



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 18

Strange Times

How many times has it been observed that “We live in strange times”? So, why not celebrate it with a limerick – a limerick for our times:

The was a young woman from Kew
Who could barely decide what to do.
While in somewhat deep thought,
She was caught rather short,
As she stood in a safe-distancing queue.

before getting down to the really serious matters which will concern us today. But what *would* you do? Rush back to the car and drive rapidly home? As has been said, we live in strange times!

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A Little More Local History

Anyway, I thought we might, this week, continue with our local history studies by looking a little way beyond our own town. How, for instance, about Langar? I guess most of us know Langar as

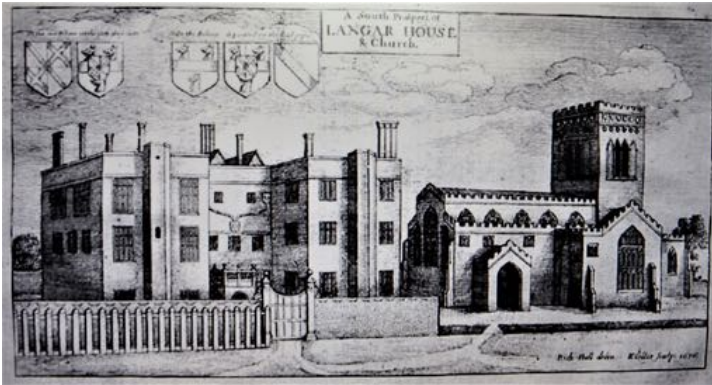


the home of the Unicorn’s Head, whereat the Luncheon Group has enjoyed several – well, Lunches. And possibly, you might venture, on a very special occasion, to Langar Hall for a special Dinner. But, would you believe, there is much more to Langar than this – it really has quite a history. In fact, it has so much history that we have to take it a bit at a time. Even the Unicorn’s Head is a Grade II Listed building with the date 1717 worked into its brickwork (no less than one hundred

years before we have any information about Cotgrave’s pubs). To the left, is a single storey brewhouse with a fancy chimney stack which implies that it certainly must have served home-brewed ales, just as the Cotgrave Manvers Arms claims to have done.

Perhaps the best place to start is the Church of St Andrew which is closely associated with Langar Hall. The present Hall is relatively modern, dating from about 1835, while the original Hall was much grander and dated back to the time of the Norman Conquest. It was situated close to the Church as a convenience to its aristocratic owners who would be able to cover the short distance between the two without getting wet on even a rainy English Sunday morning. There was a church on this spot in Norman times but the present church is in the Early English style of the thirteenth century. It is clearly a far grander building than one would associate with such a modest village and that is almost certainly due to the importance of its Lords and Ladies.





During the thirteenth century the estate belonged to a family called Tibetots and in 1373 Margaret Tibetot married Richard le Scrope who was a member of a powerful Yorkshire family who were based at Bolton Castle in Wensleydale. The Scropes built a new Hall which is shown in our illustration, dated 1676 and in the south transept of the church is a splendid alabaster monument to Thomas

Lord Scrope (died 1609) and his wife Philadelphia. They lie side-by-side in a four-poster bed with a diminutive statue of their son Emanuel, looking benevolently over them. Nicholas Pevsner, in his 'Buildings of England' describes the monument as 'splendid' and claims it 'good enough to in Westminster Abbey' – and he uses such language only very sparingly! Emanuel Scrope had no legitimate children so it looked likely that the Scrope dynasty was about to die out. However, he did have four children by a servant girl Martha James and one of them, Annabella, inherited Langar Hall in 1630. She was legitimised by Act of Parliament (I suppose if you're rich enough you can arrange anything!) in 1663 and married John Grubham Howe, MP for Gloucester.



A descendent was Admiral Lord Howe who was famous as one of England's more successful sailors. In particular, on the 'Glorious 1st of June', 1794, he took on a French fleet in the English Channel, capturing seven of their ships, without losing a single one of his own. He died in 1799 and is buried in St Andrew's Church – there is a Howe vault but nothing to see – his monument is in Saint Paul's Cathedral. Sadly, his daughter Sophia, who married a Curzon, and her son sold off the Hall which was then demolished in favour of the present, much more convenient building which now serves such excellent food.



