



# Cotgrave and District U3A

## Keeping in Touch 26

### **Peter's Train Set – What a Blessing**

Readers may well understand that, after twenty-five Weekly Letters, I sometimes wonder what, in the name of heaven, I am going to put in the twenty-sixth! I'm afraid I have to admit that inspiration was not exactly bursting to get out and desperation was showing distinct signs of making itself felt, when, out of the blue, along came the following article by Peter Shreyhane which fills all the boxes, ticks all the queries and lets me well and truly off the hook (to use but a small fraction of all the known clichés!). A thousand thankyou's, Peter, I know that it will stir fond memories, at least, in many a male U3A member – and possibly a few female members, perhaps? No? Well there's always cricket – I'm sure we can find something of interest in that general direction! And Peter is pretty good at that too!

### **Bogs Lane**

As I mentioned in the Winter 2019 Gazette, I have a model railway. Railways have been a life-long interest. My first model railway was a Hornby Dublo 3 rail set for my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.



By today's standards it was very basic and I think unlikely to impress the modern child, but I thought it was wonderful!

Since then, over the years, there have been three others, one of which was exhibited.

However, they all had to be erected and then taken down after use.

Until, four years ago when we moved here to Cotgrave. Our new home has a fully fitted out loft with a velux window and easy access. This is it I thought! Well not quite. I erected the layout but it didn't quite fit.

So once again, due to sorting the house out and other commitments, the railway was again "put on the back burner". And there, I suspect it may have stayed.

But then along came the virus lockdown and I suddenly had "time" - garden fence treated, garage door painted, garden wall repointed ..... what next?

So since March I've spent many hours, that I'm sure I would have not have done before, working on the railway.



It's been remodelled to fit the loft. Many frustrating hours spent wiring and sorting out problems. One thing I've discovered, bifocals don't help when you are on your back looking up at fine wire! But overall a thoroughly satisfying time, constructing buildings out of card, adding scenery and lights.

The layout is fictitious, but is based on where I grew in Biddulph, North Staffordshire.



The layout is called Bogs Lane. This was a real place, that was the destination of the bus from Tunstall. The name was changed to the more acceptable Halls Road in the early 60's! The local bus company was the PMT – Potteries Motor Traction and known locally as Potteries Muck Trucks and never by the current wording of the initials!

I have included some memories of the shops in the High Street, including the Cosy Café where us teenagers used to go to listen to records on the juke box that, hopefully, some one else had paid for! Of course there have to be trains to run, but building the layout is as much fun as running it.

Big boys toys maybe, but it keeps me happy, ask Christine!



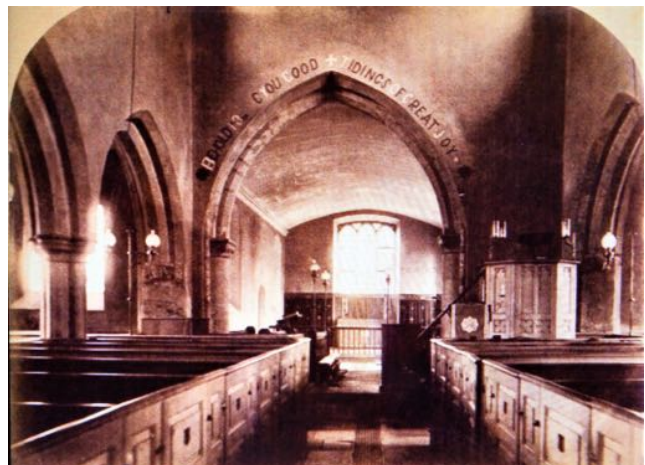
And in this mini world, damsels in distress get help.



## Cotgrave Rectors

Having got off to such an exciting start, we can now revert to our occasional studies of Cotgrave history and one interesting side-line is to look at the doings of Cotgrave Rectors over the ages – well, over a fairly small range of ages, mainly the nineteenth century. As background, it is perhaps worth recalling that the village Rector was originally paid by Tithe – once a year, each villager was obliged to present the local Rector with ten percent of his output in the form of corn, vegetables, fruit, pigs, ducks, etc, etc. This, of course, demanded the existence of Tithe Barns for the storage of this small mountain of produce and there is evidence of their existence on early village maps of Cotgrave. Such a system held sway for centuries but it gradually became clear that the more sophisticated holders of office found it increasingly embarrassing to continue with it. Thus, at the time of Enclosure (in Cotgrave this took place in 1791) the village Rector was rewarded with an allotment of land in lieu of tithe revenue. Thus the Rev. Pierrepont Crompton (1756 – 1797) found himself the proud owner of some 550 acres of farmland in and about the village of Cotgrave. He was therefore obliged either to farm it himself or (far more likely) let it out to tenant farmers who actually knew what to do with it! Just how valuable this allotment of land was is reflected in the division of land between the various land-owners. Thus, the total amount of farm land in Cotgrave (including Stragglethorpe) was approximately 3600 acres, of which Charles Pierrepont (Viscount Newark as he then was) owned 2400 acres, the Rector 550 acres, Lionella Clay 300 acres, while some fifteen other landowners were responsible for a total of 350 acres. The point of listing this data is simply to illustrate that the Cotgrave Rector was a relatively rich man, being second only to Viscount Newark in the order of things. This state of affairs is further illustrated by census data during the nineteenth century, when, in 1861 the Rev. Evelyn Hardolph Harcourt Vernon lived in the old rectory together with his wife, seven children, a Governess and six other servants. He was followed by Alfred Hensley who, in 1881, had only three children but, similarly, they enjoyed the services of a Governess and six servants.

