

Cotgrave & District



Quarterly Gazette

No 1

Spring 2016



Welcome to the first edition of the Quarterly Gazette of Cotgrave & District U3A. We will cover news from the Groups, forthcoming events and other interesting items happening in our U3A. If you want any items included in future issues please let the Editor know.

Last year Tony Bullin organise a Badger watch...it was a great night and we saw badgers and some Muntjac deer. Tony is planning to organise another visit this year so watch out for announcements.



This Gazette is produced by Cotgrave & District U3A; views expressed are not necessarily those of U3A, the Committee or of the Editor; any items for inclusion or comments please send them to the Editor at cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com

From the Chairman



It is now nearly two years since U3A decided to set up in Cotgrave. We have continuously bordered the 100 members we targeted at the start. I believe that it has been a valuable addition to the life of Cotgrave. It has certainly given retired members of the community a new focus

and direction. I fully believe that it has contributed to the development and life of our small town.

I would like to thank the Executive Committee elected by the members. They have been enthusiastic and committed and we could not have achieved so much without their unflagging work behind the scenes. And, of course, the strength of U3A is the membership itself and the self organised and run Groups. We have a great number of active Groups thanks to the hard work of the Group leaders. We are currently looking to increase our portfolio of Groups. Again, come and see for yourself the wide range of interests that are covered.

There have been so many highlights it would be unfair to single them out. I do remember our participation in the Cotgrave Summer Fair, the Xmas celebrations in the Guide Hall, the Quiz Nights, the Wine Tastings, the Bridge Club (now over 20 regular members) and the General Meetings. We have a members meeting every month in the Miners Welfare Hall. We have had so many excellent speakers and informative meetings, far too many to mention . . . these have provided the cement for our U3A.

So, looking forward to our third year we are confident we can grow and have a influence on the rich tapestry of our town life.

As I walk around Cotgrave I see so many people I have met who I would not have known a few years ago.

Michael O'Connor, Chairman Cotgrave and District U3A

Group news

Luncheon Club

We have enjoyed meals in a variety of places. The November gathering was at the Country Cottage Hotel in Ruddington, a stylish place with a good two-course deal at lunchtime. Smoked salmon salad and chicken liver parfait were two of the starters, with popular mains boeuf bourguignon and herb-crusted pollock. We do not seem to have any vegetarians among us, but they are always catered for.



Our Christmas meal was at the Neville Arms in Kinoulton, where we had the Snug all to ourselves; daube of beef and sticky toffee pudding were the most popular choices.



January saw twenty-five of us take advantage of two main courses for £10 at our much-loved local Nottinghamshire Golf Club.

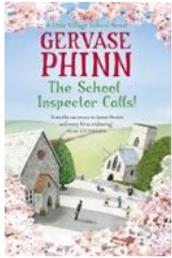
In February we found ourselves in the Plough in Hickling, a canal side public house serving a good selection of food and drink together with a nice atmosphere.

Any articles for the Summer 2016 Gazette should be sent to the Editor by June 1st.

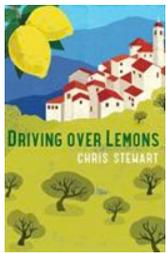
Group News

Book Club

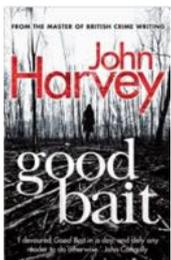
Over the last 3 months the Book Club members have "visited" the variety of teachers and infants in their experiences in the school environment, some good and some odd as told by the author who is a school inspector in the Yorkshire Dales.



Author Gervase Phinn.



From there we travelled by literary word to hotter climes in the Andalusia mountains, a funny, insightful book that charmed us from the first sun-lit page to the last, proving when life gets tough, it can also become good!!
Author Chris Stewart.



The current novel is a crime fiction written by a local Nottingham man, John Harvey. The story is set in London and Cornwall and will be discussed at the monthly meeting 21st. March at 2.15p.m. There will also be a presentation on banned books and a book list for the proposed books for 2016.

