



Cotgrave & District



Quarterly Gazette

No18

Winter 2021



Welcome to the latest, and the first since lockdown, edition of the Cotgrave & District U3A Gazette, covering news from the groups and other interesting items relevant to our U3A

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year
to you all

If you have any items for inclusion or comments please send them to
The Editor at Cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com

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

A Message from Peter Shreyhane – The Chairman

Perhaps to start, little about myself.

I was born just after D Day in Tunstall, the northern most of the six towns that constitute the City of Stoke-on-Trent.

When I was 10, my family moved a few miles out of the city to the small town of Biddulph on the Staffordshire Cheshire border.

There is a tenuous connection with Nottingham – the River Trent rises on nearby Biddulph Moor. If I may give a plug for my old home, Biddulph Grange National Trust Gardens and the nearby folly of Mow Cop, with its magnificent views over the Cheshire Plain, are well worth a visit.

Biddulph is very much like Cotgrave. There is an old part, with buildings dating back to the Middle Ages and a “new” estate built in the 1950s.

This was built for miners, who moved mainly from the north-east, to work in the local pits, Chatterley Whitfield and Victoria. The houses are of identical design to those built for miners in Cotgrave.

Perhaps the similarity is one reason why I feel so “at home” here.

My life-long interest in cricket began when, at 13, I played my first game for the local club. I carried on playing until 2016. By then, not for nothing was my team known as the Geriatric Fusiliers !

I now umpire, which is a way of giving something back to the game that has given me many hours of enjoyment and friendship.

It was while training to be a teacher that I met Christine on a blind date. Christine, although born in Scotland, lived in the North East. After we were married we lived in Sunderland until we moved to Cotgrave in 2016. When we first arrived, apart from our children and their families we knew no-one.

So we decided to join our U3A. What a good decision that was !

Through the U3A we’ve made good friends and isn’t it good, when you wander around the village to be able to chat to people you know.

Our U3A is quite small by comparison to many. However, I believe our smaller size is a plus that enables more social contact between members.

What are the duties of the Chair/Chairperson/Chairman ?

A list of roles I read recently suggests “Providing Leadership” and “ Ensuring the Committee Functions Properly” .

These sound rather “grand” but in truth the day to day organisation and running of meetings and groups is brought about by the hard work and dedication of Committee Members and Group Leaders.

Recently, I have been trying to visit all our group meetings. Without exception, the enjoyment, talent, learning and sheer fun I’ve seen are clear evidence of what our U3A is about.

It has been a tough year, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

However, Covid is still all around us. So, as the police sergeant in Hill Street Blues used to tell his officers before sending them out on duty

“Let’s be careful out there !”

Your 2021 - 2022 Committee



Maureen Johnston
Newsletter Editor



Michael O'Connor
Link Coordinator



Peter Shreyhane
Chairman



Sue Hillyard
Minutes Secretary



Stuart Ellis
Secretary



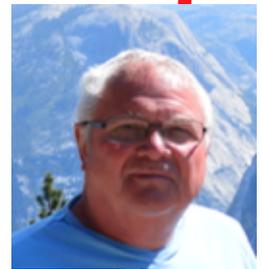
Heather Whatnall
Treasurer



Elsie Warby
Speaker Finder



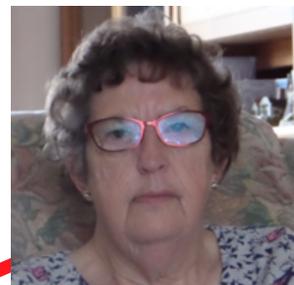
Paul Childs
Vice Chairman



John Haskell
Web Master



Liz Manning
Membership Secretary



Pat Baxter
Groups Co-ordinator



Barbara Bullin, Honorary President

Luncheon Group

August 2021

Whoopee!!! We have escaped the clutches of 'Covid' and had our first Luncheon Club meeting at The Nottingham Knight. Twenty of us met (should have been 22 but two got lost), seated in a nice private area. It was so nice to meet up again and to enjoy nice food at reasonable prices with very attentive and friendly staff and prompt service. The food received good reviews similar to our previous visits.



