

# Cotgrave & District



## Quarterly Gazette

No 7

Autumn 2017



Welcome to the latest edition of the Quarterly Gazette of Cotgrave & District U3A. We 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.



### **Cotgrave U3A Christmas party**

Will be held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December in the Scout Hall  
Tickets just £5, available on a first come first served basis only  
from June Odell  
available from the November General Open meeting.



Any items for inclusion or comments please send them to  
The Editor at [cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com)

*This Gazette is produced by Cotgrave & District U3A.  
Views expressed are not necessarily those of the U3A , the Committee or of the Editor*

## Thoughts from the Nottingham Link Coordinator



Four years ago we started to organise the Cotgrave and district U3A. We had support from the Regional Committee and, as we know, we have developed into a friendly and successful society with many functioning Groups. Much of our success has been due to the hard work of our Group leaders and Executive Committee. As Chairman for this time I have been proud to represent our area whenever and wherever it has been necessary.

We have a constitution which we think is democratic and the Committee hope that we are not a clique but do encourage members to contribute. When it came time for me to stand down as Chairman I had to think about where I wanted to continue to contribute to our development. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chairman but freed from the shackles what could I do? There is a structure for the U3A both locally, regionally and nationally. Although I feel that we have a happy and functioning association we can still learn from others. We have around 120 members. Some groups have 1500! Obviously, that gives them some advantages in finances, number of Groups offered etc., but there are disadvantages to being so big. In national terms our monthly meeting is envied. We can assemble all our members in one location, which some cannot, we have nearly 50% attendance which cannot be matched and the friendliness cannot be bettered.

I have attended regional and national meetings over the years and find that we can teach others some things. So, I asked to be the regional and national representative on our Committee and the Committee was prepared to support me. Recently, David Drakes and I attended a big meeting in Kirkby in Ashfield to share thoughts and ideas about how we managed growth in the U3A. We had a very pleasant day in a good venue with good food and plenty of Group work. Although we felt that much of the work covered was in line with what we do, it is always good to meet and share ideas with others. I will continue to do this. Myself, our new Chair and others will attend the national Annual General Meeting which will be held in Nottingham University late August. We should learn something from that, we hope!

One thing of interest is the amount of resource material available locally and nationally for use by our Groups. We may not have used much of this, but it is available. Also, common support working with other local U3As will be beneficial. We have, for instance, helped with advice and support for Chilwell Real Ale Group and we hope to participate in joint Spanish language Groups and outside visits.

The question we ask ourselves is: do we want to grow larger? It may be that we are at an optimum level in our area. However, it has always been an ambition of mine to get more members from the mining community and I will continue to look carefully at this. Also, we can look at an idea nationally for a U3A plus, meaning we will support and care for our older members where needed. If you ever want to talk to me about these matters then get in touch. I want to represent your views on a regional and national level.

So, I have laid down the burden of the Chair to a more than capable person in Barbara, but you have not seen or heard the last of me (some may say shame!) I would like you all to think of these things:

Should we expand or stay as we are? Should we join with other local Groups? Should we try to develop more academic courses? Should we participate regionally and nationally?

Other groups may well be set up near us and I hope to have some input into their formation and organisation. I wish that we had had that kind of advice and support in the beginning. You are all very well served by your Committee. We have our disagreements but we all bounce back. All I can say is give me your views so that I can feed them back to the national Group. Good old Cotgrave and District!!!!!!

Michael O'Connor

## Group News

### Singing for Pleasure

Singing is well known for giving a number of health benefits - not only physical but also emotional.

Singing releases stored muscle tension and decreases the levels of a stress hormone called cortisol in the blood stream. It improves mental alertness as blood circulation and an oxygenated blood stream allow more oxygen to reach the brain. Making music in any form is relaxing (perhaps some of our Group might occasionally disagree with this when learning the difficult harmonies of a new song!) and the social side of our Wednesday evening singing sessions can't be ignored.



What do we do in our Group apart from sing? Well, we learn - good for the brain. We laugh - good for the spirit. We talk - good for social

interaction. And, last but not least, we support each other and appreciate the contribution that each and every one of us makes to the Group as a whole.

When our three gentlemen members boom out in their deep tones, when our high sopranos contribute harmonic descants, when the middle voices stoically keep a melody going while all around them might be chaos - well, it's a sheer joy! I particularly like the warm summer evenings when I open my windows and I think how people walking past will be enjoying the lovely singing coming from my house.

