



## Cotgrave and District U3A

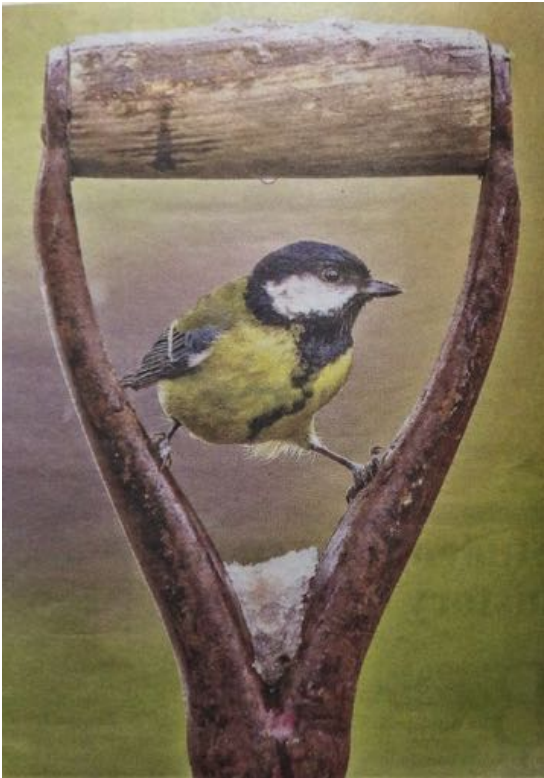
### Keeping in Touch 43

#### Signs of the Times

Two things which concern us most these days are making sure we get our Corona Vaccine jab and maintaining a two-metre distance between one another. We therefore have two lovely photographs to open our account this week, the one showing an over-eighties couple walking slowly over Epsom Downs on their way to the Racecourse for their vaccinations, the other showing the extent to which even our pets have learned to stand (or sit) in line at the local supermarket. Whether it is funnier that the cat should sit 2 metres behind the next customer or that the woman should stand 2 metres behind the cat is a moot point. Whichever way I look at it, it strikes me as extremely funny – I can only hope that you agree.



But coming much closer to home, Chris Tomblin has sent us this photograph of herself back in uniform at Nottingham University Cripps Health Centre, helping to accelerate the Covid vaccination rate. As she says, she had never expected to see herself in nurse's uniform ever again. One never knows what life has in store for oneself – I can't say that I ever expected to find myself editing a U3A Weekly Letter, for that matter! But "Well done, Chris" from all of us.



Nor should we overlook nature at this time of year – the birds can have a tough time when the weather's bad (as it seems to have been for much of January). However, the great tit which took its athletic stance in the handle of a Yorkshire gardener's spade made quite a picture. The photographer had been anticipating the arrival of a robin and got quite a shock to find the tit there, fortunately not severe enough to cause him to miss the shot. It is difficult to see how the bird could possibly have set himself more perfectly in the frame of the fork-candle. And, by the contorted angles of his legs, it would seem that he very well knew what he was doing!

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## A Saucy Tale

Chris Soar tells us that he has recently had his gate painted – and, no sooner done than some obliging by-passer felt the urge to chalk the initials ‘BNAG’ upon it! Why, exactly, will probably remain one of those minor mysteries of human behaviour but, as Chris so wittily expresses it, “It’s BANG out of order!”

Why any individual should feel driven to chalk *anything* on Chris’ gate may never be discovered but the incident set my mind working along the line of ‘why BNAG?’ So, of course, I looked it up on the Internet, only to discover that BNAG is the name of a spicy sauce made in Bridgend (half-way between Cardiff and Swansea, for those of us largely ignorant of the geography of Wales). I quote: “It is a sticky collaboration sauce using Bang-On Brewery’s 13% ale, full of BS Baltic Stout, infused with Jalapenos and Cocoa Ribs (yes, ‘Cocoa Ribs’!) in the brewing process. This is a rich and smoky, full-bodied sauce that hits the spot Bang-On.” You have been warned!

