



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 16

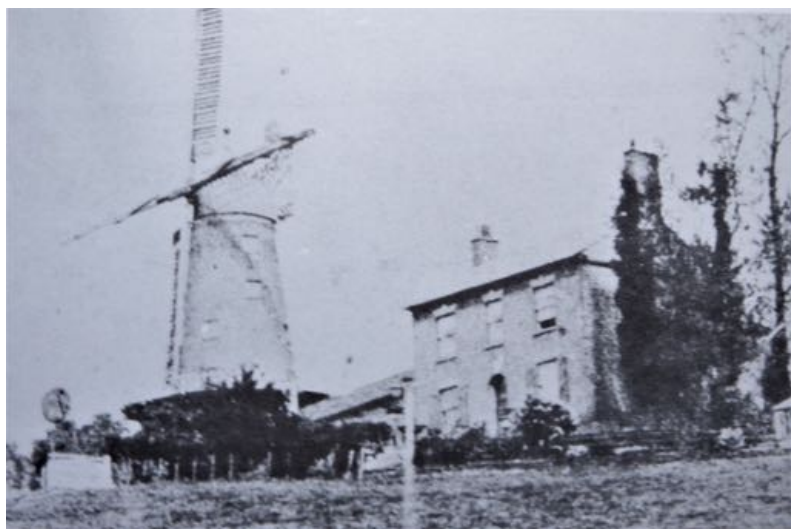
U3A News

The National Office of the U3A organised a Zoom on-line tutorial on the subject of “Running Large Meetings and Virtual AGMs”. This was scheduled for Friday 3rd July. It was hoped that this would provide advice and guidance on the running of our future meetings. However the efforts of our Committee to take part were thwarted because there was “a much larger response than was anticipated”. It is understood that there will be further tutorials in the near future. We shall keep members informed of developments.

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1793 and All That

1793 was quite a year. It not only saw the French Revolution, with the beheading of Louis XIV and his queen, Marie Antoinette but also the first take-up of the metric system of units and the setting up of the first optical semaphore communication system by Claude Chappe. Elsewhere, George Washington is on record as making the shortest ever inaugural Presidential address, while the then USA capital city of Philadelphia was battling with a major attack of yellow fever but Japan probably suffered the worst catastrophe of all when a volcano completely removed the island of Unsen, killing 53,000 people in the process. As I say, 1793 was quite a year.



For the people of Nottingham, 1793 was also of significance (even though they took a very long time to recognise it) as the year in which the miller/mathematician George Green was born to George senior and his wife Sarah. He was baptised in St Marys Church on the fourteenth of July of that year. Sarah’s father had helped set up George senior as a baker and, by stint of hard work, his business flourished and he was able, in 1807, to invest his savings in building a new windmill in Sneinton,

just a mile outside Nottingham. It was very up-to-date, brick-built and full of the latest gadgets to help the miller with his task of grinding corn. Again the business flourished and George was able to build a fine house alongside his mill where young George was brought up.

It was expected that George junior would eventually take over the running of the mill but, from a young age, he showed considerably more interest in mathematics than in milling. At the age of thirty he became a member of the recently established Bromley House Library in Angel Row, where he was able to read not only maths books but also the Proceedings of the Royal Society. It was here that he developed his interest in things scientific and just four years later (in 1827) George published his first, and most important, contribution to the application of mathematics to the theory of physical phenomena. In this he had developed certain mathematical procedures which came to be known as 'Green's Functions' and are still in use today by theoretical physicists. However, this paper, published privately, failed to catch the interest of the scientific community and George was obliged to concentrate his attention on running Green's Mill.

In the meantime, he had established a relationship with Jane Smith, the daughter of the mill manager and had already fathered two children by her. They went on to have five more children, though they never married. There are various theories as to why but it seems most likely that the determining factor was George's intention to become a Cambridge academic. In those days, Oxbridge Dons were not allowed to be married because they were ipso-facto clerics (and supposedly celibate) - George was probably keeping his options open!

George's father died in 1828 so George was free to follow his instincts and, in 1833 he let the mill and the family house and became an undergraduate at Caius College Cambridge. Having obtained his degree in Mathematics he achieved his life's ambition by becoming a Fellow of the College, where he could concentrate on writing several more papers on theoretical physics. After a further few years, however, his health failed and he returned to Nottingham, where he died in 1841, aged 47. He is buried in the churchyard of St Stephen's at Sneinton, just a stone's-throw from his mill. Jane was left with his several properties in Nottingham while the mill and family house were left to his seven children, all surnamed 'Smith' – not 'Green'.

Inevitably, as steam-powered factories took over the production of flour, Green's Mill, like so many others, became redundant during the latter half of the nineteenth century – Cotgrave's three mills, for example, had all ceased working by about 1875. The mill was later used by various small companies but suffered a disastrous fire in 1947, after which it was abandoned and allowed to decay.



