



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 38

Chairman's Letter

As you are probably aware I have taken over as Chairman of our U3A. My first duty is to say a big thank you to my predecessor. Barbara was a founding member of Cotgrave & District U3A. Since then she has worked tirelessly to establish and run our branch. Barbara's leadership has ensured that we now have a thriving organisation. That she is now our Honorary President is a fitting tribute to her commitment and dedication to U3A

Peter Shreyhane



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Love at Large

Have you ever wondered whether animals show affection to one another and, if so, exactly how? I've wondered vaguely once or twice but never given it serious consideration, so the attached photograph of elephantine affection quite caught my imagination. It isn't easy to associate such enormous creatures with gentle and delicate gestures but this photograph, taken, as ever, from the Times, certainly proves the point – they obviously can show affection for one another and I hope it serves as a reminder how important such affection is to all of us.



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More on Cotgrave Place

Cotgrave Place consisted of a rather nice Georgian house built by William I'Anson in 1796, together with some 200 acres of farmland. It was owned by the Manvers family of Thoresby and occupied by a range of wealthy tenants. As we have seen already, these ranged from the local man Robert Burgess (born in Leicestershire), through the more aristocratic families of Charles John Hill (and his wife Frances Clare nee Lumley) and Hon Robert Henley Eden and we now come to another interesting family headed by St John Leigh Clowes (1828-1915). They first



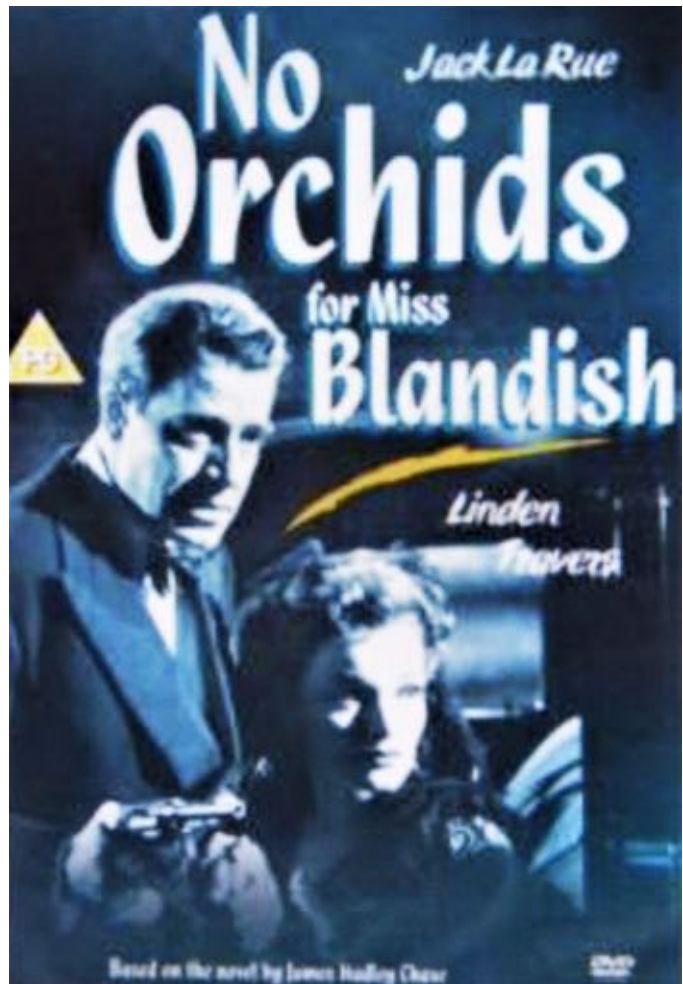
appear in the 1871 Census Returns, where St John refers to himself as a farmer of 437 acres – he had obviously taken over the land previously farmed by Charles Hill, whereas his immediate predecessor, Robert Henry Eden made no pretence to being a farmer.