September 21

Twenty-one of us met up at The Salutation at Keyworth. It was a nice sunny day and this and the company was the highlight of the day. Unfortunately things have not really improved at The Salutation, the service although very chirpy was very slow and some of the main courses were finished before others had started. Because of the large numbers the kitchen could not cope with getting the food all out together, this caused some foods to be over cooked. Although the rump steak was excellent. On a positive note the Main courses were all half price in September.

October 21



Our October luncheon was at a new venue for us with recommendations from our daughter held at The Dorset in Compton Acres West Bridgford. Thirty attended, the dining room sat tables of 4 or 6 with place names so no scrabbling around for places to sit and on the reverse side was what that person had ordered so no confusion as to what each person had ordered making less for John to sort out.

The food was very good, a few had starters a fish pate proved popular, as did mushrooms. The mains varied from blade of beef, steak pie, etc along with a vegetarian choice. We didn't have a

sweet but judging from the empty plates they were well received.

Overall the service was very good each table being served individually, food was excellent and so was the company of course, needless to say we will be returning sometime in 2022

November 21

Once again the group was well attended with 30 of us going to The Goose at Gamston. The food was typical pub food, the portions were generous, nicely presented and the service efficient. The curries and mini mixed grills were popular along with the fish & chips, with the generous portions some diners needed 'doggie bags' but some still found room for puddings and coffee. At the end I think we all went home well sated..



Art Group

The Art Group had an art lesson from local artist Lynne Whitfield where we were shown how to draw glass.

The 2 hours flew past and here are our paintings. A very enjoyable taste of normality!!



Ukulele Group

At the time that I am writing this, the Ukulele Group and the Singers are about half way through our preparations for the upcoming Christmas Evening Social.

We have been joining forces to prepare our repertoire and we hope that everyone will enjoy, and join in with, our performance.

With regard to the Ukulele Group, things have changed since we came out of lockdown. Our lovely founder, Ken Hemsell, passed away earlier this year and I was determined to keep our little band (get the pun?) together so that all his hard work would not be lost. Then, during the summer, I was told that two new members had joined our u3a and, hurrah!, they were experienced ukulele players. As quick as a flash, I invited them round for a coffee (I had a dastardly plan) and we discussed our little group of enthusiastic strummers. The upshot was that we agreed that I would organise and host the sessions and that Anthony and Lyn Taylor would take over the teaching and the repertoire. It's been a huge success and we all love getting together to practice. Thank you and well done to everyone, especially Anthony and Lyn, brand new residents of Cotgrave and in at the deep end! Super!

We meet at my house but we would love it if our group could expand. If we could grow by 4 or 5 members we could easily find suitable larger premises to hire. Do think about having a go - I have a spare 'on loan' ukulele which you could use to give it a try. What have you got to lose?

CARD AND BOARD GAMES

Since re-starting our evening Card and Board games in August 2021, we have had to change the way things are run. No longer do we all meet once a month at my house. Instead, we meet twice a month - half of us for the first session and half for the second. I do try to make sure that we rotate though so that we all meet up with each other over the weeks.

The format hasn't changed - we play a variety of games on two tables and then, for the last game of the evening, we all gather round the dining table and play as two teams.

The u3a is about learning.....over the last couple of sessions we have played a game called Balderdash where we have to make up a meaning for an obscure word and the opponents have to work out the correct definition. Here are a few examples for you to have a go at. Good luck!

1. DEWSHOE
 - a. Posterior section of a sword sheath
 - b. A newt with spots on its back that resemble stars
 - c. A West Indian fish also known as the half-beak

2. CRAMBOCLINK
 - d. Cotton fuzz and fibres left behind on the cotton gin
 - e. A silly rhyming game
 - f. A mixture of clay and linseed oil for filling joints

3. GUMMER
 - g. A flexible twig
 - h. The medicinal leech
 - i. A tool used to repair the teeth of a saw

By the way, ALL of the definitions are real - but only one matches the word in question.