In the north transept of the Church are monuments to the Chaworth family of Wiverton Hall just a mile or so down the road from Langar. Sir Thomas Chaworth built his Manor at Tithby in 1450, which survived until (as devoted readers of the Weekly letter will already know) it fell foul of the English Civil War. However, the Chaworth family name survived intact until the nineteenth century, when it ran out of male heirs. However, Mary Ann Chaworth, a one-time lover of Lord Byron, married John Musters of Colwick Hall and persuaded him to add her name to his, thus founding the Chaworth-Musters dynasty. I well remember meeting a descendent, Maria Chaworth-Musters when visiting the garden at Felley Priory – she was usually to be seen working in the garden and always had a friendly word for her visitors. Those were the days when one was free to wander round the countryside at will – remember them?

Going back to St Andrew's Church, there are a couple of points of interest which we should not overlook. Firstly, on entering the building one can't help noticing the presence of a 'wicket door' in the main entrance door. In my experience, this is unique and takes me back to the 'wicket gate' which gave its name to the 'wicket' to be defended by the very first cricketing batsmen. The shepherd boys who may have originated the game made use of a wicket gate in a sheep pen as a convenient 'castle'. But that is, of course quite another story. The Church door is interesting for yet another unusual feature – the magnificent iron hinges which support it bear the name of the blacksmith who fashioned them: 'William Gretton'. Yes, St Andrew's Church is certainly well worth a visit – when it's open again!

You may well think that that is more than enough of Langar's history but I have to warn you that there is even more. The Victorian novelist Samuel Butler was born and brought up in Langar. His father Thomas was Rector of Langar-cum-Barnstone for the remarkable period of forty-two years and he was responsible for many improvements to both Church and village. There is also much to be said concerning his relationship with his son but I shall respect the fact that you, the reader, have suffered enough for one week and leave the details till next week – however, be warned!

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Art



here; there are surely right and wrong methods of making one's feelings known – all I want to say is that this is an excellent piece of statuary. It serves admirably to express the intense feelings that the 'Black Lives



This week we have a combination of local and national art. Don Whitaker of our U3A Art Group has sent us four lovely examples of his work. We show just two of them this week (it's always good to have something in hand for next week!), while I am sticking my neck out with a photograph of the 'illegal' artwork which was briefly on show in Bristol. Let me make it clear – I am NOT making a political point here; there are surely right and wrong methods of making one's feelings known – all I want to say is that this is an excellent piece of statuary. It serves admirably to express the intense feelings that the 'Black Lives Matter' proponents obviously hold and, as such, it surely deserves to be put on display – but not necessarily in the manner chosen. And, let me emphasise, it should certainly not distract us from enjoying our own Art Group's contributions.



I think, too, that this is probably the optimum place for the wonderful photograph of the cat on the pole sent in by Lesley Sinclair. Thanks so much, Lesley – it really is a delight.



ECO News

Brenda Ainsley has asked that we publicise the interests of the ECO Group and this we gladly do. Indeed, anything any of us can do to help reduce Global Warming and atmospheric and environmental pollution is surely to be welcomed. Thanks Brenda and all Group Members for reminding us all of these vital issues.

Eco Group News

We have had some excellent Zoom discussions since the middle of March; for a while, we moved to fortnightly meetings as it was a great way to see some friends and talk about something other than the pandemic. It became clear early on that the environment was benefiting from 'lockdown', although I read today that the reduction in carbon emissions we saw earlier has now been reduced by half. There has been much discussion internationally about how nations are coping (or not) with the challenges of the pandemic and what can be learned to ensure that humanity heads off and survives the much greater threat of global warming. The Paris Agreement set out to improve upon and replace the Kyoto Protocol, an earlier international treaty designed to curb the release of greenhouse gases. It came into force in November, 2016, and has been signed by 197 countries and ratified by 187.