Firstly, a comment on the pitfalls which lurk in the path of even the most careful of researchers. When Steve Cockbill and I translated the hand-written Census Returns into digital form way back in 2016, we supposed that the 'St' bit of St John's name was actually 'Lt' so we supposed him to have been a retired army man. Not at all – St John (pronounced 'Synjn', I think!) is all part of his name. It doesn't affect the story to follow but I cannot let the opportunity to justify all our hard work pass unrecognised!

St John was accompanied by his wife Elizabeth Caroline nee Bingham (1838-1920), five children and no less than seven servants. St John was born in Derbyshire, variously at Pick Hill, Pack Hill, Eckington and Eggenton (such is the questionable reliability of official records!), while Elizabeth came from Brighton. They stayed roughly five years in Cotgrave Place before moving, first to Normanton (near Plumtree), then to Charlton Kings, Gloucestershire, later to Oxfordshire and then Cheltenham. In the 1891 Census, when they were living in Oxfordshire, St John describes himself as a 'Farm Steward' so it would appear that he had dabbled in farming most of his life.

While living in Cotgrave, they had two more children, a son Philip Cecil (1871) and a daughter Evelin May (1872) and it is with this son that we shall be chiefly concerned. The 1881 Census has him, aged 10, living with his parents in Charlton Kings, while at the time of the 1891 Census he has left home. We do not know exactly when, but it is clear that he left England and moved to South Africa, to live in East London because he married a South African lady called Daphne Scholz who was born in Cape Town in 1890. They had a son St John Legh Clowes in 1907 (the same name as his grandfather! – note that it's sometimes spelt 'Legh', sometimes 'Leigh') and he seems to have been something of a livewire. He was twice married, firstly, in 1930, to Vivien Rosemary Hodge (1911-2003), secondly, in 1947, to Grace Louisa Powell (1910-1999). There is no record of any divorce but one must presume that there was one. Again, evidence is missing, but it seems likely that both these marriages took place in England so he must have chosen to leave South Africa sometime before 1930.

What is beyond doubt is his intimate connection with the English stage and cinema screen. He not only wrote numerous plays but also produced and directed several films. His play, 'Dear Murderer', written in 1946, was made into a film in 1948 which was well received and reckoned to be probably the best film to emerge from the Gainsborough Studios under the supervision of Sydney Box. So far, so good but his next effort, 'No Orchids for Miss Blandish' was castigated for its concentration on sex and violence. The review by the Monthly Film Bulletin was typical – they regarded it as “the most sickening exhibition of brutality, perversion, sex and sadism ever to be shown on a cinema screen.” Many cinemas actually refused to screen it – but, in those that took the risk, it proved to be a considerable commercial success! I remember the time well enough but didn't see the film, so I can't add any personal comment. It is rather a long time ago, now but adds that little bit more spice to the history of Cotgrave Place – and that is our interest today.



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The Art Group

This week we can enjoy a selection of flower paintings by members of the Group.



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The Family Tree

Michael O'Connor has sent us this – a fascinating account of his experiences in pursuit of his Family Tree. Thanks Michael.

Many of you will know that I have been working on my Family Tree for years. I have found 'Ancestry' and 'Find My Past' sites excellent. I also did my DNA a few years back and would recommend it too because it has put me in touch with a number of relations across the World. I could tell you lots of interesting things I have found out --- W H Davies was a relative (he wrote 'What is this life, if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare.') ---one relation was a guard for Garibaldi in the 1870s at the time of Italian unification. He came to South Wales to set up an ice-cream business with Mafia connections! Some came over during the Irish potato famine of 1848 --- the coal steamers to Cork needed ballast on their return to Wales and they took families as ballast, turfing them out onto the land in South Wales – with nothing! The Workhouses were full to overflowing!