Best of luck!

Table Tennis

Fancy some gentle or more energetic exercise with some social 'chat' for an hour of your time; then why not come along to our Table Tennis meetings which are held at the Leisure Centre between 3.30 and 4.30 pm on alternate Wednesdays.

The group is restarting with two dates this side of Christmas with a review about 2022 dates and times to be determined. The two Wednesdays booked are Wed 24th November and Wed 8th December.

Come along and give it a try. All equipment is provided and a good laugh is guaranteed (breathing restrictions accepted!).

Paul Childs – group leader

Creative Writing Group



At the start of 2020 with the imminent departure of Anna and Brian Franks our group was potentially down to 3 members. Luckily we managed to attract 2 new members before lockdown started which then took us up to 5 members not counting Anna and Brian who eventually left the group in July 2020. In June this year another member joined us so now there are 6 of us. And what a brilliant group we are.

I think I speak for us all when I say the group was an absolute godsend during lockdown. We continued writing and communicating via email then Zoom. Then once we were allowed to meet in person we met in my garden, often every couple of weeks in all weather and at least once under umbrellas in the pouring rain.

Since then we've done a lot of writing, a lot of talking, a lot of putting the world to rights and an awful lot of laughing.

We do a mixture of very quick writing on the spot and/or writing on a theme that we do at home and share at the meeting. If anybody would like to join us you'd be very welcome. There's no pressure to produce any writing and for most of us it was the first writing we'd done since school.

It was not my intention to include any of our writing in this edition of the gazette as we were a weekly fixture in the brilliant weekly newsletter edited by John Orton so you've probably had enough of us for a while. As Elsie Warby said if she'd known that a month or two after joining the Creative Writing Group the whole of the U3A would be reading her pieces she might have thought twice about joining.

However I couldn't resist a quick Limerick in honour of John Orton and all those brilliant Limerick writers from the weekly newsletter. It's not a patch on theirs of course.

There once was a group that liked writing
And reading their work was exciting
They did so much laughing
And plenty of chatting
That the group became very inviting.

It's a wonderful supportive group and we do hope some of you will join us.

The Knit and Natter Group -

Following covid the knit and natter group continues to meet on the first Monday afternoon of the month in the group coordinators home.

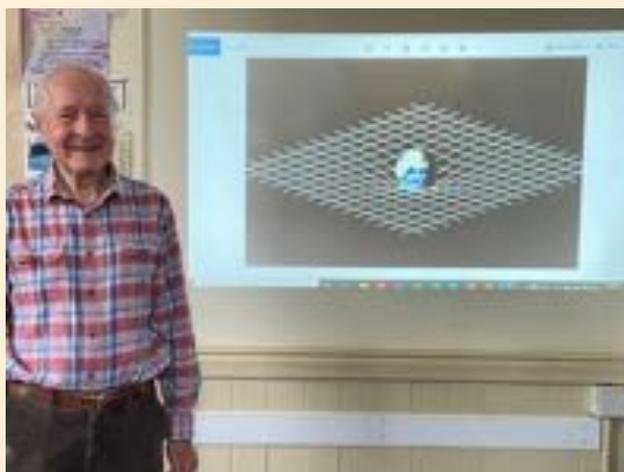
Members knit / sew / craft what they like though in the past we have, as a group, knitted poppies for the local church for part of its Remembrance Day display.

Four new members have joined the group since September and they have fitted in very well. Due to the fact that the group is held in a members home the group size is limited.

U3A Science Group

The Science Group met for the first time after lockdown on 21st October in the Methodist Hall, a new and very pleasant meeting room. There were twelve attendees who enjoyed an overview of the exciting subject of 'Gravitational Waves'. "Gravitational What?" you may be forgiven to ask – but you *could* have been there to discover. We still have room for a few more members. Don't be put off by the word 'Science' – the whole idea is to make science understandable to anyone unfortunate enough not to have read it at school. Our next meeting on Thursday 18th November will wonder at the 'Wonders of Graphene'.