Bridge Club

The Bridge Club continues to go from strength to strength, with regular attendance of upwards of 15 to sometimes over 20.



We enjoy a social game of bridge in The Manvers on

a Monday morning. "I never thought I would be regularly queuing outside a pub at 10 o'clock on a Monday morning!"

Some members play again on a Tuesday evening and, to try and improve their knowledge, also attend classes at Nottingham Bridge Club.

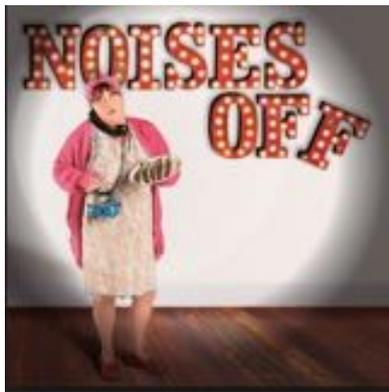


Group News

Theatre Group



The Theatre Group had its first meeting at the Lace Market Theatre, Nottingham, where we enjoyed *The Pitmen Painters* by Lee Hall.



We have now made a booking of 20 tickets for *Noises Off* at Nottingham Playhouse on Thursday April 21st at 7.45 pm. "As a touring troupe desperately try to hold their shambolic production of 'Nothing On' together and with under 24 hours to go until curtain-up, it's downhill all the way through their dress rehearsal as backstage antics, forgotten lines, backstage romances, hilarious malfunctions and a tin of sardines threaten to result in a disastrous first performance." It sounds like an uproarious evening's entertainment, so, First Come, First Served! All money must be paid by the monthly meeting on March 8th at the latest - but don't wait till then to secure your place - when they're gone, they're gone. A theatre programme will be planned for the summer . . . nothing definite yet, but several members have expressed a desire to go to the Stamford Shakespeare Festival at Toilethorpe Hall, so it looks as if we may be branching out. We look forward to seeing this Group grow.

Film Club



The Film Club has been running since late 2014 and was originally called Silver Screen. The original concept was to operate the Club similar to a book club, where a film was to be selected and, once viewed, the group would meet to discuss and share their views. After a number of discussions and with a variety of likes, dislikes and opinions, it was decided that the Club would run in line with the 'Silver Screen' presentations shown at the Broadway Cinema, Broad Street, Nottingham, where Group members would have their own choice of film. These presentations are shown every Thursday with films shown twice, once at 10.30am and again at 1.30pm. The entrance fee is £4.80 and includes coffee/tea and biscuits. 95% of the films are shown within 7 days of their nationwide release. During late 2014 and early 2015 films shown included 'The Theory of Everything', 'The Imitation Game', 'Mr Turner', 'Jersey Boys' and 'Paddington', all nominated for a BAFTA or OSCAR award in 2015. Recent

showings have included 'Brooklyn', 'The Danish Girl', 'Bridge of Spies', 'Lady in a Van', 'Carol' and 'Room', all nominated for 2016 awards.

Members of the Group also have the option to attend the Long Clawson Film Night which takes place on the second Monday of each month at Long Clawson Village Hall with an entrance charge of £4.00. Films are normally 3 to 6 months of age but are shown within a few days of the film being released on DVD.

Recent presentations have included 'The Second Exotic Marigold Hotel', 'Love and Mercy', 'Still Alice', 'The Hundred Foot Journey' and 'Women in Gold'. An average of 12 U3A member attends the evening with some members offering transport.

Each month all Film Club members receive an e-mail listing the Silver Screen presentations and Long Clawson presentation showing start times, running times and a brief description of the film's theme.



Group News

Singing for Pleasure

“Singing for Fun” now called “Singing for Pleasure” has been in existence for 16 months. We have a core membership of 15 including 3 men, so if any man who has been considering whether to join us, you would not be on your own. All new members are made to feel very welcome. Our weekly meetings are held in our Group Leader’s home and have a very informal and convivial atmosphere which would still prevail when we acquired new members and had to find a larger venue for our practices.