It led to a binding and universal agreement designed to limit greenhouse gas emissions to levels that would prevent global temperatures from increasing more than 2°C (3.6°F) above the temperature **benchmark** set before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The UK is signed up to this.

Nearer to home, we are currently focussing on 'Plastic Free July' and the smaller steps we can all make as individuals to be part of the solution and to lighten our footprint on the planet. <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/> Plastics are, of course, a by-product of the petrochemicals industry, which is at the heart of much global warming. As they see their markets reducing because of growth in the use of renewable energy, they are actively seeking new, plastic-based markets for their product and to keep their shareholders happy. There is a clear explanation about this in the (American) film 'The Story of Plastic'.

So, what can you do? The most effective thing, if this worries you is to

SWITCH YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER TO A PROVIDER THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY

1. It's one of the biggest impact things you can do as an individual - switching to renewable electricity and carbon offset gas could slash your carbon footprint by up to a quarter.
2. It could save you money.
3. It's so easy! Yes it might feel like a bit of a pain, and a very dull and grown up thing to do, but honestly, you could do it in an ad break, without even leaving the sofa ☐☐

If you are locked into a contract, suppliers such as Bulb will buy you out.

Grab a recent energy bill, head over to Big Clean Switch, pop in your details, pick the quote you like the look of best, and switch.

It really is that simple!

Brenda Ainsley

Plastic Free Cotgrave

In March, a successful Open Meeting was held at the Library. This generated a list of interested people, many of whom now follow the progress being made through emails, zoom meetings and the facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/580286966256793>

Please do sign up there, if you would like to know more.



Are you new to Facebook?

It is likely that some of you found your IT skills growing rapidly during lockdown. If you've been using facebook to stay in touch with family and friends, you might like to join our Cotgrave Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/265548334377355>

This is a closed group – only members of the group can see who belongs and what people have said.

Trust U3A

Trust U3A is an online U3A community launched in April 2020 to meet the continued demand to become a member of the U3A movement while face to face contact is limited. The Third Age Trust - the national charity which supports all our U3As - has created Trust U3A to give you an opportunity to make the most of the opportunities on offer for members. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> Open to existing members and to new members, it is entirely conducted online. There are 21 groups at present, so this gives you the opportunity (for a very small fee) to join groups that you might not otherwise have been able to join locally – or to keep up interests you already have during this time when groups are unable to meet in person. There is a small charge of £4 to existing members. These are the groups, at present:

*Drawing Workshop	*Egyptology Talks	*Law for Fun	*Renaissance Art
Armchair Travellers	Art Appreciation	Arts and Crafts	Astronomy
Book Club	British Light Music	British Symphonies	Creative Writing
Early Lady Doctors Research Gr	Eco Group	Exploring beliefs underpinning	Exploring Italian
Fun with Maths	History (General)	In your neck of the woods...	Latin
More Fun with Maths	Music,Fashion,Culture 1950-80s	Philosophy	Popup Poetry
Psychology	Recorders	Robotics	Science Technology and Society
Shakespeare – Exploring	Smartphone Photo Art	Spanish Group 1	Spanish Group 1B
Spanish Group 2			

Crisp Packets

The crisp packet collection scheme is up and running again, raising money for Ash Lea School. Packets can be taken to The Welfare or to Brenda Ainsley at 104 White Furrows.

Please make sure they are empty and flattened, then placed in a box (preferably) or a tied bag. We need to make the process as simple and hygienic for anyone sorting them ready to send off to Terracycle for processing.



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Puzzle Corner

Sue Hillyard has sent us the following quiz. All you have to do is recognise the name of the song from which the extract has been extracted. “Very simple”, she pretends and expects her choir members to attain full marks. I’m not so sure that it really is at all simple but I hope I’m wrong.