Gravitational waves were predicted by Einstein in 1916 but he was convinced that they would be too weak for experimentalists ever to detect them! This talk was concerned with the remarkable story of how a crazy group of scientists finally succeeded in measuring the gravitational wave generated by the coming together of a pair of massive 'black hole' stars, many millions of light-years distant from our planet. Their paper was published in 2016, just a hundred years after Einstein's prediction. The overall programme cost just over a billion dollars and involved something like 1200 scientists in eighty different laboratories, world-wide.



The photograph shows the Group Leader, John Orton explaining Einstein's theory of gravitational attraction on the basis of his General Theory of Relativity.

Computer Group

We restarted the group on 27th October. Our next meeting will be 11.00 a.m. at the Manvers on 1st December. In the New Year the meeting will be held on the fourth Wednesday each month.

We would dearly like to attract more members. We are not a group of geeks but are ordinary computer users trying to improve our knowledge by sharing experiences, problem solving and assessing applications (apps) which could be of use to members.

Please pop along to any meeting to get a flavour of what we are about - light-hearted, not tech-heavy, learning.

Walking Group

After a gap of over a year, the Walking Group was able to restart in April.

At the time, restrictions due to Covid limited the size of the group to 6.

Since then numbers have increased and now are regularly over 20.

We walk on the third Friday of the month.

Our aim is to have two simultaneous walks, whereby one will cover around 4 miles but with the opportunity for those who prefer a shorter walk of 1 ½ or so miles.

We always try to end at a venue for coffee or, in my case, tea!

Since April we have undertaken walks starting from Cropwell Butler, Rushcliffe Country Park, Hickling, Harby and Attenborough Nature Reserve.

It is good to be in the fresh air and to chat as we walk along.

This can be the only reason that 9 hardy souls undertook the walk from Wild's Bridge in June in torrential rain!!

Our next walk is listed in the monthly Newsletter and Diary.



Christmas Comedy Corner

What do you call a bunch of chess players bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?

Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!

Line Dancing

Very little good has come out of the dreadful Covid 19 pandemic. Of course, the NHS, the scientists and the vaccines have all been beyond amazing. Looking closer to home, one of the positive bright lights for our u3a, I hope, is the development and introduction and settling-in of our brand new Line Dancing Group. There is the saying 'Necessity is the mother of invention', but in the case of Line Dancing it was sheer mind-numbing boredom!



I had to entertain myself somehow and so began dancing to music in my kitchen...I enjoyed it...it made me move about....it was FUN! Over about 7 months I developed and wrote down over 40 dances, hoping against hope that some of our members might like to give it a try once we were given the go ahead to come out of our homes and begin to get back to near-normality. And they did!

In fact so many joined the group that we have had to move premises twice (!) in order to accommodate everyone. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to our dancers who come along time and time again and trip the light fantastic with me.....believe me, it genuinely is fantastic! The joy of dancing and socialising and laughing together is priceless.



Wine Tasting Group



The wine tasting group is back on. A group of interested participants met before lockdown to discuss how future meetings were to be conducted, venues and subject matter. It was concluded that each meeting would be ticketed and tickets bought in advance. Group members would take it in turns to choose the wines and themes. Maureen Johnson would be the group coordinator and would organise the venue.

Our first meeting took place at the end of October in the Manvers with 11 participants. One member of the group took responsibility for organising the theme for the evening choosing the wine and setting the range of wine prices.

It was a very enjoyable evening, 5 wines were blind tasted and no one guessed the wine types, which country and region the wine came from or the price. The wines - 3 reds and 2 whites - were from South Eastern Australia. The reds were Shiraz and the whites were Chardonnay and the price of the wine ranged from £10:99 to £3:99, it was surprising that the most expensive wines were not necessarily the favourites. It was interesting to see members reactions to the wines and it was very obvious how diverse people's wine tastes and knowledge are.

There will be another gathering in the new year with a different group member taking on the role of organising the wine choices.