All that was left in 1978 is shown by our photograph. However, all was not lost – Professor Lawrie Challis of Nottingham University Physics Department and a number of his colleagues set up a ‘George Green Memorial Fund’ and raised sufficient money for the restoration of the mill and the provision of the ‘Green Science Centre’ where children (and non-scientific adults!) can learn something of the physics of electricity, magnetism and light by way of hands-on experiments. The restored mill provides not only a source of stone-ground flour for bread-making but serves to illustrate much of the technology essential to the function of a nineteenth century mill. It makes an interesting and stimulating day out.



The photographs show (in this order): the mill and house built by George senior as it was in 1860; the ruined state of the mill as seen in 1978; Professor Challis, with Mrs Eva Saunders, great granddaughter of the mathematician, at the reopening of the mill in 1985; the mill as it is today.



As ever, it can all be summed up by a limerick:

A Nottingham miller named Green
 On math'matics became rather keen.
 He took his degrees
 At a College named Caius
 Where Green's functions assured him esteem.

It is interesting to make comparison between Green and Isaac Newton. We don't know much about Green as a personality but it seems that he was somewhat shy and withdrawn, as, indeed, so was Newton. They were both, of course, largely self-taught, coming, as they did, from humble backgrounds. And they both made their scientific names by developing mathematical techniques which we now know as the differential calculus, Newton in relation to planetary motion, Green in relation to electro-magnetism.

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Verse and Worse

In lighter vein, we note that the re-opening of pubs and other drinking establishments must surely serve as a stimulus to our human thoughts on the subject of alcoholic refreshment and 'Verse and Worse' does, of course, have quite a lot to say on this particular subject. The following represents only a small selection.

The Poor Beasts

The horse and mule live thirty years
And nothing know of wine and beers.
The goat and sheep at twenty die
And never taste of Scotch or Rye.
The cow drinks water by the ton
And at eighteen is mostly done.
The dog at fifteen cashes in
Without the aid of rum or gin.
The cat in milk and water soaks
And then in twelve short years it croaks.
The modest, sober, bone-dry hen
Lays eggs for nogs then dies at ten.
All animals are strictly dry:
They sinless live and swiftly die;
But sinful, ginful, rum-soaked men
Survive for three score years and ten.
And some of them, a very few,
Stay pickled till they're ninety-two.

On the other hand:

He had his beer
From year to year
And then his bier had him.

But beware of tomato juice:

An accident happened to my brother Jim
When someone threw a tomato at him.
Tomatoes are juicy and don't hurt the skin
But this one was specially packed in a tin.

The 'nog' referred to in the first of these verses is a rich mixture of whipped up eggs, milk and caster sugar 'strengthened' with rum, gin or whisky. The origin of the name is uncertain but may relate to a strong beer, called 'nog', made in East Anglia in mediaeval times, or to a wooden tankard known as a 'noggin'. The term was first recorded in 1693 – just a hundred years before the birth of George Green! Egg nog is something of an old-fashioned beverage, of course, but remember that 'Verse and Worse' was first published in 1952!

A final thought: Why is it only men?

Anyway: Cheers!



Yes, Cheers!, Cheers!, Cheers!



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Molly's Essay

Meanwhile, our six-year-old Molly is still keeping her diary in good order – thanks to Sue Hillyard:

Molly's Essays - 7

Nana red my poem. She sort off laffed at first and said to mummy have you red this and mummy said no what is it and she red it then mummy toled me off she said be carefull what you rite Molly becos sometimes peepole can get upset so i cried and nana said dont cry and then she went to the toilet and when she came back her wiskers had gone.

some thing nice has happend. Greatgranddad has given us his piyano. he came with a big van on Thursday and put it in our dining room. then he showed me how to play it he showed me how to play oh can you wash your fathers shirt which is played on the black notes. i dont no yet what music the white notes are for. daddy said he is going to give Peter and me lessens so i mite lern what the white notes are for then i can play some white note songs and things

another nice thing is that daddy has toled me and Peter that his sister is going to have a baby it might be born at christmas so that will be a nice present. i hope they let me play with it but i have desided not to share my teddyted but i mite get another one from bildabear insted. daddy said thats a good idea Molly and gave me a big hug and said i love you my special little Molly.

i have desided to rite another poem and this one wont upset nana or enybody.

Auntie Karen has a baby in her tummy
that means that shes going to be a mummy
ive asked my daddy but its not fair
because he wont tell me how it got in there

he just said ask your mother and went outside.

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The Art Group

We have three more lovely paintings from the Art Group.