Here, though, is something you may not believe but I'll tell you just the same. I was on a tour of Cork with Carol and Cerys, my youngest daughter. I had met and befriended a man, Eddie Tucker, who had been the Cork Lighthouse Captain and who, in retirement, had catalogued and cleaned up the graveyards in South Cork. He had a lead to an ancestor of mine who died in 1720. We went to the graveyard but could not find the grave. Then Cerys suddenly tripped over a stone --- and there it was – Maurice Connors 1720. A few years later I took my Eldest, Gareth to the graveyard. It was at night --- Gareth went back to the car, having seen the grave whilst I stayed behind to say a prayer. I was amazed to hear a sound behind me. Looking round, I saw an old lady in an Irish shawl. She asked who I was, saying that she came here every month to pray for a relation --- pointing to a grave which was next to that of my relation. We had a chat and she said that she would look after Maurice's grave. I went out and told Gareth but he said that no-one had gone into the graveyard. It is quite small, with only one entrance. I ran back in but there was nobody there! I have returned several times since and Maurice's grave is the only one tended well. Make of all this what you will!



So, ancestry and family trees are well worth studying, especially during 'lockdown' as they can fill up lots of spare time, profitably. But don't visit graveyards at night --- you might experience a shock!

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Quiz Corner

Once again, Peter Shreyhane has come to our rescue with a novel form of quiz in which the answers are made available right from the start – the only problem is to identify to which questions they belong. Happy hunting.

Quiz with a Difference

You are given the Answers – Match them to the Correct Question

Answers

1. 2
2. 4
3. 5
4. 6.
5. 10
6. 11
7. 22
8. 23
9. 30
10. 35

Questions

On a mobile phone the number that is on the same key as M, N and O?

Number of years for a Pearl Wedding?

Yards in a chain?

In the Bible the number of plagues of Egypt?

Number of landlocked countries in South America?

The 9th Prime Number?

Number of Apollo Mission that first landed men on the Moon?

Number of Lions by Landseer at the foot of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square?

Minimum age to be President of the USA?

Number of events in the Pentathlon?

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ECO News

Brenda Ainsley does an excellent job of keeping us aware of our duty to help defend our environment against ourselves – if you take my meaning! The following news item from Brenda is appended with our full support. Please give it your best attention.

Trust u3a

Have you heard of Trust u3a? It was set up early in the summer to provide talks, courses and groups online for people unable to get to u3a meetings. It is aimed at current and new members alike, for a very modest joining fee of £4 for existing members. The growing membership is over 700 and there are more than 65 different groups [Trust U3A U3A: Interest Groups and Courses \(u3asites.org.uk\)](https://u3asites.org.uk)

News from the Eco Group

We continue to meet – and never was there a more critical time to make our views known on the environment and how we treat this beautiful planet.

We have been interested to learn more about the Government's 10 point plan for a green recovery announced in November. It includes:

- Installing air-source heat pumps: 25 million gas boilers are to be removed from our homes. New homes will no longer be built with gas boilers, by 2025 (maybe even 2023). This will massively reduce our Carbon Footprint, as we race to achieve 'Net Zero' by 2050 – as we agreed to do when we signed up to the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- Massive growth in Wind Power to provide electricity
- Electric Vehicles: A ban on sales of new diesel and petrol cars by 2030 (2035 for hybrids)

How much will this all cost? Well, to not do it may well cost the Earth... Last week there was an impassioned plea from Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN. In a major speech to Columbia University in New York, Guterres elevated climate action and the restoration of nature to one of the most important tasks for the international community. "We are facing a devastating pandemic, new heights of global heating, new lows of ecological degradation and new setbacks in our work towards global goals for more equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. To put it simply, the state of the planet is broken," he said.

To add to this, last Friday, our Prime Minister announced 'Ambitious environmental targets' to reduce carbon emissions by 68% of what they were in 1990, by the end of this decade. This all comes ahead of the COP talks that will be hosted by the UK next November, in Glasgow.

A more sustainable Christmas

At a more local – but still important – level, did you know that destined for UK bins this Christmas are:

- 1 billion Christmas cards
- 227,000 miles of wrapping paper... That's around the equator 9 times
- 114,000 tonnes of plastic packaging

If you choose carefully, some of this may be recyclable. OR maybe you will find ways to reduce or re-use and just cut out the waste entirely!

Reduce

Refuse

Reuse

Recycle... In that order!

Head over to [Plastic Free Cotgrave](#) for more ideas.

Plastic free Cotgrave

We are making great progress, despite having set out to do this during such a challenging time! We are very pleased to have secured the support of the Town Council: Cllr Stuart Ellis is our link onto the council and is a member of our Steering Group.