The wine group size is constrained by the venue and with this in mind there is a first come first served policy.



Bridge Group

The Bridge Group meets every Monday in The Manvers at 10. Some members kept on playing on-line during the shutdown and some just let their cards gather dust. We regularly get 15 to 20 players with abilities from experienced to beginners, all are welcome.



Christmas Comedy Corner

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?

They always drop their needles!

Chess Group

The Chess group managed to keep going during the pandemic, albeit with reduced numbers, but we restarted face to face meetings at the Welfare on 9th July. Since then we have been meeting every Friday at 10.00 a.m. at the Welfare and will continue to do so. We would very much like to attract new members, both experienced and inexperienced. Chess is a fascinating game and our group is there purely for the enjoyment of playing. We also provide tuition so please give it a try even if you are a complete novice – we all started out in that position!

Singing Group

The news we were all waiting for, that the Singing Group was to reopen, came on 8th September.

We have moved to larger premises and now have space to welcome and would encourage anyone who enjoys singing to join us. No auditions or solo singing, we just 'Sing out loud, Sing out strong' as our song goes.

We now meet at the Scout & Guide Hall on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month at 2.00 – 3.30pm. The cost is £1.50 per session to cover the room hire and the refreshments.

We may have changed lots of things, where we meet, the time of day, how often we meet and the subscription costs but the important things have stayed the same, we still enjoy our wide repertoire of songs, have fun together going home with that feel good factor. Hope you enjoy the singing at the Christmas Social and it would be great to see you on 12th January after the Christmas break.

From Barrow to Baghdad

Our speaker was Philip Caine, who came all the way from Barrow-in-Furnace to tell us about his quite remarkable working life under the title 'From Barrow to Baghdad'. It was an equally remarkable performance in that he scarcely drew breath for a full forty-five minutes, regaling his audience with a constant flow of anecdote, both witty and serious, without a single note. Not once do I remember him hesitating over the appropriate phrase – I think we were all transfixed by both the subject matter and by his ability to recall its every detail. He even provided us with the questions we might have asked could we have collected our scattered thoughts at the end of his presentation.

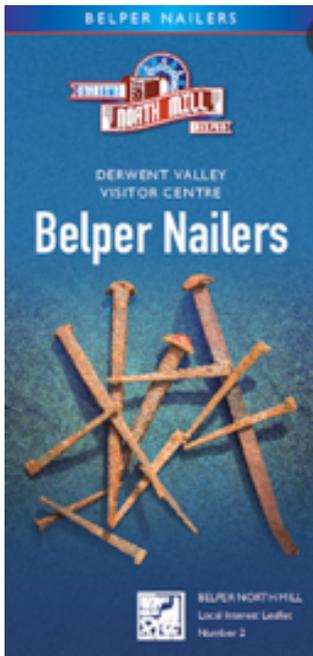


Having been brought up in Barrow, his father expected him to work in the local shipyard but Philip decided to become a chef, a profession in which he made a rapid rise, leading to a senior position in a special London hotel. Having conquered this particular hurdle, he then took up work on a North Sea oil rig, which allowed him to work two weeks on and two weeks off to be with his family. Tough as it was, even that became boring and he decided to move further afield, taking up numerous positions setting up supply companies throughout Russia and the Middle-East. All went very well until an unfortunate experience with the Russian mafia led to his being left not only bankrupt but seriously in debt. His account of how he and his wife battled to pay off this huge deficit was touching in the extreme and probably demonstrates better than anything the true nature of the man.

Having, finally, killed all his demons, he has now settled down to the quiet life of writing books and making presentations of his many life experiences. Cotgrave and District U3A was fortunate, indeed, to be able to enjoy them.

Knitters, Nailers and Traitors – Belper and the Industrial Revolution

Our October General Meeting was addressed by David Skillen from Belper who gave us a delightful account of how Belper contributed to the Industrial Revolution. His talk was special in the way he explained just how and why each development occurred and who were the people involved. It was, without doubt one of the most enjoyable talks we have been fortunate enough to experience.



