



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 41

Important – Vaccination!



Do you know your NHS Number? You will need it if you are called for a Covid vaccination. It can be found on any NHS correspondence (for instance on your medication prescription) or through the NHS App. Please make sure you have it handy – it will save a lot of time-wasting and bother, when the time comes.



As ever, a limerick may help:

*Our number from dear NHS
On our minds we must deeply impress.
If we want a vaccine,
It is clear to be seen
We shall need it; or else there'll be stress.*



Prime Time

Did you realise that 41 is the thirteenth prime number? And could it be that, being the thirteenth, it is likely to be an unlucky one? Which only reminds me that the Chinese have an even greater dislike of the number 4. To them it means ‘death’ and is to be avoided at all costs. When Joyce and I lived in Malaysia, the apartment block where we resided had no fourth floor! The floors were numbered 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, etc and I understand that such a practice is very common in the Far East for that self-same reason.

Nevertheless, we shall be ‘guided by the science’ and ignore such fears – our number 41 will endeavour to be as interesting, amusing and informative as any of its predecessors. Far be it from me, of course, to say *how* interesting, amusing and informative that is – but we shall do our best.

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Cartoon Corner

In the interest of informative amusement, we shall give pride of place to our cartoons, this week, one from ‘The Week’, one from ‘The Times’.



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How very true it is that we have to admit to ‘going nowhere and doing nothing’. Joyce and I are lucky in having a lovely garden to wander round (and pull up the odd weed, here and there!) and the Country Park is not far away so we are not totally static – and I am even more fortunate in having a Weekly Letter to edit every week so time hardly drags – but it does feel to be a very odd experience, wondering, for example, which Tier we shall be in next week! Did any of us know, last April, that it would all end in Tiers? The Times cartoon serves to remind us that this is the time for making resolutions and it is clear that my first one should be: ‘never again, descend to the depths of repeating that awful pun’. I hereby promise.

But enough of these meandering thoughts – it’s time to get down to the serious stuff.

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Cotgrave Place



You will, of course, remember that we have looked at the history of various occupants of Cotgrave Place, covering the period 1830 to 1874 (this all began in Weekly Letter 32!). There was the local man, Robert Burgess, who became Steward to Earl Manvers, the aristocrats Charles John Hill and Robert Henley Eden, followed by St John Leigh Clowes (whose son directed the controversial film ‘No Orchids for Miss Blandish’). The Clowes family left Cotgrave Place in

1874 and were replaced for a couple of years by a pair of brothers Thomas and George Marshall who came of a well-to-do farming family, established in Cotgrave from the early 1800s. Their father John Marshall came from Cropwell Bishop, while their mother Mary was born in Cotgrave. Indeed, their first son, another John, as was the custom, was born in Cotgrave but the family then moved to Stoke Bardolph, where four further sons were delivered. Thomas was born in 1830, George a mere twelve months later – being so close in age, probably meant that they were close in other ways too. They all moved back to Cotgrave in time for the 1841 Census.

John, senior was recorded as being a farmer but it was only in 1851 that the importance of his agricultural interests became clear. In that Census farmers were asked to specify the size of their farms and the number of labourers employed – John claimed to farm 266 acres and employ four labourers (‘Ag. Labs.’ as the Census form refers to them). To put this in context, we might look at the size of farms listed following the Enclosure Act of 1791. The total acreage in Cotgrave and Stragglethorpe was some 3600 acres, mostly owned by Earl Manvers, though the Rector owned 550 acres and Lionella Clay roughly 300 acres. However, typical farms were less than 100 acres in size. We can see, therefore, that John Marshall was a relatively wealthy man – the fact that the family employed four house servants provides confirmation. Even the Rector could only better this by one or two!

The family obviously flourished, the 1861 Census recording that John Marshall (by then a widower, aged 69) was farming no less than 451 acres, while his son William farmed 306 acres. We can only surmise that Thomas and George were seriously involved in the running of both farms. In the 1871 Census, John is no longer with us but George is listed as running a 230 acre farm, while his brother Thomas (who was sharing the same accommodation) was presumably providing a helping hand. It is about this time that Thomas begins to take on the persona of a landed gentleman. In an 1869 Trade Directory he is referred to as 'Mr' Thomas Marshall, while in 1876 he is listed as a 'Private Resident' and in 1893 'Messrs' George and Thomas are described as 'Landowners' – clearly they are moving up in the Cotgrave world. Finally, in 1896, Thomas achieves the ultimate accolade: membership of the Cotgrave Parish Council!