We have already started to prepare and practice some Christmas songs and hope to be able yet again to lead the singing at the U3A Christmas party which is planned for early December. This will be the fourth year of our Group singing at this event. We try to bring something just a little different each time and we all sincerely hope that our contribution to this year's party will be greatly enjoyed by all who attend.

### Creative Writing

Our Writing group....Creative Writing only because all writing is creative .... has now been going since Oct. 2015 . We now have six regular members; like all our Groups, not everyone is always available but we are lucky in that we can see their efforts without their presence!

We only have two rules; A/ any comments MUST be constructive, & B/ the topics suggested are only that -- a suggestion. You can write anything you like; and A/ will be applied to that piece.

As previously mentioned, we are inviting the general membership to submit a Limerick to me, Brian Franks, by the end of September; the intention being of displaying them, unnamed, at our Christmas do...with a (small) prize for the one our Group thinks is the best. The following is strictly NOT a Limerick, but a verse which I hope gees you up to submit YOUR effort/s.

### Cotgrave U3A

### Limerick

### Competition

**Coming to me from you  
so far, I've only had two.**

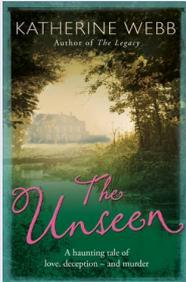
**So to win a prize**

**would be a surprise --**

**come on, it's for you to do.**

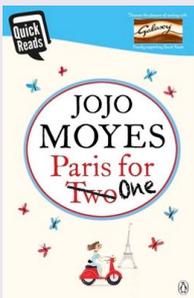
### Book Club

Over the last three months the Book Club has "visited" parts of the U.K and had a quiet trip to Paris!!



The first book was "Unseen" by Katherine Webb.

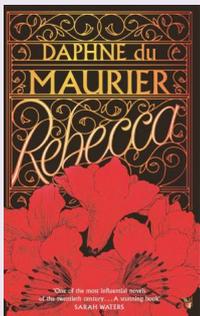
Set in a rural Berkshire village and the happy, tranquil existence of a newly married vicar and wife, enter 2 new arrivals, who change all of this, Cat a new maid with lots of baggage, and Robin Durrant a so called expert on the Occult with an interest in fairies. The rectory becomes charged with ambition, love and jealousy leading to murder. As the book is filled with various social conditions, such as homosexuality this proved to be a lively talking topic with many points of view.



The second book was "Paris for One" by JoJo Moyes, an author we have read before.

This is a short story about a 26 year old lady, not at all adventurous or experienced in travel who is let down by her boyfriend resulting in a slow weekend in Paris. Through meeting a young Frenchman and his friends her horizons are opened and changes her approach to life in many ways for the better.

This stimulated a discussion regarding life experiences and adventures of members of the Book Group and was enjoyed by all.



The last book was "Rebecca" by Daphne Du Maurier.

This is a classic written in 1938, set in Cornwall and a suspense thriller. This is a story of love, hate and haunting memories with the presence of a domineering housekeeper against a new and timid bride who finally becomes a leader.

This book generated lots of feedback and discussion related to its time of writing, style and content and was enjoyed by all.

The above books show the wide variety of literature explored by the Group and enabled many opinions to be aired.

We meet at Cotgrave library on the 3rd Monday of each month.

For details. [judith\\_mudie@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:judith_mudie@hotmail.co.uk)

### Tony's Royalty Quiz Autumn 2017

1. Which King of England was crowned on Christmas Day?
2. Which King of England and Scotland was born in 1566?
3. How many children did Queen Victoria have?
4. Who was the Prime minister at the time of the present Queen's Silver Jubilee?
5. Of which Country was King Zog the ruler?
6. Which British Royal Dynasty began in 1714?
7. What nationality was French Queen Marie Antoinette?
8. Who was known as 'Farmer George'?
9. Whose dog killed one of the Queen's corgis in 2003?
10. Which was Princess Margaret's favourite holiday destination?

*Answers on page 13*

## Film Club

The Silver Screen presentations have shown 14 films during the last 3 months with a varied and interesting content.



The Other Side Of Hope

There has been three foreign language films, all with English sub-titles, over the period, 'The Other Side Of Hope' a Finnish film telling the story of a Syrian asylum seeker and his friendship with a Finnish salesman, 'A Man Called Ove' a Swedish film about a 59 year old nearing retirement and his friendship with his Iranian immigrant neighbours and 'The Midwife', a French film, showing the difficulties a sensitive, gifted midwife encountered in the world of the modern efficiency-driven hospitals.