1. Bluebells I’ve gathered
2. Bright her eye as any star
3. Took a hand at this digging for gold
4. Love, it is a flower
5. There were more than a thousand reeds
6. Narrow streets of cobblestone
7. Got to put my cheaters on
8. These empty arms of mine
9. I used to walk in the shade
10. All around the cathedral
11. Every heart would have a new song to sing
12. And it’s no, nay, never
13. Sleeping on the job
14. Na na na nah, na na na nah
15. I sure am blue
16. The biggest word you ever heard
17. And stroll right into town
18. There are tillers and rudders and anchors and cleats
19. You can pay for a gay escapade
20. Where the gin is cold

Answers next week.

Then we have a contribution from Lesley Sinclair which is not exactly a quiz because it comes in the form of answers but one thing is certain – it could never be said to be easy! Most of the words I had never heard before but they certainly make an interesting collection – something to turn over in the mind while relaxing in a hot bath, perhaps? Thanks again Lesley.

DID YOU KNOW?

The space between your eyebrows is called a **glabella**

The way it smells after the rain is called **petrichor**

The plastic or metal coating at the end of your shoelaces is called an **aglet**

The rumbling of your stomach is called a **wamble**

The cry of a newborn baby is called a **vagitus**

The prongs on a fork are called **tines**

The sheen or light that you see when you close your eyes and press your hands on them is called **phosphenes**

The tiny plastic table placed in the middle of a pizza box is called a **box tent**

The day after tomorrow is called **overmorrow**

Your little toe or finger is called **minimus**

The wire cage that holds a cork in a bottle of champagne is called an **agraffe**

The 'na na na' and 'la la la' which don't have any meaning in the lyrics of a song are called **vocables**

When you combine an exclamation mark with a question mark (like this ?!) it is referred to as an **interrobang**

The space between your nostrils is called **columella nasi**

The armhole in clothes, where the sleeves are sewn, is called **armscye**

The condition of finding it difficult to get out of bed in the morning is called **dysania**

Illegible handwriting is called **griffonage**

The dot over an “i” or a “j” is a **tittle**

The sick feeling you get after eating or drinking too much is called **crapulence**

The metallic device used to measure your feet in a shoe shop is called a **Bannock device**.

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Molly's Diary 8

Molly is now seven and has chosen to stop writing her diary which is a shame because we have all enjoyed reading it. However, time moves on and we have to accept that all good things come to an end – if only bad things (like lockdowns) would come to an end too!

Anyway, here it is – enjoy!

Molly's FINAL Essay - 8

I have really liked writing my stories but I am going to stop now because we have broken up from home schooling for the summer holidays. We had fun pretending to have a home schooling parents evening. Mummy pretended to be the teacher and sat at the kitchen table and daddy and I waited until we were called in and we had to sit at the other side and mummy said what a good girl I had been. And daddy said what has she done that's good and mummy said she's been writing some stories and daddy said hm yes I know all about those stories and they both laughed. Then Peter got called in and daddy was the teacher and mummy was the mummy and then we had a barbecue and daddy burnt the sausages and mummy said that's typical.

Yesterday was my birthday. I am seven years old now. It was a good day. Nana came for a while and brought me a pair of roller skates and a card. Then great-granddad came and brought me a new backpack for school and a card and he gave me ten pounds. Then he showed me how to play another tune on the piano. It is on the white notes. It is on middle C which is one of the white notes on the piano. It goes like this - this is sea middle C left hand right hand middle C. Now I can play on the black notes and the white notes. Peter and I will start lessons with daddy in September.

My cake was like a piano with my teddy made of icing sitting on top. There were seven candles and I blew them all out and then they sang happy birthday.

Then when we had finished our birthday tea mummy said Molly I have one last present for you and she gave me a little parcel and I opened it. It was a book with a pink cover and inside mummy had written My Family and Me by Molly Henderson Aged 6. And she had stuck all my stories into the pages and each story was like a separate chapter and it was like a proper book and I really liked it.

Then daddy said Molly I have one last present for you and he gave me another little parcel. I opened it and it was another pink book and I opened it and inside daddy had written My Family and Me by Molly Henderson Aged 7. And he said this is for you to write more stories Molly and this story that I am writing now is in my new book because I am 7 now.