But now the mystery darkens – who else but a Real Ale Group member could possibly have thought of such an imposition on Chris’ gate? It clearly requires considerable insight to know about BNAG and some degree of subtlety to make use of lockdown to ensure the absence of any observer. Come on you lot – own up! Much as I deprecate the use of the Weekly Letter to drag members’ misdeeds into the light of day, there can be no excuse – newly painted, too! One can only wonder whether the Welsh connection might be significant.

But, then! Did it really happen? Or was it some figment of someone’s imagination? Again, we may never know – but you have to agree that, without it, we might never have learned about BNAG – and that would surely have been to our loss. After all, what is the Weekly Letter designed to do but keep us in touch. My only concern is whether this section should have been placed under the **Creative Writing** Heading? But it’s too late to change it now.



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## Ortons in Cotgrave

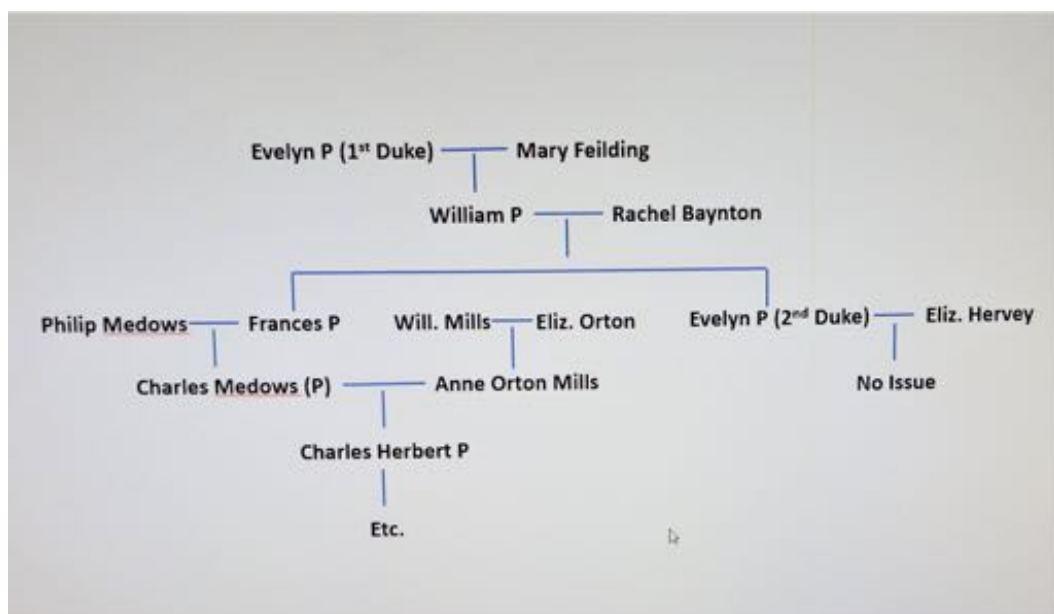
Now for the serious stuff. Did you know that there was an Orton influence on Cotgrave way back in the eighteenth century? It's been bothering me for a long time so I took the opportunity provided by lockdown to explore the details a bit more. It takes us back to a change in direction made by the Pierrepont family of Holme Pierrepont in 1788.

The Pierreponts, as one might suppose from the French name, could trace their pedigree back to the Norman invasion of 1066 but I won't bore you with the details. We take up the story with Evelyn Pierrepont (1665 – 1726) who was third son of Robert Pierrepont of Thoresby and Elizabeth Evelyn (daughter of John Evelyn, famous for his diary). Evelyn had a successful political career, serving as Lord Privy Seal and Lord President of the Council, and being created 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Kingston-upon-Hull in 1715. He had three daughters and a son, William by his first wife Mary Feilding and two daughters by his second wife Isabella Bentinck (daughter of 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Portland). William died of smallpox at the young age of 20 but still managed to marry and produce a son (another Evelyn), who succeeded to the Title as 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Kingston in 1726, and a daughter Frances.