The Midwife

Three films were based on novels, 'The Hippopotamus' a film where a theatre-critic and poet was asked to investigate the so-called healings of a care unit, based on a Stephen Fry novel, a new version of 'My Cousin Rachel' based on the book by Daphne du Maurier, and the re-launched versions of E.M Forester's 'Howard's End'.

A number of presentations were based on real life characters, 'The Odyssey', the story of deep sea explorer Jacques Cousteau, 'Final Portrait' where celebrated artist Giacometti met an old American friend and persuaded him to sit for a portrait, and 'Maudie' a film based in 1930 in Nova Scotia where a talented painter, Maud Lewis, overcame crippling arthritis to become a famous Canadian artist.

Two further films shown were 'Hampstead', the story of Donald Horner who had lived for 17 years on Hampstead Heath and an American widow who befriended him when developers wanted to build luxury apartments on the land, and 'The Beguiled' the tale of a wounded soldier who found shelter in a girl's boarding school during the Civil War in America and the resulting consequences.

World War II was the background for 3 films, 'Churchill' covering the 48 hours preceding D Day and the clashes and tensions Churchill had with his generals and the Americans, 'Alone In Berlin' where Anna and Otto Quangel, heart broken by the death of their son on the front, dropped handwritten postcards all over Berlin denouncing Hitler and encouraging people to stand against his regime, and 'Dunkirk' the story of the evacuation as seen through the eyes of a tommy on the beaches, a spitfire pilot flying over the beaches and the master and owner of one of the many small boats that crossed the channel to reach the trapped soldiers.



"SUSPENSEFUL AND RIVETING"  
★★★★

"NAIL BITING" "A TRIUMPH"  
★★★★ ★★★★★

There were only two films at The Long Clawson Film Night due to holidays. 'Sully' told the tale of the 'Miracle on the Hudson' when on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 Captain 'Sully' Sullenberger glided his disabled plane onto the waters of the Hudson River saving the lives of all 155 aboard and 'Lion' the true story of a lost Indian boy who, 25 years after his adoption by an Australian family, uses Google Earth to trace his original home and family.

## Comedy Corner

Did you hear about the Hyena who drank a pint of gravy?  
He ended up a laughing stock.

### History Group

The Group met on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July with a trip to the Newark Civil War Museum which was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all.



The displays showed all of the local battles and skirmishes with particular reference to the part played by both Nottingham (a parliamentary stronghold) and Newark (which remained Royalist throughout the conflict) and the feuding between village families. The interactive displays allow visitors to 'feel a real sense' of the intensity of battles and the subsequent slaughter taking place during 1642-1645.

On the first floor there were numerous medical implements and some crude knives and hacksaws used on wounded soldiers during the war.

The Museum was also hosting an exhibition of Lawrence of Arabia's strenuous efforts to galvanise the feuding Arab tribes into working together to rise up against the Ottoman Empire.

The success in driving the Turkish army back was not formally recognised by the British government until many years later).

The Museum also hosts a number of ancient artefacts found around Newark including the golden Torc found near to Newark Castle.



On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August the Group were treated to a walk around part of Cotgrave organised by Malcolm Baxter and Paul Childs who pointed out various landmarks and areas of interest from previous centuries.



It started at the Manvers public house noting a number of name changes it had before moving to Pepper St (now Church Lane) and its association with the plague and mass burials. Moving along Main Street the group stopped by the Rose & Crown public house (noting its several name changes) and the former location of the village Blacksmith, Wheelwright and Saddler workshops as well as Rose Cottages adjacent to the pub.

Further along the road the site of the original School House cum Library and Institute building was highlighted before moving into Mill lane where the site of the Anglo-Saxon burial ground is located; the site of the Gozen Windmill and the famous Cotgrave 'Marl' used on many notable cricket squares.

The group moved on to the field where the village cricket team played and where 'dummy airfield tents' were erected during the German bombing raids, designed to cause distraction and confusion.

The walk finished back on Bingham road and the site of the 'Pinfold', the Methodist church and the original Baptist church on Chapel lane (now the Scout and Guide Hall).

A second walk around the centre of Cotgrave is planned for the spring of 2018 as part of the 2018 calendar of events for the History Group.

## Luncheon Group

We had three very different dining experiences over the last 3 months, The Ferry at Wilford, The Willow Tree and Nottinghamshire Golf Club

### The Ferry at Wilford



We don't want to put you off eating at The Ferry. It has always been a good place for a meal. However, it was not equipped to handle a group of our size.