Then Peter went out of the room and came back and he gave me a present wrapped in one of his socks and it was his very best favorite pen which has 4 colours in it. You press a little thingy and a new pen comes down and it's got blue and black and green and red. And Peter said after the holidays I think you should keep writing your stories

Molly....so I will. I love my brother Peter, it's a shame he is a boy.

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Creative Writing

Fortunately, our Creative Writing Group contributions are not coming to an end – even though they always come *at* the end! This week we can enjoy another of Chris Tomblin's efforts. Apparently, the challenge was to write something which included a set of specific words, in this case: 'van, leaving, brand-new £20 note, nature, corset, sun-dial'. You will find them all in Chris' entertaining article. Made me think how very different were the dating manoeuvres when Joyce and I first met but that's a long time ago – and I'm certainly not going into detail!

Words

Chris Tomblin

Dave was a happy person. He enjoyed his life except for one thing. He was now in his late twenties soon to be thirty and he wanted to settle down and get married and eventually have children. His sister Penny who was two years older than him was married and had two adorable little boys who thought Uncle Dave was wonderful. The problem was he'd never really had a proper girlfriend, it's not that he didn't get on well with girls, but he would get tongue tied and nervous if he tried to chat them up. He never seemed to meet any girls these days that he even wanted to chat up.

After leaving school Dave had drifted for a bit not knowing what he wanted to do even working in a factory on low pay until he decided. He'd always wanted to work for himself and when he'd unexpectedly been left a bit of money from a distant aunt, he'd bought a van and became a man with a van. He worked hard and was successful, but it wasn't a job where he could meet girls at work. He moved into his own flat but as he'd never learned to cook when he came home from work starving hungry he filled up on take aways and convenience food and he spent a lot of time with his mates in the pub drinking pints of beer. His once lean frame gradually got heavier. He sat down at his laptop

'Just one more go' thought Dave 'and then that's it. I know Penny says to keep trying but I'm not sure this is really my cup of tea; I'd prefer to just meet somebody I like in the pub or somewhere. But Penny said I don't go to the right places to meet the right people and the internet's the way forward nowadays anyway and I suppose she's right. She's even bet me a brand new £20 note that I'll meet 'the one' on the internet, I hope she's right, but I've not had much luck so far' he thought gloomily.

He logged on and stared at his photograph. Not too bad he thought. Admittedly it had been taken 2 or 3 years ago when his paunch hadn't been quite so large, and he had been holding his stomach in. But still... His profile wasn't bad either he'd kept it simple. Decent bloke wants to meet genuine girl for potential long-term relationship.

Dave's previous dates had been a bit of a disaster. He'd had two in total neither of the women had been much to write home about themselves but the first one had actually laughed when he turned up and called him Tubby even though her photo looked like it had been taken twenty years previously. The other one was ok, but Dave found it difficult to relax and she hadn't seemed remotely interested. Just getting through the date as quickly as possible and she hadn't wanted to meet again. She had said she preferred men who were a bit more athletic looking.

'I'm a big bloke' he thought looking down at his well-rounded frame slumped in the chair. 'Nothing wrong with that it's mostly muscle anyway' as he practised holding his stomach in and then letting it go before he turned back to the computer. He suddenly noticed much to his surprise someone was winking at him, that meant he had an expression of interest from another member. He clicked on the name and a photograph popped up of a laughing curly haired girl who was called Lisa.

'Wow she looks gorgeous' he thought, and he quickly read her profile which said 'country girl at heart looking for soul mate. Likes the simple things in life walking and spending time in nature but also likes talking and having fun. Looking for long term relationship with the right person.' 'Yes' he thought 'that's a lot more like it but I'd never stand a chance with a girl like that'. 'Contact her' said Penny when he told her. 'What have you got to lose and I might even win a brand new £20 note if you do' so he did and soon they were emailing back and forth and seemed to get on like a house on fire. Dave had a worry though he was convinced that when Lisa saw him in the flesh, she would be disappointed, and she'd suggested meeting once or twice already. He did want to meet her she seemed so lovely so of course he'd agreed but it really mattered to him that it went well. He'd already put himself on a bit of a diet, but he still had quite a way to go to get rid of his paunch. He'd even taken up running although staggering down the road might be a better description. He suddenly had an idea and went straight onto his laptop. After a few false starts he eventually found just what he was looking for and pressed buy and even paid extra for next day delivery.