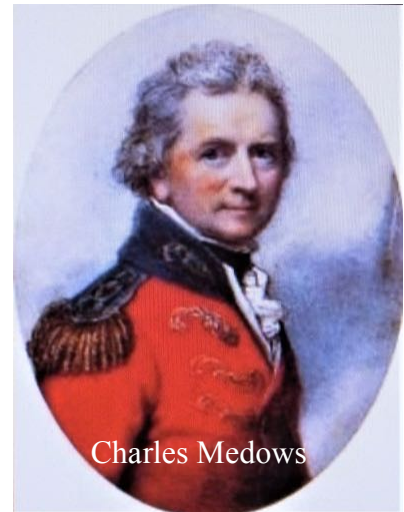
This second Evelyn turned out to be something of an embarrassment to the Pierreponts, being dissolute and interested in almost anything other than the furtherance of his country's well-being. He also played a central role in a confusing succession saga. In 1769 he married Elizabeth Hervey (nee Chudleigh) who had earlier been married to Augustus Hervey, Earl of Bristol and, though she claimed this earlier marriage had been dissolved, subsequent investigation suggested that this was not the case and her second marriage was therefore bigamous! Not only that but William Lewin describes her as 'notoriously expensive' - it seems that the two of them were well matched!



Anyway, the marriage resulted in no progeny, so Evelyn left the Pierrepont Estate initially to her but subsequently to his nephew Charles Medows, who had married Frances Pierrepont, daughter of the short-lived William (see my beautifully constructed - but much simplified - succession diagram).



The outcome of all this was that, when Elizabeth died in 1788, Charles Medows and Anne Orton Medows found themselves the proud owners of the Pierrepont Estate. To celebrate the event, Charles changed his name to 'Pierrepont' but he did not inherit Evelyn's title (titles cannot be transferred except to a male offspring). This meant that Charles was obliged to seek preference by offering his political support to a powerful parliamentarian, which turned out to be Thomas Peles Holles, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Newcastle, a close friend of the Prime Minister. During a long career in Parliament, Charles supported the Duke of Portland who helped him to ennoblement, firstly (1796) as Baron Pierrepont and Viscount Newark, then (1806) as the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Manvers. His major interest lay in farming reformation and he was involved in many Enclosure Acts, particularly the one in Cotgrave.



But what about these Ortons? William Mills married Elizabeth Orton in Richmond and they had two daughters Elizabeth Orton Mills (b. 1753) and Anne Orton Mills (b. 1756). Elizabeth married William Fleming in the Church of St Mary Magdalene in Richmond in 1775, though, sadly, he died only one year later. Her sister, Anne (b. 1756) married Charles Medows in St Mary Magdalene in 1774 when she was still a minor and this may have been the explanation for the fact that they were married by Special Licence, with the agreement of her father.

There is something odd about this marriage in the sense that Charles was twenty years senior to his bride – in fact, he was much about the same age as her father, whom he probably knew quite well! Knowing, in 1773, that he was due to inherit the Pierrepont Estate, Charles must have recognised the need for an heir, to continue the line, so he obviously needed a wife. However, not only was there a considerable age discrepancy, there was the matter of the Special Licence. Charles is on record as having paid the Bishop of Winchester no less than £200 for such a licence – the equivalent of something like £15,000 in today's money! (From the portrait of Bishop John Thomas, it looks as though he quite often received large sums of money for similar purpose!).

It certainly proved Charles to be a wealthy man but still puzzles me somewhat as to the reason for it. The marriage took place in the Bride's local parish church and there was no question of desperate urgency on account of Anne's being pregnant – their first child arrived well over nine months after the marriage! Anyway, there is no doubt that this marriage certainly lasted – Charles died in 1816, aged 79, while Anne survived until 1832, aged 76. They are both buried in Holme Pierrepont. Though I have no evidence to support the idea, it would seem more than likely that Anne's sister Elizabeth must have spent time in Holme Pierrepont too. Beyond that point, the name 'Orton' seems to have disappeared from the scene - until 1992, that is, when Joyce and John arrived but that is a very different story.