Our first Community Business Champions (Kerry's Fresh) are waiting in the wings to be approved and our first Community Allies (the Community Garden) will have their certificate presented by Cllr Susan Mallender, Mayor of Rushcliffe on 12th December (weather permitting!)



We have held our first (virtual) event on 23rd November: a talk on [Zero Waste Shopping](#), in conjunction with The Simpler Life in Keyworth. You can watch the presentation on our [YouTube Channel](#). Our [website](#) is now well-populated and we have a good and growing following on social media.

If you belong to another group in Cotgrave that would be interested in becoming involved, then please do speak to them about becoming a 'Community Ally'. It is not an onerous task! You sign a simple 'pledge' to eliminate 3 items of single use plastics from what you do - these can all be straightforward 'swaps' and it is fine to use examples of actions you have already taken to move away from single-use plastics.

Crisp Packet Collection

We continue to collect these – you can take them to The Welfare or to 104 White Furrows.

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University of Nottingham in Malaysia

No doubt many members will have read something about the Nottingham University Campus in Malaysia. It saw the light first of all in the year 2000, when a temporary building was opened in the City of Kuala Lumpur. Then, in 2005 the University moved to its permanent campus in Semenyih, some 30 km south of KL.

Following my retirement from full-time employment, I was fortunate to be invited to help set up the 'Foundation' programme of lectures in the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, within the Division of Engineering, so Joyce and I very much enjoyed a three-month stay in KL during 2001. It was a wonderful experience and gave us the opportunity to travel around Malaysia and the surrounding area of South-East Asia. Perhaps I will risk boring you with something more of that when topics for the Weekly Letter become almost totally exhausted but, for the moment, I thought you might be interested in learning just a little more about the University of Nottingham in Malaysia itself. But, firstly, I can't resist showing a photograph of the famous 'Twin Towers' which characterise KL. We shall always remember the excitement of dining in the restaurant somewhere near the top of one of them and gazing out, with appropriate degree of wonderment, over the bright city lights. KL is, without doubt, a superb example of a dynamic modern city which grew with enormous rapidity during the twentieth century. As ever, we can sum it up with a limerick:

The Malaysian city KL
Grew like a bat out of Hell.
Architectural powers
Which built the Twin Towers
Built a great many others as well.



The setting up of the Malaysian campus was, at the time, an innovative and very nearly unique project. The idea was to establish a branch of the University offering exactly parallel degree courses with those available here in Nottingham. Students would sit examinations of matching standard to those in Nottingham – all courses being presented in English - and degrees would be awarded at precisely the same level. Indeed, many Malaysian students spend one year of their studies here in Nottingham. It was destined to help the country of Malaysia to advance its ambition to become one of the best educational centres in South-East Asia.

Needless to say, when I was there, the project was in its infancy and numbers were relatively small (measured in hundreds) but, with the move to the new, purpose-built, 118 acre campus in Semenyih, numbers have rocketed and currently some two-and-a-half thousand students live and study on campus. At the time I was there, the site was occupied largely by snakes and they proved more than a little reluctant to give up their territory to the advancement of higher education. However, I understand that they no longer present a threat to life and limb, having finally retired to the surrounding jungle!



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Creative Writing Group

This week's contribution comes from Sue Hillyard – another inventive story to add to the many we have already published. Thanks, Sue and thanks to the Group.

A sequel to a fairy tale

“...and they all lived happily ever after!” Margaret closed the book and smiled down at the two sleepy children.

She had only been living next door to her neighbours for about 6 months when they first asked her to babysit and she had rather reluctantly agreed to help out. However, these last few times she had come to realise that the two little girls were really quite sweet and nothing to be afraid of. They were polite and well behaved and not at all the arrogant little show offs that some children seemed to be – all puffed up with their youthful self importance and the over developed self confidence which came from being brought up in a world where parents were almost scared to discipline their spoilt children.

Margaret had never given birth herself and so wasn't used to babies but Holly and Sophia (8 and 5 respectively) were old enough to talk to, and they always enjoyed their bedtime story.