It is, perhaps, helpful to appreciate that all these Rectors were appointed by the Pierrepont family and were therefore either close friends or even family members. This was the time of the ‘second son’ syndrome, whereby second or third sons, who were never going to inherit the family title took solace from their appointment to a vacant parish, on the understanding that they need never actually live there, nor work too hard in the interests of caring for their flocks – that could safely be left to the ministrations of a couple of curates! However, Cotgrave may have been fortunate in having a large rectory which tempted the various incumbents to spend, at least some time in situ. The Rev. E H H Vernon was an interesting example of the genre, being the younger son of Granville Harcourt Vernon of Grove (near Retford in north Notts). He later inherited the Grove Estate, his elder brother having died prematurely. However, while in Cotgrave, he took a considerable interest in village life and, particularly, in education. It was his initiative (and quite a bit of his money, too) which led to the building of the present Church School in Plumtree Road.



It was typical of the English village church during the eighteenth century that it should be neglected and allowed to fall into a degree of disrepair and this meant that, during the following century, it was incumbent upon the incumbent to do something about it. It is this aspect of village life that we are about to concentrate on, there being no less than four noteworthy reconstructions. These were begun by the Rev J H Browne in 1818, followed by a second in 1843 but the major work was undertaken by Rev. Alfred Hensley in 1877-8. He removed the west gallery where the musicians had been wont to play for Sunday service and he also stripped out the box pews which had graced both Chancel and Aisles and replaced them with 'modern' open seating – not at all an improvement in my estimation! What was worse, he also removed the lovely inscription “Behold I Bring You Good Tidings of Great Joy” which had decorated the Chancel arch (William Lewin, the well-known Cotgrave writer, shared my



disappointment at this desecration!) Mind you, Hensley did repair the roof, install a new East Window and a new font so his efforts were not all bad. He is also remembered for selling all his land to Earl Manvers and transferring the responsibility for his income to the Church Commissioners, something of a revolutionary step! Finally, the Victorian restorations were completed by Rev. John Percy Hales, who installed an organ chamber on the north side of the church so that church singing might be accompanied in tune. He also repaired both

tower and spire and added two new bells to take the complement up to eight. One of the many sad retractions forced upon us by lockdown is the loss of our Friday evening bell ringing practice – I used to love to hear it!

Of course, the attractively modern layout of seating in All Saints Church, which differs markedly from the austere Victorian arrangement, dates from the restoration of the church following the fire in 1996. For this the Rev Bryan Barrowdale must be thanked. He is also known for his support for Cotgrave’s miners during the 1984/5 miners’ strike, when he could often be seen on the picket lines, sometimes wearing a tin hat! (This may be fiction but it certainly gives an exciting impression!)



For anyone wishing to follow up on these few details, remember that there is far more on the History Group’s website. (<https://historyofcotgrave.weebly.com>)

## **The Art Group**

We have two more paintings from the Art Group, one by Don Whitaker and the other by Carol Harris. How fortunate we are to have such talented artists in our U3A Branch – our thanks once again to them all.



Since we have made some play with All Saints Church, above, I am adding a copy of this lovely painting of the Church from a slightly unusual angle. I have a personal collection of church photographs from all around the country but how wonderful it would be to have paintings like this one, instead! Anyone familiar with our History Website will recognise it immediately. Our thanks go to Derek Perkins, the artist, who generously allows us to use it.