We now have a repertoire of nearly 100 songs, all suggested by members and ranging from “Itzy Bitzy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini” and “The Hippopotamus Song” to “How Great Thou Are” and the round “Oh How Lovely is the Evening”. We recently became proud owners of a small keyboard, kindly funded by the Cotgrave U3A Committee but currently sing “a cappella”, sometimes in parts or rounds or with harmonies and sometimes accompanied (with some confusion) by an assortment of bells, drums, whistles and various other home-made instruments. Three of our songs are sung in foreign languages.

Since forming in 2014, the Group has performed at 2 U3A Christmas parties and has been invited to perform again at Christmas 2016. We have sung at the Cotgrave Memory Café and are returning there in April. We have also entertained the people who live at Spring Meadow, the retirement complex in Cotgrave and are going to the Service Tree in Tollerton in September. One evening in December we took a break from our usual activities and spent a night at the Nottingham Concert Hall with an evening with Gareth Malone.



Group News

Walking Group

Walking trips in December and January are a bit up and down. There's Christmas, which means participants are trying to fit the walk in with lots of other things and there's January ... chilly and sometimes muddy and uninviting. Nevertheless the stalwart Cotgrave U3A Walking Group took three walks in those months in their stride!

In December we had two walks, one the usual Friday and another on a Wednesday, which were both "there and back" i.e. linear and back by the same route. One was short, from Hickling canal basin to Kinoulton and back. We had a winter warmer in the Plough Inn in Hickling. Most kept to coffee as it was still morning when we got there. The other December walk started on Flawford Lane (which is sometimes used as the short cut to Ruddington) and progressed through lovely Bradmore to Bunny and back! Our starting point on Flawford Lane was once the site of a village but all that's left today are some very sketchy remains of the village church.

In January we travelled further, to Barrow upon Soar in Leicestershire for a "figure of 8" walk. It was a bit muddy along the canal or river towpath that day but the weather was bright and cheerful. We made it across rather moist fields to Loughborough, arriving there close to the Great Central Railway station before returning by the fast route along the River Soar. On that occasion



we were accompanied by the paparazzi and some of the photographs they took are shown. Walks in February included a brisk riverside amble from Gunthorpe in the direction of but nowhere near Lincolnshire and an exploration of Attenborough nature reserve.

Art Group



Our Art Group continues to enjoy our Thursday mornings at the Cotgrave Miners Welfare. We meet in the conservatory every week at 10am to 12 noon.

Everyone brings their own materials and spends the two hours doing their own art. Some watercolours, sketching, pastels or acrylics... whatever we feel like doing. We have a break for coffee/tea and charge £1 as the Welfare provide this. There is also a charge for heating in the colder months of 60p per person.

We welcome new members and look forward to seeing anyone who fancies a morning relaxing and doing a bit of art. Colouring in is also a popular pastime and has proved to be very therapeutic, so come along for a pleasant couple of hours.



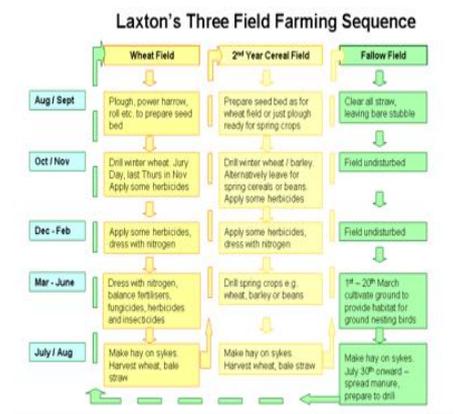
Group News

Local history Group

The Local History Group continues to thrive with a regular turn out of about 10 members and a good number of occasionals! Our vision from the start has been to gather and sort out all the available documentation and reminiscences of Cotgrave and provide an accessible store for future generations. We would like to thank the generous donation we received from the council to this end. We have purchased a number of resource materials and the Group has members who are researching aspects of Cotgrave life. We usually meet in The Manvers pub once a month but recently have met in the local library in order to make use of their resources.