The first thing that happened was that we were informed that the new potatoes had not arrived, and were given an alternative choice. Most of us chose chips. Then the starters, for those who had ordered them, came out 20 minutes late. The staff did not use the latest version of our

spreadsheet, though it had been emailed to them, so not enough starters were produced. Then the mains came out two at a time, painfully slowly. By two o'clock some people had had nothing to eat at all. Tempers were starting to rise. It turned out that the pub only has one fish fryer and one chip fryer, so could not work any faster.

The climax came when the manageress, clearly mortified at their inefficiency, offered to knock £100 off the bill. As we all pay separately, this amounted to £4 each, as there were 25 of us (though some had actually left by the time the offer was made). The £4 could not be processed through the till, so some people gave money to Anna directly, and others paid as normal, then went to Anna to be given £4 back. Queues at both places, and general chaos. At three o'clock, once everyone else had left, the manageress and Anna agreed that the Ferry would not be taking any more group bookings, unless it was for a sandwich buffet. We shall not be going there again.

### The Willow Tree



After the problems at the Ferry the visit to the Willow Tree was a revelation. From the start the service was very good. The pub has been refurbished following change of ownership and the surroundings were pleasant. The food was good and reasonably priced and for the more senior of us they offer a discount, which they applied to the bill without being asked. A very hospitable establishment and well worth a return.

### Nottinghamshire Golf Club.

In August we returned once again to the Golf Club, the surroundings are really nice and airy, plenty of room, nice crisp white tablecloths and good quality food. With two mains for £12 it is a very popular venue and even if our numbers were much less we would have to book to guarantee getting a table.

They do ask us to pre-order due to our numbers and this certainly helped with the service, if only the guests could remember what they ordered. The Roast of the Day was very popular, closely followed by the Stroganoff and the steak pie, some people even found room for a pudding – the Rhubarb and Apple crumble looked particularly inviting.



### **Wine Appreciation**

**“Summer’s arrived. . . bring out the Barbie . . .**

**but do you have the wines to complement the food?”**

Wine Appreciation has now settled into its quarterly slot on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month in the Garden Bar of The Manvers.

The latest slot took place on 27 July at 7.30 with the format as before: 5 “blind” tastings plus a selection of delicious cheeses and biscuits . . . all accompanied by our team-based Wine Quiz hosted as Quizmaster for the evening by our entertaining and energetic former U3A Chairman, Michael O’Connor.

A fun evening was guaranteed for all with some wine surprises to sample . . . for example, two delicious barbecue aperitif style wines from unexpected places. . . a wonderfully refreshing Gruner Veltliner best found and known in Austria, but in this instance from South Africa and an equally delicious Riesling not from Germany but in this instance from, of all places, New Zealand!

The treats of the evening were, however, reserved for the “wines selected to complement the sizzling barbecue food . . . a bumper Gran Reserva Chardonnay from one of our favourite Chilean shippers, Luis Felipe Edwards, followed by a Tempranillo (i.e. Rioja style) blend from Spain and, the surprise treat of the evening, a charming Italian DOC blend Bardolino from the Veneto region in Italy.

All the wines tasted were under our target price of £10 a bottle, meaning that if a particular wine took your fancy, you could dash out and purchase it the following day without breaking the bank!

For just £12 a head for U3A members (£15 for guests who are very welcome) it makes for a memorable and fun evening . . . just the right way to sample and learn about one of nature’s great gifts to us all!

### **Comedy Corner**

What do you call fake spaghetti ?

An impasta

### Card and Board Games

Despite having a great evening each time we meet, there is little to report from the Card and Board Games Group other than that the members continue to enjoy each other's company in light-hearted competition.

The September event will be held at the home of Peter and Christine Shreyhane but will then return to White Furrows as usual.

As there is little news, I thought I would, instead, give you all a simple pencil and paper game to play. It's just a bit of fun but should stimulate the neural pathways for a while at least.

The challenge is to make as many **6 and 7 letter words** as you can from a little phrase within a set amount of time - I used a timer so that I could measure myself accurately. I worked on 6 letter words first and got **20 words in 5 minutes**. I then did the 7 letter words and got **21 in 10 minutes**.

After the time had run out I found lots and lots more words so why not make yourself a cup of tea and take a few minutes to see if you can beat me? My first attempt words are listed on **Page 12**. Oh, and don't forget the usual rule of using a letter from the phrase only once in any particular word, no proper nouns, no plurals or verbs ending with 's' etc!