Again, it is one of the various Trade Directories that alerts us to the fact that Thomas and George were installed at Cotgrave Place for the years 1874-76. By this time they were presumably on close terms with the Manvers family and could be persuaded to take the tenancy of Cotgrave Place, if only as a temporary measure. A more permanent arrangement came into being in 1876 when the tenancy was taken by a younger son of the Cotgrave Rector. Bearing in mind that the Earls Manvers held the advowson of the local Parish, it is not altogether surprising that they were well acquainted with the Rectors and their various offspring. Rev. John Henry Browne was Rector from 1811 to 1858 and his son Edward Waite Browne chose to make a living as a farmer. In fact, he was responsible for running the Cotgrave Place farm while a relatively young man. According to the 1851 Census, Charles Hill, who lived there at the time, showed no personal interest in farming and employed Edward Browne to keep his farm in order during the 1850s. The experience thus gained may well have encouraged Edward to take up permanent residence in 1876 and he was to continue farming there until his death in 1885. He was twice married, firstly to Fanny Blackden in 1862 with whom he had two children and secondly to Edith Allethea Franklyn in 1872 with whom he had three children. The 1881 Census records them all living at Cotgrave Place, together with no less than eight servants. Not bad for a 'fourth son'!

This stable period, almost ten years in length, precedes a somewhat puzzling hiatus – from 1885 until 1904 there is no evidence from Census returns of any tenant being in residence at Cotgrave Place but we shall leave that for another time. I feel sure most readers will have had enough of the 'Place' for the moment.

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The Art Group

This week we are going to the dogs again. We have two paintings of happy dogs and two photographs for comparison.



January Quiz Answers

1. 1st January 1877 - [India](#) (Queen Victoria became Empress of where?)
2. 3rd January 1959 - [Alaska](#) (Which became the 49th State of the USA?)
3. 5th January 1933 - [Golden Gate](#) (The construction of which famous bridge began on this date?)
4. 6th January 1412 - [Joan of Arc](#) (By tradition this is the date when this French Saint was born.)
5. 8th January 1935 - [Elvis Presley](#) (Which singer was born in Tupelo, Mississippi?)
6. 13th January 1968 - [Johnny Cash](#) (Who performed in Folsom State Prison?)
7. 17th January 1942 - [Cassius Clay / Muhammad Ali](#) (Which sportsman was born on this date in Louisville Kentucky?)
8. 18th January 1778 - [James Cook](#) (Which British Sea Captain discovered Hawaii?)
9. 20th January 2009 - [Barack Obama](#) (Who became 44th President of USA?)
10. 22nd January 1901 - [Osbourne House](#) (Queen Victoria died here on this date)
11. 24th January 1964 - [Winston Churchill](#) (Which politician died on this date?)
12. 25th January 1533 - [Anne Boleyn](#) (Henry VIII defied the Pope and formally married who?)
13. 26TH January 1756 - [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#) (This famous composer was born in Salzburg.)
14. 27th January 1788 - [Australia](#) (Which future nation started as a penal colony?)
15. 30th January 1948 - [Mahatma Gandhi](#) (This peace loving man was murdered on this date.)

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Women Today

It will not have escaped anyone's notice just how many women have been concerned with the amazingly rapid development of vaccines against our all-too-familiar Covid virus. They appear on TV at regular intervals and speak with confidence on their work. It has always been a feature of biological science that women prefer it to the less 'human' sciences such as physics – though even that is changing to a considerable extent these days. No matter, it is good to see women playing a central role in scientific developments of any kind and standing up to announce their success to an anxious world audience. I was particularly interested in a recent Times article about one remarkable woman scientist, Carina Tyrrell, who has played a significant part in the development of the Oxford vaccine. Last week we looked at the contribution from a male epidemiologist, so it seems fair to balance our account by looking at Carina's story.