With the return of Spring we are discussing the value of trips around the locality. We have successfully visited the Laxton Three Field System to assess the impact of agricultural change on Cotgrave. We now look further afield toward the Newark Air Museum, Cresswell Crags and the National Holocaust Museum. A more adventurous trip will be to the Bletchley Park Decoding Centre in Milton Keynes. This continues to be a thriving and ambitious group.

I would like to thank all members for their commitment and enthusiasm this year. We hope that the future children of Cotgrave will have a valuable bank of materials to draw on and see the Local History Group as a valuable local asset. Come and join us!!!



Group News

Yoga Group



Our excellent Yoga teacher Jane always makes classes enjoyable... with her changing lesson plans you are forever learning new postures and techniques. With relaxing music the classes leave you feeling completely energised but with a great sense of calmness and well being.

Creative Writing

The Writing group has had two sessions; our method is to stimulate the creative juices by suggesting (only a suggestion, not compulsory) a topic to write on for the next session. This has produced some interesting work with everyone bringing a different response, and also provoked some interesting discussion. As a new Group we are currently intending to meet monthly: the second Thursday, 7 pm at the facilitator's home. This enables our active members to be involved with all the other activities our U3A provides. The next meeting's topic is based on the old family game of Consequences . . . this has apparently been a challenge. So with that experience behind us, it seems unlikely that we would attempt that topic again! We may not be a university but we are still learning.

Real Ale Group

We met in the Royal Children, off Maid Marion Way, although we had a quick look in the Salutation, next door, first.

Both pubs have a long history and have quirky little rooms.

Unfortunately, they are both dumps, which is a great shame!

This is no doubt because of their location, between Spaniel Row & St Nicholas Street and Maid Marion Way. Despite the charming names the two short roads are hideous, a legacy of 60s vandalism!

Therefore, after half a pint, we moved on to The Trip to Jerusalem where we sampled another couple of beers and had lunch. The Trip is a great little pub, equally quirky but pleasantly located under the castle rock (the building, not the brewery). This time our usual numbers were boosted by 25%, the Stalwart Four being joined by Barry

We're not a big group, so attendance by anyone interested is always very welcome.

Comedy Corner

*Never trust an Atom,
they make up everything.*

Group News

Wine Appreciation

“Have fun wising up on wine!”

Know your Sauvignon Blanc from your Chenin Blanc, your Cabernet Sauvignon from your Pinot Noir? . . . fear not, our Wine Appreciation Club is gradually revealing all! We meet every other month in the Garden Bar of The Manvers to taste 5 different wines, rate them on a series of five different agreed criteria and then have a best guess at country of origin and grape variety.

We divide our members into groups of four or five and try to ensure that those with a little more knowledge and experience are split evenly across the groups. Simultaneously we run a simple wine knowledge quiz between each of the five wine tastings and at the end of the evening the group with the highest score is awarded a bottle of wine of their choice from those tasted during the evening. There’s no question of “wine upmanship” . . . it’s just great fun! Each evening has a theme, dictated by the wines tasted . . . for example “Wines off the beaten track” or “Chilean nights” (wines from Chile).



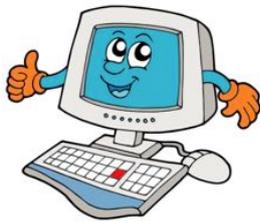
January’s session was entitled “An easy evening. Five quality wines, easy on the palate, easy on the wallet” All the selected wines had been tasted by our Club Group Leader (for this session he tasted 13 different wines and selected 5 for the “blind tasting “. . . tough job, but someone has to do it!). All the wines were exceptionally well received and one of our members declared that the New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc was the best wine he had tasted since the Club’s inception earlier in the year (and promptly put his money where his palate dictated and bought two bottles!).

All wines must be affordable should members wish subsequently to purchase (usually this means between £6 and £8 discounted price per bottle).

Cheese and biscuits are served after the first tasting and entry price is just £12 per person for an evening of enjoyable fun enhancing your knowledge and overall enjoyment of wine.