And the phrase to use? It's '**COTGRAVE AND DISTRICT**'. Let me know how you get on!  
By Sue Tatum.

### Computer Club

#### "Fighting your way out of the techno jungle"

Let's face it, most of us have spent many a frustrating day or so trying to understand the weird and wonderful ways of our laptop/tablet/smartphone.

Well, the Computer Club comes together once a month to try to help out, as best it can, by sharing experiences in a workshop environment.

Some of our members are more computer literate than others . . . it doesn't matter . . . we're all there to help, to chuck in our two penneth.

So, for those of you feeling trapped in the techno jungle then just come along and share your problems/issues with others who may well have encountered similar issues themselves and maybe found a resolution.

Jargon is the protective veil of the technocrat so we're doing our humble bit to draw back its supposed mystique...one of our members has drawn up a list of phrases which are either self-explanatory or clothed in secrecy depending on your techno knowledge...we discuss among other things the meaning of Hyper Text Transfer Protocol and the function and merits of The Cloud

So do come along...take the mystique out of computing ...it's an invaluable tool for productivity once you've fought your way out of the techno jungle!

## Theatre Group

The Group goes from strength to strength with a great variety of venues and genre.



### The Play That Goes Wrong

"This set is a bloody deathtrap," complains the stage manager at one point, and before the evening is out, it's hardly a spoiler to say that it will have collapsed almost entirely. It starts falling apart before the play even begins, so it's not much of a surprise." These comments are taken from an online review, and capture the play perfectly. It starts with a murder, but the actor playing the corpse sits up at inopportune moments. Doors stick. A lift catches fire. And that's only the beginning. Everything that can go wrong in the theatre, does, but the actors and the management of the disasters were excellent. People have said that it was the funniest thing they had ever seen. When my daughter saw it, she complained that people were laughing so much that she never found out who the criminal was.



### Guys and Dolls.

A near-professional performance of this classic musical, in the intimate venue The Lace Market Theatre. Need we say more? A great afternoon out.



### West Side Story

performed by Carlton Operatic Society at Nottingham Theatre.

In his 1950s book, "The Joy of Music", Leonard Bernstein explained how he wanted to write great American opera to appeal to a wide audience but with the quality of say Puccini's verismo operas like La Boheme or Madam Butterfly. Bernstein scored a major hit with his West Side Story, which sits alongside his own symphonies and his legacy as a conductor of Mahler, Brahms and much more. Seeing Carlton Operatic Society's production of West Side Story we were treated to a full bodied theatrical experience - a lively, youthful cast, great costumes, full use of the space on stage, decent American accents, and most importantly really excellent singing. This was a joyful couple of hours, as we were swept along by the cracking pace of the performance. Based on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, but set in a tough part of New York, you had to remember that the plot of West Side Story is finally very sad - so there were tears at the end. That didn't spoil the pleasure of this theatre trip. I hope we will be able to go and see Carlton OS's next production in 2018: Top Hat!

## Group News

### Theatre Group – continued



#### *Hobson's Choice* at Tolethorpe Hall

It is always a joy going to Tolethorpe. One can arrive from 5.30 and enjoy a picnic in the grounds - people bring tables, chairs, and champagne if they want to. Then a bell rings and the audience moves into the large marquee, where they sit, while the stage is in the open air.

The *Hobson's Choice* set was imaginative. Set on a revolve, it showed three interiors in turn: Hobson's shop, the cellar where Maggie and Willie set up home, and Hobson's parlour behind the shop. A street and view of the pub completed the set. There were clever props too - I now understand about moving house with a handcart. The play is about the owner of a Salford shoe shop. Henry Hobson is the elderly father of three daughters whom he attempts to cure of 'uppish-ness.'

He tries to maintain a firm hand, but the women, particularly Maggie, the eldest and cleverest, know more than he does. Maggie marries the cobbler Willie Mossop, who appears to be beneath her, but she realises his potential. In the end, Maggie and Willie are the winners.

It's a funny play, and the director and cast made the most of the humour. Especially amusing, and touching, was the scene where Willie screws up his courage to go to bed with Maggie on their wedding night. He slowly undresses, and we see that his shirt is only a front, with no sleeves, but cuffs around his wrists, and his socks have holes. Poor, and lacking in confidence, he later becomes a successful business man, with his wife's help.

There will be three more plays at Tolethorpe Hall next summer. If members have never been, I would strongly encourage them to try it out once, and see if, like those of us who went to *Hobson's Choice*, they become hooked.