According to the Times, Carina has enough medical qualifications to fill a dictionary but that does not imply she is some bespectacled academic lost in the depths of some college library. In fact, as is clear from our photograph, she is an attractive thirty-year-old who rides a bike to work at the Medical Research Council Epidemiology Unit in Cambridge, where she is a Clinical Fellow. She is an expert in the field of Global Public Health and has worked long hours during the past year helping to analyse vast amounts of data representing the results of large-scale tests on the efficiency and safety of the recently-approved Oxford vaccine. This has meant a sad break in her many interests which include skiing - she is a fully qualified ski

instructor, having been brought up in Geneva, where her father was employed on the large hadron collider at CERN. Another surprising interest has been her activity in judging Miss World beauty competitions, a follow-up to the fact that she, herself, won the competition in 2014. She is a committed feminist, which, at first sight, seems inconsistent with being a beauty queen! However, as she points out, modern competitions are concerned more with public good works interests, rather than mere physical attributes.

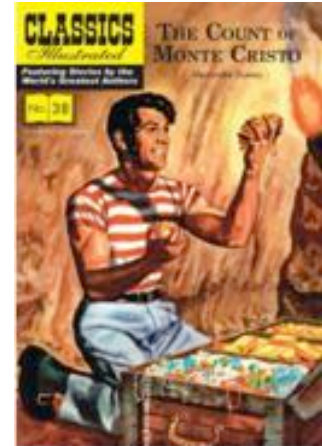
What is important is surely the fact that modern day women can live such full and diverse (used in its proper meaning) lives, while still enjoying strictly feminine interests such as fashion – also one of Carina's loves. Looking back over my own life, I feel extremely fortunate in having worked at a subject dear to my heart (semiconductor science) while continuing to enjoy various sports and help bring up two lovely girls. I wonder, sometimes, whether women of my generation can say the same or whether this only applies to Carina's generation. It would be fascinating to hear from some of our members on the subject – then I won't have to write quite so much of the Weekly Letter myself!

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Childhood Reminiscences

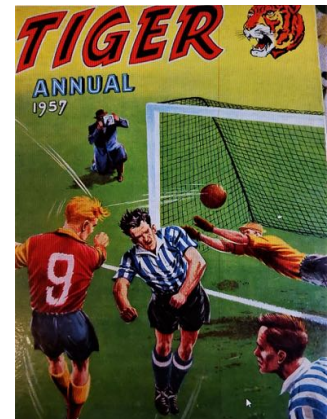
Michael O'Connor is fast becoming our chief exponent of childhood experiences. Here we have his article about the comic papers we all used to read 'in those days'

I have recently rediscovered some old comics and annuals and they have brought back a lot of memories. As a young child we had few books in the house but my father was determined to see me educated as well as possible. He bought me every Saturday a new copy of Classics Illustrated series. This was a colour magazine which did children's versions of classic books...many long forgotten now; Master of Ballantrae, Coral Island, Treasure Island, Robinson Crusoe etc. It started me on my fascination for books and at 6 years old I used to go on my own to the local library and take out the latest Just William, Jennings and Derbyshire, Billy Bunter.

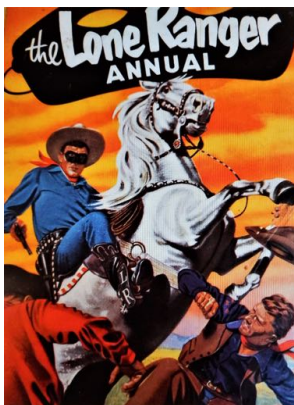


As far as comics were concerned I remember Rover, Hotspur, Valiant, Topper, Eagle, Lion, Beano and Dandy. My favourites, however, were the Wizard, Tiger and Roy of the Rovers.

I used to love Tupper the tough of the track and Basher Briggs. Both were from poor backgrounds, both worked in scrap metal, both hated bullies, defended the downtrodden and had an old fashioned deference for women. Tupper was a great athlete of all track sport and was the first to break the 4-minute mile, Briggs played football, cricket and rugby. Both used to say when things went awry 'blooming Ada'. Biggs drove a motorbike with a bath as a sidecar.



But Wilson, the wonder athlete was something else. He was born in Yorkshire in about 1790 and lived a hard life in a cave on a strict diet. He studied yoga and trained his heart to beat very slowly. He was thus still alive in 1940 and went missing on an air raid. He was the first man to climb Everest, first to fly solo over the Atlantic, shot down the Red Baron. V for Vengeance was a favourite story...allied escapees in the war fighting the Gestapo in occupied France.