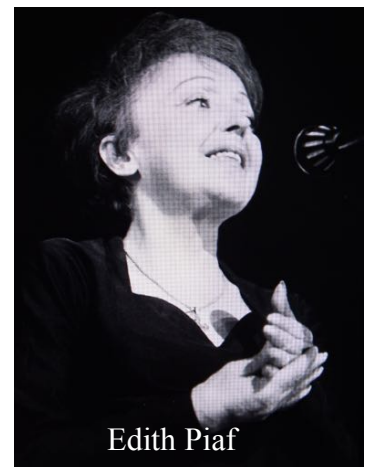


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### **Puzzle Corner**

Here are the answers to last week's 'Nickname' quiz by Peter Shreyhane:

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Tricky Dicky            | Richard Nixon              |
| 2. The Little Tramp        | Charlie Chaplin            |
| 3. The Swedish Nightingale | Jenny Lind                 |
| 4. The Louisville Lip      | Cassius Clay – Mohamed Ali |
| 5. The Beast of Bolsover   | Dennis Skinner             |
| 6. The Little Sparrow      | Edith Piaf                 |
| 7. Winnie                  | Churchill                  |
| 8. The Desert Fox          | Rommel                     |
| 9. Tarzan                  | Michael Hezeltine          |
| 10. La Divina              | Maria Callas               |



Edith Piaf

## And Even More

Peter is intent upon keeping our wits about us – and don't we need it these days! Here follows his list of:

### *Alternative Medical Definitions*

Bacteria	-	Back door to a cafeteria
Caesarean Section	-	A neighbourhood of Rome
Cauterize	-	Made eye contact
Enema	-	Not a friend
Morbid	-	A higher offer
Nitrates	-	Rate of pay for night work
Post-operative	-	Letter carrier
Recovery room	-	Place to do upholstery
Rectum	-	Nearly killed him
Urine	-	Opposite of 'You're out'

### **That Important Last Line**

You will all remember that four-fifths-complete limerick by Miles Kington which we published last week:

Edward Lear jumped into his bed  
Along with a dashing redhead.  
He had drunk so much whisky  
He felt rather frisky  
????????????????

Exactly how to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion without upsetting the more discerning among us?

I received just two suggestions – both from Trevor Dennis:

He fell asleep clutching his Ted.

Or

He fell asleep without dipping his bread.

My own version came to very much the same conclusion:

But then it went straight to his head.

Thanks very much Trevor – obviously a lyricist after my own heart!

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## **Creative Writing Group**

Finally, we come to the ever-awaited-for contribution from the Creative Writing Group. This week it is another example of the treble-bill – a poem, a short story and a limerick – by James Odell. Thanks Jim and thanks to the Group.

### **Nocturnal Drama.**

From dark caverns mystic sound  
nocturnal creatures to be found  
Moonbeams lasso a timid mouse  
escaping from a human house.

Breeze of summer wafts the air  
overlooking those beneath its care.  
The owl scours the scene below  
from this bough all views allow.

Rushing, rustling can be heard  
by the ears of that great bird.  
Rising like phantom in the night  
stops the rodent in full flight.

### **THE KENTISH MAN.**

Alex Saunders lived on his own in a one room flat in Felixstowe. He was a landscape artist.

His one joy was to go out of town and camp in a field. He had been given permission by the farmer to do so.

One night in the summer he was camping in the field. It was a warm night, so he decided to walk to the village which was not far away. He knew most of the villagers. The first house he came to was owned by Mrs. Ann Jones. She was a widow. He saw that the light of a downstairs bedroom was on. After looking round to check that there was no one about he went to the window and looked in. Mrs. Jones was in there but unfortunately for him, she was fully dressed. He continued to look in for a few minutes. Suddenly she looked round. She looked at the window. Very quickly Saunders had ducked down. He wasn't sure if she had seen him, but he ran back to the tent. Nothing happened.

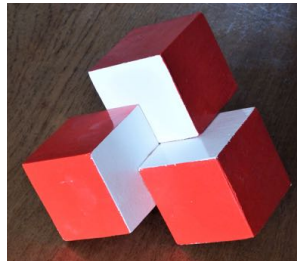
Ann Jones had lived in the house with her husband for twenty years but four years ago he had died. Ann stayed on. When Saunders had looked in the window, she had recognised him as the man camping in the top field. The following day it was hot again but, in the evening, it had clouded over and at ten started to rain. Ann put on her raincoat and Wellington boots. She selected an umbrella from the stand. Then she walked up the hill to the top field. She saw a small tent quite near to the gate. She could hear him snoring. She walked round the tent and pulled out all the tent pegs. It folded round the sleeping man as it collapsed. Suddenly the sleeping man was awake, and he fought to find the tent door. Then he rose through the door. As he did so there was a heavy downpour of rain. He stood up. He was dressed only in vest and pants. He looked around and then saw Ann standing at the field gate. She waved to him and then walked back home.



There was a young man from Kent  
Who loved to live in a tent?  
He looked through the window  
He knew she was a widow  
This young man was no gent

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Please take care of yourselves – see you next week,  
I'm signing off with my new signature,



**John**