### Real Ale Group

The R.A.G. continues to be faithfully attended by its members, now numbering nine.

There are very few apologies, and they're only for holidays or other serious events. The meetings are very relaxed, genial, and filled with gentle banter - very few serious topics (e.g. politics) are discussed.

Our August meeting was a home event, meeting at John Orton's home, with a barbecue and wander round his lovely garden. Fortunately, the weather was kind and eight of us were able to attend.

The real ale was, obviously, from bottles, since John has declined to set up a micro brewery in his garden!

The next visits are on the bus route, either in West Bridgford, or town, though November's meeting is planned to be at The Rose & Crown in Cotgrave.

### Croquet Group

This year we have been fortunate, with only one meeting rained off.

We now have a very good turnout - over a dozen players on most days.

Everyone manages to fit in at least 2 rounds, in groups of 4 players.

Because we play a much simplified game (the proper one takes over 3 hours), a round only takes 20 minutes or so.

Though members improve in their game, the improvement is not such that they cannot be beaten by a new player - it's a very leveling system!

We always have room, and a welcome, for anyone who'd like to have a go, or just to come, drink coffee (or tea!) and laugh at the mistakes of the players - all in good humour - so why not try it?

## Group News

### Bird watching

The Group has not been active over July and August due to the Group leader suffering from ankle/walking problems and the Group members having child minding duties plus holiday commitments. However it is worth reporting a first in Nottinghamshire for a species.



Beautiful Bee Eaters

In June a small group of seven 'Bee Eaters' was seen at the Gravel workings near East Leake. This bird is rarely seen in the UK, and then usually singly or in pairs and in the southern counties. Its breeding range typically comprises Spain and Southern France with small numbers elsewhere in Eastern Europe. It is a beautiful bird and for these reasons created quite a stir in Bird Watching circles. It seems that the group at East Leake comprised three pairs and a single male and in July three nest burrows were observed in the

sand quarry walls. It was established that two of the nests contained young and it was hoped that a first breeding in Notts would be recorded but sadly the nests failed and the seven adults departed the site in early August to return to their winter habitat in Southern Spain or North Africa.

I heard it said "why the excitement over this species when our Bee population is struggling" but the birds diet is mainly other flying insect although they do take some Bees.

Despite my mobility difficulties I did make the effort to visit the site and was lucky enough to see two birds that I thought I would never see in Nottinghamshire. What lies in store next year?

Hopefully further outings of our Birding Group will take place from September.

### The Science Group

Our U3A Group Scientific  
Considers things rather specific.

From Newtonian Laws  
We move, without pause,  
To Einsteinian Relativistic.

We've looked into the theory of light:  
Could be particles, waves, or it might  
Be a mixture of each,  
As the Quantum laws teach.  
On the way, we acquired much insight.

But our studies are practical, too.  
MRI we have given its due.  
We learned, with surprise,  
That this great enterprise  
Was developed at Nottingham U.

### Card and Board games Pt. 2

Sue's word game suggestions

6 LETTER WORDS:      7 LETTER WORDS:

CARROT	CATTIER
CARTED	COASTED
CARVED	DENTIST
COATED	DICTATE
COTTER	DISTAIN
CRAVED	DOTTIER
DARTED	GIRATED
DIRECT	GRAINED
GIRATE	GRANDER
RATTER	GRANTED
ROTTER	RATTIER
SACRED	ROASTED
SCARED	ROTATED
SCORED	STAINED
SITTER	STARRED
STARED	STARTED
STRAIT	STARTER
STRAND	STORAGE
STRICT	TRACTOR
TRADER	TRAINER
	TRAITOR

## Group News

### Walking Group

The 'short walk' Group have been able to undertake 3 walks during the latest quarter with the group repeating two walks at the request of some members.



Stepping across Highfields boating lake

The first walk was a visit to Highfields and the University of Nottingham grounds. The walk enabled us to view the gardens and the numerous rhododendron bushes stretching along University Boulevard. The walk continued by the side of the boating lake before discovering the buildings and grounds of the University

Our second walk was a requested walk bought about by the Trent Barton decision to discontinue the V2 Villager bus service. Just as the group had used the service to travel to Cropwell Bishop on its introduction so we travelled again to Cropwell where we joined the Grantham Canal towpath and walked back to Cotgrave

The last walk during this period was again a request to visit Rushcliffe Country Park where we walked the outer footpaths around the park.