Roy of the Rovers featured Roy Race of Melchester Rovers and his team's winning of domestic and European cups.

At Xmas I always got an annual. I still have various copies of Radio Fun, Beano and Dandy. Radio Fun did sketches on Benny Hill, Arthur Askey, Cardew Robinson, Norman Wisdom, Issy Bonn, Beverley Sisters, Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warris, Stan Bennett, and many more. I still remember the Bash Strert Kids with Lord Snooty, Desperate Dan, and Dan Dare.



My sister did get the Bunty, Girls Crystal, Jack and Jill, School friend, Janet and John, Girl Annual. Does anyone remember the Broons and Oor Wullie?

I could actually say much more. Perhaps my next foray will be about radio and TV in the 50's. Keep your eyes peeled.

Michael.

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Creative Writing Group

This week's contribution from the Creative Writing Group is one dug out from their Archives. It represents Jim Odell's recollections of his experience in being evacuated from London at the beginning of the Second World War, an exercise of somewhat dubious effectiveness.

AS I RECALL

The evacuation was a very haphazard affair, as far as the children were concerned anyway. Some thought they were going on holiday and were happy. The others were not going on holiday and were not happy. The latter was perhaps nearer to the truth.

It was at the end of August 1939 that I first realised things would change. To start with, we would have to go to school that week on Saturday and Sunday. This did not please me as school was not at the top of my list of priorities.

On Saturday mum took us, Jean my sister who is 18 months my junior and me, to the infant's school in Chiswick just to be counted, I think.

On Sunday we went back to the school, it was a different kind of day. Some old motor coaches were parked outside, the children lined up, with labels in our lapels to say who we were and square boxes containing gas masks slung over the shoulders. Despite my protests, we were loaded onto the coaches. As I got in, I did feel a moment of pride. This soon faded. As the coach drove away, it seemed that mum was at every corner, waving.

Some of the children were singing. Others, including us, were crying. The teachers tried to comfort us, but it was a difficult job.

The first night we stayed at a school, outside of London. Mattresses were laid out in the assembly Hall for the children to sleep on. It was a very dark night and lights were not allowed. At bedtime, we had to put our gas masks on. I fell asleep. Later I was rudely awakened by a hand feeling my face. It was a teacher looking for the gas mask. I had taken it off because I did not like it at all. She reprimanded me. I heard a loud engine noise overhead. I imagined an enormous aeroplane that was stationary over the roof. Then I fell asleep.

We were taken, the following day, to the first billet. A very posh house. At mealtimes, Jean and I were locked in the scullery whilst the family had their food. Afterwards, we came to the table. We were then subjected to many insults such as, being dirty and from London. A very cruel household. Later on, the coaches took us to Green End, Braughing. At a disposal centre the children were selected for their next billet. Jean and I were amongst the last. Finally, an old stout woman dressed in black and an unsmiling face took us. Apparently, she did not want a boy, but we came as a job lot

Mrs Page took us to her house. It stood in a group of houses that arched away from the road. The long front garden path led to the front door. This door went straight into the living room. Behind it was a thin wooden door like one from a garden shed with a latch on it. A flight of stairs led to the bedrooms. In the house was a young girl, a little older than us named Rosie. We do not know where she fitted in.

Sunday morning, Mrs Page waddled up the hill with a big square Wicker basket towards the hotel. There she collected their left-over dinners. This was our Sunday dinner. I cannot say that we were ever really hungry. When there was misbehaviour, the girls were always brighter than me. They went into the house by the back door. I went in the front where Mrs Page waited with a big stick. This stick she used liberally on me. I often received corrective training, which is why I am so well behaved now. Um well.....

After what appeared to be a lifetime, probably a couple of weeks Mum and Uncle Jim, her brother, came to spend the day with us. Then came the time for them to leave. We pleaded with them to take us home or at least to stay there with us but that was not possible. After another lifetime they did come again. This time it was to take us home.

It was about this time that the enemy started to bomb London!

Jim says that his sister's recollections of this same experience are quite different from his own. It all goes to show – something – but never quite what!

Anyway, thanks again to Jim and to the Group.

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That's all for now – keep apart and keep well and let's hope it won't be long. Oh, and remember to make a note of your National Health Number.

John

