://facebook.com/theculturalsisters)

twitter: [@culturalsisters](https://twitter.com/culturalsisters)    Insta: [@theculturalsisters](https://www.instagram.com/theculturalsisters)

**Charity Number:** 1159564

## Trustees

Tim Diggles Co-Chair; Carl Wilson Co-Chair; Kathy Lovatt, Mike Oliver, Penny Vincent

## The Cultural Sisters & Misters

Deborah Rogers

Fiona Waddle

Associate Artists:

Sandy Auden, Rachel Ballard, Jessica Byron, Samantha Jones, Poppy Kent, Anne Kinnaird, Sam Mace, Liza Rivia

## Accountants

Auditor - Lynne Ball

Bookkeeper - Kathy Lovatt

Bank: The Co-operative Bank





# CULTURAL SISTERS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2020

DATE	Bal c/f	Income	Expenditure
01.01.2020	291.06		
31.01.2020	800.69	1820.00	1310.37
28.02.2020	3444.39	3202.81	559.11
31.03.2020	2238.13	625.00	1831.26
30.04.2020	1710.95	1140.00	1667.18
31.05.2020	3387.41	2694.03	1017.57
30.06.2020	6533.98	5400.00	2253.43
31.07.2020	10114.70	5540.00	1959.28
30.08.2020	13330.17	3920.90	705.43
30.09.2020	12859.22	0.00	470.95
31.10.2020	13093.32	1645.00	1410.90
30.11.2020	12535.03	550.00	1108.29
31.12.2020	11996.15	0.00	538.88
		26537.74	14832.65

Bal c/f	291.06
Income	26537.74
Expenditure	-14832.65
<b>Bal 31.12.2020</b>	<b>11996.15</b>

Lynne Ball  
 11 Joanhurst Crescent  
 Stoke on Trent  
 Staffs  
 ST1 4LA

6<sup>th</sup> April 2022

## Independent Examiners Report of The Cultural Sisters ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

I report on the accounts of The Cultural Sisters for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commi

To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Conclusion

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention and the accounts presentec

L J Ball (Mrs)



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I are a true and accurate reflection of The Cultural Sisters for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> of December 20







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L J Ball (Mrs)