Computer Club



“We can help you conquer your computer issues”

Nobody in our U3A is a computer “geek” (as far as we know!) but we can all improve our computing skills to make life easier and our communication with the internet an altogether more pleasant experience rather than a trial of our patience.

We are all in dread fear of viruses, “malware” and whatever the evil side of the IT industry tries to throw at us.

We all need help.

And that’s where our Computer Club comes in.

Every month we call upon 90 minutes’ time of our Cotgrave IT expert Michael Bridges of Embrace IT to explain to us the mysterious workings of the IT world.

Michael explores with us the workings of tablets, laptops and PCs, responding to our questions and probing, seeking always to enlighten us with his expert knowledge without baffling us with computer “geek speak”.

Every month a small U3A Computer Club sub- committee meets a week beforehand to plan the contents of the forthcoming meeting, always bearing in mind what Club members will be interested in.

Recently in our January session we looked at the threats of the latest viruses and what can be done to protect against them.

We also explored “The Dark Side of the Web (scary!).

In February we looked at Google docs (how does it stack up against Microsoft Office?) and Google Chrome (“is it really a safer bet?”).

We invited Computer Club members to bring along any of “Santa’s toys” which have baffled and bewildered for Michael to sort out.



More importantly given the time of year we looked at what

“Spring cleaning” might best be applied to our computing devices i.e. what Tidying and Housekeeping we should be undertaking.

Logically, then, a discussion as to which Back-up procedures we undertake (if any!) and how regularly we check them out.

Group News

Travel Club

The Travel Group met in November, had a rest in December, and the January meeting was postponed until 12 February. The next meeting will be 1st April 2016 when the topic will be “English Towns to visit”.

November 2015: Topic: Iceland.

A reluctant, non Group member, Sue Tattam, carelessly let slip that she had recently visited Iceland with her sister and was immediately press ganged into leading a discussion at our meeting!

Her presentation revealed an interesting and surprising history, topography and interesting features of a charming little country, well worth a visit. Travel from Manchester; no jet lag (on GMT); quite expensive (about £1000 for 4 days (inc flights & hotel) with extra trips available; good food (not all fish!) and pleasant, friendly people.



February 2016: Topic: Rail Holidays.

There wasn't a deal of experience apart from Tony & Barbara's trip to



the Italian Lakes but the general discussion brought up many points of interest, mainly that you don't sleep on the train on such a trip (you would have to on the Trans Siberian one!); it is sensible to pay (approx £50 each) for your luggage to be sent ahead

... almost certainly there will be the LOL syndrome (Little Old Ladies) with far too much luggage having to be helped by the guide and fellow passengers as there are several walks between stations and to hotels; and that Rail Discoveries seem to be the leaders in the field – read the brochures and options carefully!

Don't think I'll go to Argentina on holiday again. It was a lot colder than I thought. In fact it was bordering on Chile

Group News

Bird Watching Group

The Group did not meet in January due to the weather being so bad on our scheduled day and reserve day.

Our scheduled February meeting was postponed again due to bad weather but eventually we met on our reserve day of the 24th and spent an enjoyable morning at Langford Lowfield Reserve off the Newark to Gainsborough road.

Five members of the Group attended and we were rewarded with excellent views of waterfowl including Goldeneye as well as the usual more



Goldeneye

common species. There were a large number of finches on site mainly chaffinch and goldfinch but one siskin was seen. We were treated to a skylark singing as it soared into the clear blue sky and then dropping down to settle on

a nearby fence post giving close views to all. Reed Bunting and Long Tailed Tit were also abundant and well viewed. The highlight, although a brief one, was sighting a Bittern in flight over the reed beds. An enjoyable outing in the sunshine topped out with a visit to the teashop at the nearby garden centre for coffee and cake (and a delicious bacon sandwich for the writer).



Skylark



Bittern

Our outing in March was provisionally to Skylarks Reserve, but it is currently very muddy and will probably hold no birds that were not seen at Langford. I will therefore see if anything different shows up locally before confirming our outing scheduled for 16th, but it will be fairly local.



