



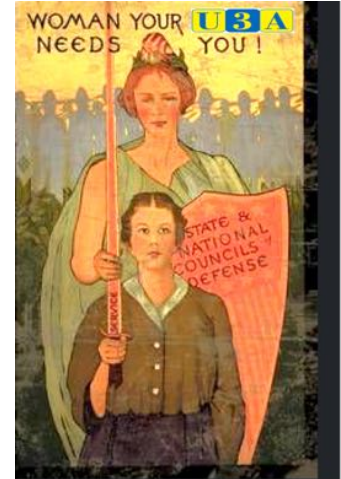
Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 57

Committee Membership



As a departure from our usual practice, we start our Weekly Letter this week with a *Serious Matter*. Members will appreciate that our local U3A Branch is guided by an Executive Committee of some eight to ten members (it varies with time!) and, needless to say, it is always the case that one or more Committee Member is obliged to resign as a result of our Branch Constitution or for personal reasons (such as old age!). It is therefore essential, if the Branch is to



continue, that new members are willing to volunteer their services in various ways. We are currently in a situation where there is a degree of urgency in this respect and I have been asked to bring it to everyone's attention. Please think seriously whether you might offer your help for the next year or so – the long-term future of Cotgrave and District U3A depends upon it! We have almost survived lockdown now and it is vital that we all pull together to re-start our various activities. I know very well that joining a Committee can be a fearsome undertaking (I did it myself a year or two ago!) but let me assure you that there would always be help and guidance from other members. For example, when I took over the task of finding speakers for our General Meetings, the previous office-holder June Odell held my hand until I was able to function unaided (I did my best to hold on longer but, sadly, she has a husband to look after!). Also, as a means of helping new members over their initial difficulties, they are encouraged to attend one or two Committee Meetings as observers. Think of it, perhaps, as another way of extending your range of really good friends within a vibrant community! We really would love to hear from you.

How to apply? The easiest way is probably to e-mail your interest (or questions) to the U3A address:

CotgraveU3A@hotmail.com

Or speak directly with our Chairman, Peter Shreyhane on 0115 989 9016.

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Cotgrave Census Returns

Quite a few years ago, Steve Cockbill and I spent quite a few hours transcribing the hand-written Census Returns from Ancestry into a type-written version fit for inclusion in the Cotgrave History Website and I also took the opportunity to write an article for the All Saints Church Magazine. I thought that it might interest today's readers so here it is in unadulterated form.

1851 And All That

As I may have mentioned before, the Cotgrave branch of the U3A, Local History Group is engaged in a programme to unravel the history of the village during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. An essential part of this is concerned with analysing data from Census Returns which were collected every ten years from 1841 onwards and I am currently wrestling with the task of transposing the hand-written 1851 Census into a more readily understandable Excel spreadsheet version. Anyone with experience of family history exploration will understand something of the nature of such a project – not to mention the poor quality of the handwritten version available from Ancestry, nineteenth century handwriting is characterised by a wealth of swirls and flourishes which tease the modern reader into near-maddening frustration. Trying to interpret unknown surnames can be, well, extremely trying! Christian names are somewhat less so, particularly as the residents of Cotgrave, alive in 1851, tended to concentrate their attentions on a very limited range of choices. What is more, they seemed drawn very strongly to Biblical names. Johns, James's, Josephs, Thomas's, Samuels and Daniels occur with remarkable frequency in the 'Male' column, Anns, Elizabeths, Marys, Hannahs, Sarahs and Rebeccas in the 'Female' column. There is also a well-defined trend towards naming at least one son after his father and one daughter after her mother, which implies yet another limit to the range of Christian names in regular use.

However, perhaps unsurprisingly, one does come across a few surprises. The occasional use of Theophilus set me wondering but I soon located it on the Internet. St Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles (probably both written by the same author) were addressed to a certain 'Theophilus', though his identification appears anything but 'certain'. The name itself means 'Friend of God' or 'Beloved of God' but it was apparently used both as a first name or as an official title. The Coptic Church insists that he was a Jew of Alexandria but various alternatives have been suggested. He may have been a Roman official (possibly a man converted to Christianity), St Paul's lawyer during his trial by Rome or (a modern preference) Theophilus ben Ananus, the High Priest of the Temple between 37 and 41 AD. But who are we to choose? There can, however, be no doubting the Biblical origin of the name. My only concern is with the poor recipient of such an appendage – how would he be teased, I wonder, by the lads in the Manvers Arms (or whatever it might have been called in 1851 – yet another puzzle to be addressed at a later date*)? Another surprise (of an inverse nature) is the lack of usage of the names Peter or David. The frequent use of other apostles' names seems to imply there may have been an embargo on the use of Peter. Could it have been that St Peter was regarded as too close to God to be dragged through the mire of common usage?

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Clearly, the name of Jesus was treated thus – perhaps Peter was too. But there can be no corresponding sensitivity over the use of David, which is commonly used today. King David did, of course, have his weaknesses but were they taken so seriously in 1851, one wonders, as to preclude the application of his name to even the least worthy of Cotgrave’s youthful prodigy? It is easy enough to understand parents’ reluctance to Christen their offspring Judas (!) but why not David? or, for that matter, Matthew or Mark or Philip, none of which figure in my recent struggles? In all probability, I am simply overlooking the importance of custom – it was likely, perhaps, that parents wanted their children to sound like their neighbours’ children and that was enough! We can hardly ask those concerned now!