When he got home from work it had arrived, so he took it into his bedroom and when he got back from the pub, he unwrapped the package and looked at the instructions. It said 'take inches off your waist with this miraculous male corset. Great thought Dave, just what I need. They had arranged to meet the next day as it was Saturday by the sundial in the local park and Dave felt quite excited now he'd solved the problem of his girth. It turned out to be a gorgeously sunny and warm day and Dave had a shower before getting ready. He looked in the mirror his fair floppy hair seemed to be behaving itself and although he felt nervous, he was on top of the world. Now for his secret weapon the corset. It seemed to be made of some sort of rubbery material stretchy but quite firm and Dave had a bit of a job getting into it over his boxers. It was also a very unappealing salmon pink colour. Never mind thought Dave struggling into his trousers and shirt finding them a bit easier to fasten than usual. I won't be getting undressed on a first date. He had a look in a full-length mirror and was quite pleased with his new slimline silhouette and off he went to meet Lisa.

The trouble was by the time he got to the park he was beginning to feel very hot indeed and he could feel the corset riding up as he walked along. He stopped and tried to pull it down a few times and was rewarded by a very funny look from a woman across the road.

Once inside the park he spotted Lisa immediately by the sundial and went hurrying over. 'Dave' she exclaimed smiling 'I'd have known you anywhere.' She looked just as good as she had in her photo with blonde curly hair and warm brown eyes. 'Are you ok though you look a bit hot'. Dave was a bit hot he was starting to sweat, and he wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. He was also having a bit of trouble catching his breath the corset was so tight. 'Yes, I am' he started to say but his voice came out in a squeak. 'Let's go to the café' Lisa said quickly 'a cold drink might cool you down.'

Once inside the café Dave tried to sit down but it was proving more difficult than he'd thought. The corset had ridden up so far it felt like it was cutting him in half and when he finally managed to sit down his shirt buttons suddenly popped open. He looked down in horror at the salmon pink rolls of latex bulging over his belt and he looked up in panic to see Lisa staring in fascination.' What the heck is that' she asked. There was nothing for it but to come clean and he explained what it was and why he was wearing it and he could swear he saw her lips twitching. He went to the gents and with a sigh of relief took the thing off and dropped it in the bin. 'Well that's it' thought Dave 'No chance now she must think I'm a complete idiot' and he returned to the table.

They ordered some drinks and because Dave no longer felt under any pressure he just relaxed and enjoyed himself. He found himself chatting away and he was making her laugh especially when he told her the full story of the corset and the woman's face when he was trying to pull it down. In fact, they both laughed until tears were streaming down their faces.' Pity I've blown it' thought Dave 'she is actually the most gorgeous nicest girl I've ever met, and we seem to be getting on so well. 'He paid for their drinks and as they were leaving Lisa said, 'I've really enjoyed myself Dave when can I see you again''. Really 'said Dave.' Really' replied Lisa and after making arrangements to meet again the next day Dave walked home with a real spring in his step. He made a detour through to the cash point in the precinct where he withdrew one brand new £20 note.

For Penny.

Cricket

Finally, cricket (readers may have noticed that cricket has a habit of inserting itself into our dialogue!). Since we last met, England have won a Test Match and Ben Stokes has covered himself in no end of glory, winning the 'Man of the Match' award and dominating England's performance, so we end, as we began, with a limerick:

The 'Man of the Match', name of Stokes
Is now famous for some of his strokes.
The West Indies were plundered
For more than two hundred
And his bowling was fearsome – no jokes.



Stay safe and keep well – one day we *shall* all meet again.

Best wishes,

John