The Nailers were early industrialists in Belper, making iron nails by hand for the shoeing of horses. They were accompanied by Knitters who hand-knitted stockings and the Traitors are still so-remembered in Belper for taking industrial trade secrets to the United States, thus initiating the US fabric industry.

A rapid journey through the many important developments initiated by such worthies as Jedediah Strutt (rib machine), John Kay (flying shuttle), James Hargreaves (spinning jenny), Richard Arkwright (water frame) and Samuel Crompton (spinning mule) led to a more detailed account of the contribution made by the Strutt family who built mills in Belper and controlled their workforce in what would today be seen as an autocratic manner but which, in the nineteenth century, was no more than paternalistic management. They built houses, painted in their own colours, arranged for the chimneys to be swept quarterly, built a workhouse for the unemployed, together with a school and a Unitarian Chapel. They also opened the Strutt River Garden, which is till a feature today.

The Derwent Valley is now a World Heritage Site in recognition of their contribution. The History Group should surely make a visit to it.

Nottingham's Industrial Heritage

Our November meeting was addressed by John Whitfield who gave us a very interesting talk on how Nottingham changed from a rural to an industrial town.

Before 1700 Nottingham was a small town with a population of approximately 8000, smaller than Bingham. Nottingham was mainly a countryside environment with many pleasant areas, the Lace Market for instance had gardens and orchards. There was minimal industry, spinning, weaving, leatherwork and beer brewing were carried out on a small scale mainly in people's homes.



The main industry was stocking knitting, helped by the invention of a stocking frame. This was later adapted to produce lace. People were still mainly working from home and living a hand to mouth existence. Then the enclosure acts of the 19th century forced country dwellers into Nottingham looking for work. The population quickly swelled to 50,000. People were crammed into the Broadmarsh, Narrowmarsh and Sneinton areas, these areas soon became slums and there was enormous poverty.

In Nottingham most of the lace making took place in Long Eaton and Basford. The Lace Market was used for warehouse storage and as a marketing area for the sale of lace.

We were then told about 3 key individuals in the story of Nottingham.

Jesse Boot used the knowledge he'd gained from working on his father's farm to set up as a herbalist. From 1883 he expanded the number of shops to 570 all around the country and the Boots site at Beeston is still a major employer.

John Player used the new fashion for smoking to open factories in Alferton Road and Radford employing 10,000 people in the 1950s.

The final entrepreneur was Frank Bowden who took advantage of the benefits of cycling and the need for transport for the working population, to manufacture bicycles. At one time there were 60 different bike companies in Nottingham and the site at Lenton was the largest in the world.

Because of the diverse nature of industry in the city Nottingham was able to weather the effects of the depression of the 1920s much better than other areas of the country.

U3A Christmas Party

Close to 70 members, friends and family enjoyed the Christmas Party at the Welfare with entertainment provided by the Singing Group accompanied by the Ukulele Group and the Line dancing Group.



U3A goes to Glasgow



Back in November 2020, Brenda Ainsley attended a meeting with fellow Climate Reality Leaders, as they set out to plan activities to take place during COP26 in Glasgow. The group was very keen to demonstrate all kinds of diversity and wanted to include the voices of all age groups. Brenda recognised that u3a could play an important part in this. The Trust u3a group 'Countdown to COP' was founded and quickly grew to a membership of over 40. Along with several Scottish members, the group organised and ran a series of 4 workshops in Glasgow, to look at the topic of Intergenerational Climate Action. As guests of the Climate Reality Project and a

consortium of partners, these workshops took place on an electric bus at the First Bus Depot in Glasgow. Approximately 30 u3a members took part, from across England, Scotland and Wales.



We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Gazette.

If you would like to contribute any articles pictures or comments please contact the Editor at Cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com

Also if you would like to help with putting together The Gazette or taking over as Editor please use the email address above..

The End

The next edition of the gazette will be published mid March therefore deadline for any contributions, articles ect. to the Editor by February 28th.