A recent favourite was Stick Man and, although Margaret thought it rather over sentimental, she could see how the story had a certain flow and moral message. Be good and kind and everything will work out for you. Even the familiar old story she had just read to the girls delivered the same lesson.

“But what happened next?” asked Sophia. Being the younger of the two girls she had developed an enquiring mind and usually asked for anything she didn't understand to be explained to her...perhaps to try to catch up with her older sister. Holly, on the other hand, was the one who had a vivid imagination and now Margaret decided to draw on this creativity.

“What do you think happened next, Holly?” asked Margaret.

“Oh, I don't know,” Holly replied glancing across the room to her collection of stuffed toys. “Perhaps the men who took Snow White out into the forest but couldn't kill her were rewarded and given a part of the forest to themselves where they kept rabbits and pigs and a giraffe and a care bear and a dinosaur.”

Margaret smiled, “Perhaps you are right, Holly.”

“But what about Snow White and her handsome prince?” Sophia obviously now had the bit between her teeth and would query everything.

“Ah, well they got married, became king and queen and then they had two little girls – two little princesses.” said Margaret. Perhaps the sadness in her eyes showed her regret at never having children of her own.

“And the horrid old queen?” Holly pulled the duvet a little higher and snuggled as if to protect herself from the wicked old hag.

“Ah now, let’s see.” said Margaret. “Once Snow White became the new queen she banished her step mother to a land far, far away. She told the old queen, who really *was* quite beautiful, that she had to stay away for 10 years and do a good deed every day. If she did that then she would be allowed back into the magic kingdom and she would have her own small palace where the two princesses could visit whenever they wanted to.”

“Oh...I wouldn’t have done that.” said Holly indignantly. “I would have made her eat mouldy apples every day.”

“I would have made her break her magic mirror,” said Sophia. “And then she wouldn’t have anyone to talk to at all because everyone would be cross with her for being so cruel.”

“I know, I know!” exclaimed Holly. “I would have sent her into the forest and she would become cleaner and cook for the dwarves forever....and she would still only have mouldy old apples to eat.”

The two girls giggled and then Sophia asked the next obvious question – Margaret had been ready for this one.

“And what happened to the 7 dwarves?”

Margaret decided that this would be a good test for the two little girls and asked them to name all seven dwarves.

“Sleepy!” said Sophia, happy that she had beaten her older sister for once.

“Ah, yes, Sleepy. Well, you know Sleepy wasn’t really sleepy all the time. Although the dwarves were miners, Sleepy liked nothing better than working outdoors so, after Snow White had become queen of the land, she gave Sleepy a gift of a little farm where he looked after his own flock of sheep.”

“Sneezy!” Holly got in quickly.

“Sneezy....now let me see. Oh, I know, he was also given a little farm, right next door to Sleepy’s, but Sneezy decided to keep cows and he made all sorts of cheese which he sold at the local market.”

“Dopey!” Holly said again quickly.

“Oh my, poor old Dopey.” Margaret said quietly, shaking her head. “He never really understood a lot about business so all he did was run a little laundry for his brothers. He was the cleanest of them all, though, and always smelled of soap.”

“My turn, my turn,” squealed Sophia. “What happened to Grumpy?”

“Do you know what,” said Margaret “He did really well for himself. He was really only grumpy because he didn’t want to be a miner and work underground all the time. As soon as he could, he opened up a trampoline training school and became the best and most famous trampolinist, jumping and somersaulting across all the magic kingdom.”

“No, he didn’t!” laughed Sophia.

“Oh, yes, it is really, really true. Really it is!” Margaret couldn’t help but laugh too at this ridiculous idea.

“I can’t think of any of the others,” giggled Holly once they had all stopped laughing at the idea of grumpy old Grumpy bouncing up and down with his beard flapping in the air.

“What about Doc?” said Margaret. “Shall I tell you what happened to him? Well, Doc was always the serious one, as you know, and he ended up going abroad to live in the far east. He went to work in Thailand where he runs a clinic for sick children.