**Longer walks** in the past three months included a walk from Rushcliffe Halt taking in good views over the south of Notts, as well as an ancient barrow monument with tenuous links to Batman; a wander around Farnsfield where we branched off to look at the Halifax bomber memorial; and a easy ramble around lakes and rivers of the Leicestershire countryside near Cossington.

### Tony's Royalty Quiz - Answers

1. William the Conqueror (1066).
2. James I of England. James VI (Scotland).
3. Nine.
4. James Callaghan.
5. Albania.
6. House of Hanover.
7. Austrian.
8. George III.
9. Princess Anne's.
10. Mustique

## Speakers Corner (1) - Images of Japan

'Images of Japan' was the title of the interesting talk given by Patsy Raynor at the June 2017 General Meeting.

Patsy has a son who has been resident in Japan for some sixteen years where he teaches English to students in Yokohama and her account is based on her experiences over regular visits to see him, the grandchildren and his Japanese wife together with personal research.

In a brief overview, Patsy described the Japanese archipelago as consisting of four main islands with Hokkaido in the north, Honshu (the 'mainland' containing Tokyo and Kyoto), Shikoku and Kyushu in the south. The climate ranges from tropical in the south, to cool temperate in the north, but suffers extremes of temperature and humidity and can have very heavy snowfall and typhoons. The spine of the archipelago is mountainous and contains 40 active volcanoes. Earthquakes are quite common though the 2011 earthquake and subsequent tsunami is thankfully a rare and extreme event.



Up until the 12<sup>th</sup> century Japan was ruled by the Emperor. Power then was taken by the regional military clans and their samurai warriors until in 1603, the Tokugawa 'Shogunate' was established by the Emperor and a strict class system was imposed with no contact with the outside world. This seclusion was to last until 1868 when the Emperor opened up the country to 'Westeners' with the aim of developing the country from a rural economy to an industrial power. *What Patsy did not tell us was that the military still effectively held power as can be seen from the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century up until the end of WW2 when a democracy was established with the Emperor having similar status and power to our monarchy.*



Patsy described Japan today as a Country of contrasts with a very modern Urban Society typified by Tokyo contrasting with a very traditional Rural Society strong in tradition. Due to the relatively small area of agricultural land between the mountain slopes to the sea, farming is very intensive with many steeply terraced fields. The rich seas surrounding Japan ensure that seafood provides a major part of the Japanese diet. The Japanese are seen as very disciplined and hard working, generally respectful of authority and the elderly and with a strong sense of community and tradition. It is only recently that the culture of loyalty to the company and jobs for life has seen some erosion due to the slowing of the economy.

The talk was both informative and interesting and presented in an amusing and witty format enjoyed by the Members. Patsy also brought along a selection of Japanese items and artefacts to supplement her presentation which provided additional interest.

## Speakers Corner (2) - Last Post at Newton

Our speaker at the July meeting was Tim O'Brien, a keen local historian with a special interest in the RAF stations which proliferated in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire during the last Great War. He also paints and draws and writes books about aircraft of the period, so we felt sure of an interesting presentation, a presumption well borne out by experience. RAF Newton (just up the road, next to East Bridgford) came into service in 1940 as an early bomber base but subsequently took turns at functioning in any number of alternative capacities. I suspect that few members of our audience had so much as an inkling of what went on there, or even that it still functioned as an RAF station until 2001. Nor were we aware that its original buildings were designed by no less an architect than Sir Edwin Lutyens, designer, amid much else, of India's New Delhi and (in this country) of Castle Drogo, in Devon.



Early in the War, the RAF followed a policy of dispersing its activities between various modest-sized airfields and Newton served initially as a bomber station, supporting squadrons of Fairey Battles, and, later, Wellingtons. 1941 saw an upgrade to much larger, four-engined Lancasters and Halifaxes which could only operate successfully from concrete runways so Newton changed its affiliation to that of a training base for the Polish Air Force (probably accounting for the significantly large Polish community which still survives in Nottingham). It was at this time, too, that the University of Nottingham Air Squadron chose Newton as its headquarters but the Polish connection dominated to the extent that, by the end of the War, Newton's emblem contained the Polish White Eagle. From 1947 to 1950 the University Air Squadron was back but Newton's principal function was one of post-war bomb and wreckage disposal, then, from 1959 to 1973 it became a School of Technical Training. Interestingly, this attracted a wide range of nationalities – the British Government might sell arms to this country or that, then personnel from these various nations would require training in their use. Newton could



provide the expertise no matter what or wherefrom. One particular area of skill concerned the use of missiles, when air force strategy saw the likelihood of such weapons completely replacing the use of manned flying machines. Ironically, it was during this period that Newton saw the one and only occasion when the Vulcan bomber was landed on its relatively small and primitive runway. That must have been quite a sight!