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## 1940s Radio

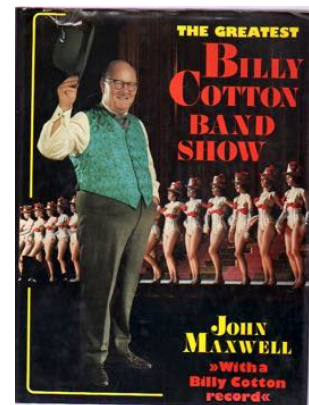
Michael O'Connor has come up trumps again with this account of his radio recollections from the 1940s.

Being born in 1946, I have recollections of the only media we really had then ----- the wireless as it was then called --- no, radio then! Many of you will have more recollections -- but here are mine --- so here goes. It was a golden time. I think that there were three main channels, the Light Programme, which featured light entertainment, news, pop music and children's programmes, the Home Service, which was more serious and carried general drama, and the Third Programme – highbrow! There was also the Government Overseas Service or Empire Service (now the BBC World Service). News was preceded at 59:32 by – “This is London” --- 59.35 – Liliburlero --- 59.55 – Greenwich Time Signal – 00.00 BBC World Service – The News, read by ---.

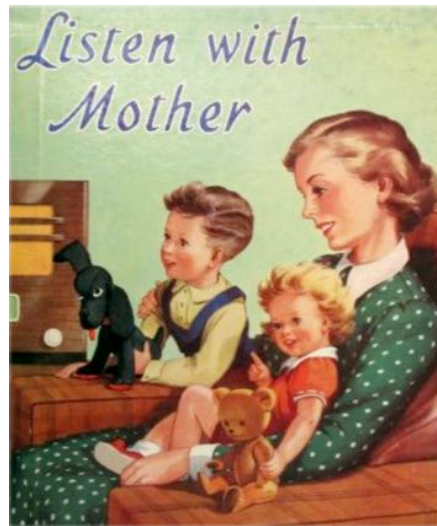
So, who remembers the Billy Cotton Band Show? Wakey, w-a-a-a-key? Sunday lunchtime on the Light Programme, from 1949 onwards, we used to listen, on a spartan lunch, fuelled by rationing, to Allan Breeze, Doreen Staples and Kathie Kay. Then there was the famous Children's Hour and I loved Jennings at School, Norman and Henry Bones and, especially, Toytown, with Larry-the-Lamb.



At first we didn't have a wireless, so I used to run every night to my Nana's to listen to my favourite: Journey into Space with Jet Morgan. His adventures involved landing on the moon and, in the Red Planet, visiting Mars in the far-off time of 1965. Dick Barton had 711 episodes and began at 6-45 on a Monday. Dick and his friends Jock Anderson and Snowy White got into and out of many tight spots. It was disapproved of by educationalists and clergymen. It had thirteen codes of conduct, summed up by: 'no sex, no booze, no bad language, all violence limited to a clean sock on the jaw'. Educating Archie featured Archie Andrews, sometimes with Max Bygraves, who had two catch phrases: 'that's a good idea son!' and 'I've arrived, and, to prove it, I'm here.' Life with the Lyons was a domestic sit-com with Ben and Bebe Daniels and their children, Barbara and Richard.



Then there was Listen with Mother which began with a signature tune, Berceuse from Faure's Dolly Suite. It began at 1-45 every day – are you sitting comfortably? – then I'll begin. Stories, songs, nursery rhymes – and an audience of one million! One song, in particular, I remember was always on: 'This is the way the old men ride – hobble-dee, hobble-dee, hobble-dee and down into a ditch!!



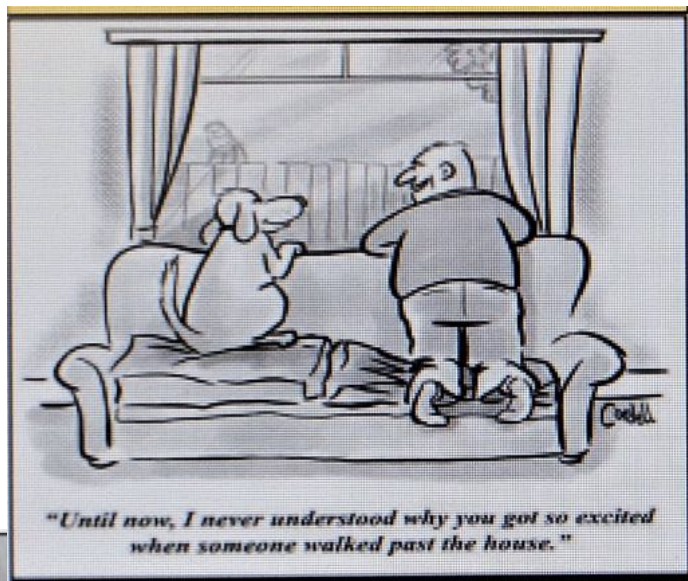
I really liked 'Riders of the Range', a musical drama of the Wild West. It had very many characters but I remember the Four Ramblers and the Sons of the Saddle – it always ended with arf, arf and, yes, the dog Rustler.