Reed Bunting, male

There appears to be some appetite for a session on the identification of birds from their song. I have a number of CDs so will try to organise this within March.

Speakers Corner

History of Tea

The January meeting of our U3A was treated to a mouth-watering account of the history of tea by Linda Davey. Linda had experienced tea drinking in many parts of the world, including Japan, where the tea ceremony forms an essential component of Japanese culture, and was thus able to provide us with chapter and verse on the various subtleties involved. We learned (at least many of us learned!) just how wide is the range of tea types and how various are the techniques used in brewing it. I, for one, was under the impression that tea should always be made with freshly boiled water in order to extract the maximum flavour but, apparently, this is a gross over-simplification. Green tea, in particular, demands water at a temperature of ninety degrees Celsius, one hundred degrees resulting in an over-emphasis of the bitterness which is an inevitable component of any brew. Balance is all important, it seems, not only when learning to ride a bicycle! Linda then took us through the history of tea in an academically precise study, emphasising the importance of the ancient Silk Road connecting China to the Mediterranean and, in particular, to India. She explained the process of planting, growing, picking and blending tea, an account which left us all feeling an enhanced degree of awe at its complexity . . . indeed, for many of us, the afternoon 'cuppa' will never be quite the same again.



St Anne's Allotments

At our February meeting we heard a fascinating talk by Mo Cooper concerning the history of St Anne's Allotments, an area of 75 acres, situated about a mile north of Nottingham City centre at Hungerhill. Gardens began to blossom there in the mid-nineteenth century when the better-off citizens of Nottingham felt the need to escape the ever-increasing pressure on the City's space. Doubtless they owned splendid city houses but the influx of workers due to the expanding lace industry left very little room for gardens, a problem solved by the acquisition of land outside the City centre. Small houses were built to provide facilities for entertainment, large glasshouses were established and the resulting blooms led to an annual rose festival held in the unlikely month of March. It still exists. At the end of the century, when Nottingham itself was able to expand, the 'bosses' left the gardens to their workers, who took the opportunity to grow both flowers and vegetables and, in some cases, even to live there, a somewhat primitive existence devoid of gas, electricity or mains water! More recently, the 'allotments' have been turned into a community exercise, offering opportunities for deprived children to experience the delights of the countryside, whilst providing valuable supplies of vegetables to local people who till the land still available. There is currently a waiting list. The area is listed by English Heritage with a grade 2*. Open days are held regularly and there is plenty of opportunity for the public to visit. Sounds like a wonderful chance for the U3A Local History Group to arrange a day out.



Cotgrave & District U3A's literary lights are shining!

Paul Childs has an article published in the recent edition of Cotgrave Connections which updates everyone on the Local History activities and in which he asks for any literary memorabilia which could be added to our growing archive.

But 5 stars go to Brian Franks who is featured in the recent edition of Third Age Matters, the national magazine of U3A.



Dayglobooks.co.uk has published Brian's book 'Breakfast Time with the Pencil Case People' with illustrations by N.J. Duckmanton.

This book forms a series of children's books written to help those children with dyslexia and forms part of the Dyslexia Friendly Project.

The text is presented on slightly shaded paper and the print is adapted to help dyslexic young people to read with ease

Well done Brian!.

Now, to end with a date for your diary . . . it's a little way ahead but it's important! . . .

It's our AGM on Tuesday 10 May when you have the chance to hold your Committee Members and Executive Officers to account, let them know what you think of their efforts over the past 12 months and decide whether or not to re-elect them.

Don't worry about being subjected to a series of long drawn out presentations . . . it's a short, sharp meeting which is effectively an extension of our normal monthly General Open Meeting with a guest speaker, as usual.

Well, that's it for now . . . hope you've liked our new production and will help us improve for the next edition in summer 2016

Don't forget, articles for inclusion in the next issue of the Gazette should be sent to the Editor by 1st June 2016