From 1975 onwards, Government cost-cutting policies led to the site being used for an extended range of activities, including The RAF School of Education, the RAF Police Headquarters and the Air Cadet Headquarters. Gradually, it became mothballed and sold off in packets to local housing development but it was at this time that Newton achieved its highest accolades from the civil dignitaries with whom it had inevitably been collaborating over its many years of life. It was awarded both the freedom of Nottingham and that of Rushcliffe. Thus, Tim took his audience on something of a roller-coaster journey which covered a period of 61 years and involved the use of 61 slides. It was all very clearly spelled out and kept us fascinated to the end. Thank you once again, June, for arranging it.

## Speakers Corner (3) - GM Plants

Our August lecture was presented, appropriately, by an august lecturer in the form of Mike Davey, ex of Swansea, Leicester and Nottingham Universities, who had spent a lifetime in academic research into plant genetics and their artificial modification. Here was an account of a well-known controversial subject by an unbiased expert who demonstrated both a love of nature in its purest form (he is an organic gardener) and of an enthusiastic professional seeker into its inner secrets. His talk was well illustrated and well presented with never a hint of any written notes. One could only envy his many students who must have benefitted from the kind of clear exposition in which we were fortunate enough to share.

Like so many subjects which appear to be excitingly modern, that of genetic modification began well over a century ago. In 1902 an Austrian Professor, by name Gottlieb Haberlandt published his theory of the 'totipotency of plant cells' which postulated that one could take any selection of cells from a specific plant and reproduce the plant therefrom. In modern terminology, we should say that each cell contained the appropriate plant DNA and that it is this DNA which characterises the plant as a whole. Mike illustrated the idea with details of a technique widely used in his laboratory which involved the formation of a 'culture medium' of cells from an asparagus plant. Optical microscopy revealed that such a culture contained so-called 'naked cells' – cells which have cast off their skin (as it were) and form almost perfect spheres. The importance of such cells is that similar cells from different plants can be combined to create hybrid cells and that such hybrid cells can then be grown into new plants with new characteristics, taking features from each parent. In other words, we have genetically modified plants – 'GM' for short. As Mike pointed out, such hybridisations can also happen accidentally and plant breeders have been making use of this to enhance the commercial attractiveness of their annual catalogues for many years. What modern scientific techniques offer is a much better controlled and reproducible process with more specific target aims, such as that of herbicidal or fungicidal resistance which allow the use of appropriate weed/fungus killers to be used to protect food crops. On the other hand, we were also treated to some beautiful photographs of GM-modified dahlia flowers which showed remarkable variation in both colour and petal structure. Obviously GM is not all a matter of Third World crop dynamics and controversial commercial exploitation of poor farmers. Then again, and what, I would guess, most of us were totally unaware of is the fact that certain bacteria and fungi have been quietly working away at genetic engineering for centuries. This was a lecture replete with surprises and all the more fascinating for being so.

The lecture ended with a number of examples of GM which well-illustrated its capabilities over a range of topics. Did you realise, for example, that close to 100% of the insulin used to treat diabetic sufferers is made by GM techniques? (How many sufferers, I wonder, would refuse treatment on account of such unnatural modification of Mother Nature?) Then we learned the fact that the shelf-life of the common-or-garden lettuce has been shown to increase by several days when suitably genetically modified, while chicory can be made to carry a valuable proportion of long-chain fat molecules (such as are contained in oily fish), chicory having been chosen because it can be eaten raw. Finally, GM methods have been applied to the development of pineapple plants without the sharp spines which lacerated the legs of those unfortunate enough to earn a living by picking the fruit. Surely no-one could take exception to that! All fascinating stuff and professionally presented – thanks again to June for arranging it.

## Stop Press

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Thanks goes to David Drakes who has stepped into the Secretary's position following the unfortunate resignation of Peter Binder who has carried out this onerous task since the inception of the Cotgrave U3A.

## And Finally

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Welcome to the new members who have joined since the  
Summer issue of the Gazette  
Andrew Duckering, Brenda Ainsley and Ron Cleghorn

*Articles for inclusion in the next edition of the Gazette should be sent to  
the Editor by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017*