Music While You Work was on twice a day. It was supposed to improve morale. It was also supposed to help workers whistle and sing along as they worked. There was also Workers' Playtime. I never got into the Goon Show, though it was frequently broadcast. Many future stars 'appeared' on the wireless, first, such as Bruce Forsythe, Hattie Jacques, Sid James, Tony Hancock, Julie Andrews – and many more. Later, of course, I listened to Hancock's Half-Hour – then TV began to take over. Later in the 50's, of course, I listened, as many did, to Radio Luxembourg and what was then popular music. Does anyone remember Horace Bachellor and his football pools? We all learned to spell KEYNSHAM, Bristol! Soon I was into Whirligig, the Bumblees and TV – but that is for another time. I still call it The Wireless and my kids and grand-kids laugh but don't understand. Different times but Golden Memories.

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## Joking Apart

I received the Beeston U3A Monthly Journal recently and found much of interest, but, particularly the jokey bits. Here are a few which I found funny.



**If they put the vaccine in beer and opened up the pubs the whole country would be vaccinated by next Thursday. Just trying to help**

### New element discovered

Oxford University researchers have discovered the densest element yet known to science.

The new element, Governmentium (symbol=Gv), has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312.

These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called pillocks.

Since Governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected, because it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact.

A tiny amount of Governmentium can cause a reaction that would normally take less than a second, to take from 4 days to 4 years to complete.

Governmentium has a normal half-life of 2 to 6 years.

It does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganisation in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places.

In fact, Governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganisation will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration.

This hypothetical quantity is referred to as a critical morass.

When catalysed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium (symbol=Ad), an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium, since it has half as many pillocks but twice as many morons.

**Rob J Whitney**



## Creative Writing

Sue Hillyard has been kind enough to submit this poem which she wrote a long time ago. Thanks Sue, once again. It's as apposite now as it was years ago – the sad thing is, of course, that we are so severely restricted from sharing our emotions with our friends – but it will get better – the tiny hole in my left arm tells me so.

### HAPPINESS

Never expect happiness – it will elude you.  
Never ignore happiness – that will delude you.  
Appreciate happiness – that will excite you.  
Enjoy happiness – it will delight you.

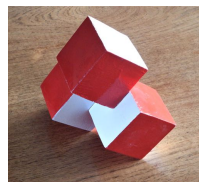
But when happiness fades and sadness slides into view,  
Be grateful of your emotions, for they define you.  
Sadness and happiness are both transient and real,  
They are genuine expressions of how you feel.  
These two emotions sit at each end of scale,  
As one comes into ascendance, the other will fail.

But linger only briefly in the dark of despair,  
Turn your back on the sadness, the worry and care,  
Aim to be happy and calm and content,  
For that is where most of our time should be spent.  
Share your heart with your friends, the good times and bad,  
Laugh when you're happy, or cry when you're sad  
And, in sharing with friends, consider what they are seeing  
Remember, as you show them, you reveal your true being.

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**Once again we come to the end of our touch-keeping for this week. Remember to take care, just as dutifully as ever, even if you have had your half-share of vaccine.**

**John**



**PS** Let me remind readers of the Zoom talk to be given by Brenda Ainsley at 10 am on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Her topic will be ‘The Climate Crisis – and Some Solutions’

You will need to register your intention to ‘attend’ by e-mailing John Haskell at:

[Cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:Cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com)