“And you can’t forget Happy!” she went on. “He was the first of them all to get married. He and his wife have 9 children now, including 2 sets of twins! He uses Dopey’s laundry more than anyone else because there’s always so much washing to do what with all the clothes and nappies to keep clean.”

“That’s only 6, I’ve been counting,” said Sophia. “You said there were 7 and I can’t remember the last one.”

“Hmm...not many people do remember the last one,” said Margaret. “Can you remember, Holly?”

“No, we’ve said Sleepy, and Sneezy, and Dopey and...oooooh, there are too many to remember,” she stretched and yawned. Margaret could see it was time to bring the story to an end.

“Yes, and Doc and Grumpy and Happy.....but what aboutBashful?” she almost whispered this last name.

“Sweet little Bashful, the quietest of them all. Well, let me tell you about Bashful then it will be time to go to sleep. Bashful decided it was time to come out of his shell so he went off to drama school and became an actor. He changed his name and has been in loads of films and television (you will have seen him in lots and lots of things but I am not going to give away his secret past) and he’s made much, much more money than all the others put together! He’s really, really rich. The brothers are still very close and, except for Doc, see each other every second Sunday – usually at the palace, with the king and queen, or at Bashful’s huge mansion. They are the only two places with dining rooms big enough for them all to eat together.”

“And that’s exactly what happened to all seven dwarves,” Margaret finished with a flourish.

“I can’t remember what you said about Sneezy”, said Sophia. She, too, was getting drowsy.

“Ah, it’s quite easy....this is how I remember it all,” said Margaret.

*“Sleepy became Sheepy and Sneezzy became Cheesy
Dopey became Soapy and Happy became Nappy
Doc went to Bangkok while Grumpy became Jumpy
And the actor, Bashful, well he’s the most cashful!”*

“Tell us it all again,” said Holly trying the age-old childhood trick of keeping bedtime at bay.

Margaret repeated the little rhyme, *Sleepy became Sheepy and Sneezzy became Cheesy....* She then got up and turned down the dimmer switch. “Night, night now – straight to sleep you two. Sweet dreams.”

Once her neighbours came home from the theatre Margaret walked slowly back to her home next door and let herself in. She took off her shoes in the hall and placed them in the little cupboard. She then walked through to the kitchen and put the kettle on ready for her bedtime Horlicks. She sipped at her drink and then decided to finish it in bed and so put out the kitchen light and went back into the hall. Just as she was about to put her foot on the first stair she stopped and turned round and looked wearily into the hall mirror. She spoke quietly.

“Mirror, mirror, tell me true,
For only I know what you can do.
How many years have I been in this place,
How many years until I return to good grace?”

The mirror glowed and a familiar, undeniably beautiful face, the fairest of them all, appeared in the dim light. Then came the sound of the perfect, sweet, bell-like voice.

“Oh, step mother, dear, do not fear,
For your goodness is now shining through.
Be kind one more year, then you will return here,
We are all waiting to welcome you.”

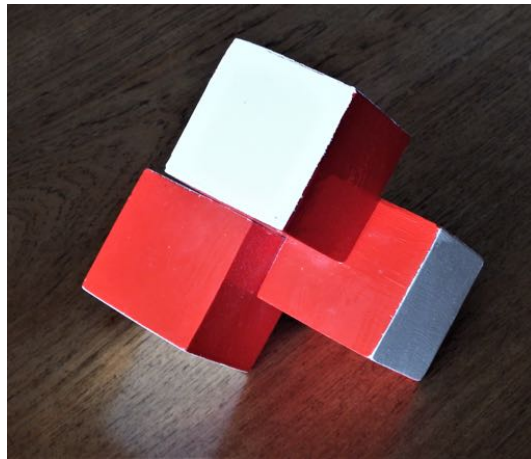
Margaret nodded demurely then smiled silently back into the mirror. She turned to go up the stairs – she was very careful not to let the mirror see the black hatred that boiled in her eyes.



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That's all for this week. Look after yourselves – and the environment.

John



PS RAG members may be interested to learn of a rumour to the effect that some enterprising brewery has come up with a new ale called 'Substantial Meal'!