Puzzle Corner

This week we have Peter Shreyhane's quiz from last week, complete with **answers**

- Q1 . Which singer had a posthumous UK Number 1 ?
a. Fats Domino b. Buddy Holly c. Roy Orbison
- Q2. Which is the only city to have staged the Eurovision Final ?
a. Bergen b. Saltzberg c. Seville d. Sligo
- Q3. Which is NOT an Australian Town ?
a. Humpty Do b. Quorn c. Rockhampton d. Woolamaloo
- Q4. How many stations are there on the London Underground ?
a. 170 b. 230 c. 270 d.290
- Q5. What is the depth of water immediately below the Horseshoe Falls (Canadian Niagara Falls) ?
a. 25 feet b. 50 feet c. 75 feet d. 100 feet
- Q6. Is the River Trent the UK's
a. 2nd b. 3rd c. 4th d 5th longest River
- Q7. Before it called in the Receivers, how many Shopping Centres did Intu own or part own in the UK
a. 10 b 14 c. 17 d. 20
- Q8. How many players in a Lacrosse Team ?
a. 9 b. 10 c. 11 d. 12
- Q9. What is the Queen's second name ?
a. Alexandra b. Mary c. Victoria d. Louise
- Q10. Which is England's SECOND largest county by area ? Yorkshire is the largest.
a. Devon b. Lancashire c. Lincolnshire d. Norfolk

ANSWERS

1. b. Buddy Holly – That'll Be The Day
2. a. Bergen 1986
3. d. Woolamaloo – that was where Frank's Grandpa Spencer in Some Mothers do Have Them came from !
4. c. 270
5. d. 100 feet
6. b. 3rd Severn – Thames – Trent – Great Ouse
7. c. 17
8. b. 10
9. a. Elizabeth, Alexandra, Mary
10. c. Yorkshire – Lincolnshire – Norfolk

Creative Writing

We are extremely grateful for the regular contributions from the Creative Writing Group. This week it is “Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder” – again but with a difference! Thanks to Heather Lea.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder

He missed them so badly.

When they went away my husband, Andy, would wake up long before me. He didn't sleep after 5am. He would lie in bed next to me, silent and in deep contemplation. When I woke he always looked really sad. I knew not to say anything. I had tried at first but it hadn't helped – if anything it had made him worse. By 6am he would get up. He wouldn't say anything – we both knew how he was feeling and what he was thinking. Sometimes he would have a shower but often it was too much of an effort and he would just put on his dressing gown and go downstairs.

I would lie in bed feeling lost. I would remember the days when we would wake full of joy and excitement for the day ahead. Often, in the summer months, we would get up ridiculously early and go to see the sunrise. We would go for a drive in the car, equipped with our picnic chairs, flask and bacon sandwiches (made the night before). We would go to the edge of the woods and listen to the amazing dawn chorus while we watched the sun make its appearance. We'd walk in the woods, call at our favourite café on the way home for a “proper coffee” and still be home by 9am. On other mornings we would stay in bed, lie in each other's arms and bathe in the beauty of the dawn – always starting the day with wonder and joy.

Lockdown had taken all of this from us. Instead of joy and excitement we both woke with feelings of dread and anxiety. On our minds would be questions of when could we go out, would a vaccine be found, would we get an online food delivery slot – and when could we see our families and hold our grandchildren. We had seen the grandchildren from the window once at the start of Lockdown. It was very traumatic as our son had told the children we had the virus as a way of explaining why we couldn't hug them!!! The children were understandably frightened of us - I cried for hours afterwards. Our son and his wife were very busy with work and said they didn't have time for Zoom, Facetime, What's App or even regular phone calls. Andy and I found it physically hurt to not see or speak to our grandchildren. We comforted ourselves with chocolate, ice cream, beer, wine - all the usual things. This just caused us to gain weight and feel even worse. It was, therefore, a very welcome surprise when the new family members arrived.

At first there was just one. Andy spotted it when he was having his breakfast in the garden- we had such amazing weather at the start of Lockdown. It was lying on the edge of the pond, with slimy skin and bulging eyes ... Frog number one. This ugly creature caught Andy's attention and he watched it for hours. That afternoon my beloved husband had no time for me – he was busy on the internet researching plants for the pond to create a better home for Mr Frog. The next morning there was another frog – this one was more yellow – Frog number two.

And so it went on - eventually Andy had spotted 7 different frogs- all distinct. They ranged in size, some had stripes, some had spots. All were slimy with bulging eyes!

So now my husband was totally preoccupied. He talked to the frogs constantly, marvelling in their movements and he was almost tearful when he started to see tadpoles appearing in the pond. I had been concerned Andy would sink into a deep depression during Lockdown with no sport on tv, no grandchildren, no trips to the pub. However, he was fulfilled in a way I hadn't seen before – by his frogs.

The sunny days flew by, Andy and his new found family were so happy ... until the frogs disappeared. One day they were all there and the next they were not. Andy sat by the pond for hours watching for a sign of them. He could see the tadpoles but no frogs. This is what led to the lack of sleep, the silence, the sadness in my husband's eyes. I knew he cared for the frogs but the depth of emotion he felt when they had gone shocked me – he really was bereft. Absence really had made his heart feel even fonder.

And, just to prove that not only the Real Ale Group can cope with the English weather, here they are enjoying an outdoor meeting.



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Keep well and remember to be careful still.

See you next week,

John