I realise, in all this, that I could be accused of misogyny (one can’t be too careful these days!) so, to put the record straight, I should also give consideration to the female sex. Zillah was one girl’s name which took me by surprise. Where in the name of heaven did that come from? Well, it came, in fact, from Genesis. Zillah was the second wife of Lamech, a member of the house of Cain. The word itself means ‘shade’, though there is no evidence that she was in any way a shady character – she had children and helped propagate the Cainite clan. No more is known of her. By contrast, yet another girl’s name that appears in the 1851 Census, that of Lucy, means light. The Roman Church has a Saint Lucy who suffered martyrdom in the early years of the Christian Church but there is also a connection with Lucius of Cyrene who was a kinsman of St Paul. Either way, the name seems to qualify as ‘Biblical’.

So much for names. Another interesting feature of the Census concerns people’s occupations. It would take far too long to go into detail but one specific example is worth recording. A couple of chaps described themselves as ‘cordwainers’. It is a word that I had heard before but never understood – I thought, perhaps, that it might be connected with sailing ships but in that I couldn’t have been further from the truth. Consultation with the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary yielded the fact that a cordwainer was a shoe-maker. It turns out that in Mediaeval times the best quality leather (goats’ skin) came from Cordoba in southern Spain so the leather was known as cordwain and a shoe-maker who used this leather came to be known as a cordwainer. There then grew up a distinction between such craftsmen and their inferior counterparts, ‘cobblers’, the former making high quality shoes from new leather, while a cobbler was allowed either to repair shoes or to make them only from old (ie ‘used’) leather. The concept of the cobbler’s inferior status is reflected in our modern-day description of a poor bit of work as a ‘load of old cobblers’. And that seems to be a suitable point at which to finish this particular example.

John Orton

***It was known as the ‘Black Lion’ in 1851**

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I can now add a couple of photographs from the 1861 Census to illustrate something of the problems inherent in our work. These represent a complete page, together with a 'blown-up' version of the Theophilus Whitehead family which readers may be able to interpret! In case this is not the case, it reads:

“Private house – Theophilus Whitehead – Married – Age 34 – Ag. Lab. – Born Cotgrave
 Harriet Whitehead – Married - Age 31- Dressmaker – Born Aslockton
 plus one daughter and one son.

(Note the spelling of Aslockton).

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

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Parish (or Township) of		Municipal Borough of		Municipal Ward of		District or Township of		Townd		Number of Buildings, Nos. of		Inhabitants	
No. of	Street, No., and No. or Name of House	No. of	No. of	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether	Whether	Whether	Whether
118	Private House	1		John Bar	Head	Mar	34	Ag. Lab.	Cotgrave				
				Harriet do	Wife	Mar	31		Cotgrave				
				Agnes do	Daughter	Unm	12		Cotgrave				
				George do	Son	Unm	17	Ag. Lab.	Cotgrave				
				Robert do	Son	Unm	14		Cotgrave				
				John do	Son	Unm	12		Cotgrave				
119	Private House	1		Susan Fisher	Head	Mar	37	Dress Maker	Aslockton				
				Harriet Fisher	Wife	Mar	35		Aslockton				
				Susan do	Daughter	Unm	4	Scholar	Aslockton				
				Jenny do	Daughter	Unm	12		Aslockton				
120	Private House	1		Jacob Wilson	Head	Mar	44	Retired Ag. Lab.	Cotgrave				
				William do	Son	Mar	16	Ag. Lab.	Cotgrave				
				Ann do	Daughter	Unm	15		Cotgrave				
				Thomas do	Son	Unm	12	Scholar	Cotgrave				
				Elizabeth do	Daughter	Unm	11	Scholar	Cotgrave				
121	Private House	1		Theophilus Mitchell	Head	Mar	34	Ag. Lab.	Cotgrave				
				Harriet do	Wife	Mar	31	Dress Maker	Aslockton				
				Mary Ann do	Daughter	Unm	3	Scholar	Cotgrave				
				John Whitehead	Son	Unm	2		Cotgrave				
122	Private House	1		Ann Goodhall	Head	Mar	52	Charwoman	Cotgrave				
				Mary Wakefield	Wife	Mar	35	Womanserv.	Cotgrave				
				John do	Son	Unm	14	Ag. Lab.	Aslockton				
				Thomas Goodhall	Son	Unm	12		Cotgrave				
				Mary do	Daughter	Unm	3		Cotgrave				
Total of Houses		8		Total of Males and Females		10		14					

Private House	1	Theophilus Mitchell	Head	Mar	34	Ag. Lab.
		Harriet do	Wife	Mar	31	Dress Maker
		Mary Ann do	Daughter	Unm	3	Scholar
		John Whitehead	Son	Unm	2	

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While on the subject of Aslockton, we might note that it's main claim to fame is that Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury during Henry VIII's reign was born there in 1489 and was probably educated in the local secondary school, before proceeding to Cambridge University. Cranmer supported Henry's struggle to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled and, finally, married Henry and Anne Boleyn. He was responsible for producing the first two editions of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and remained faithful to the concept of an Anglican Church under Royal control, a position which proved inimical to the Catholic Queen Anne when she succeeded Edward VI in 1553.

This led to Cranmer being burned to death in Oxford, along with Bishops Latimer and Ridley. Their monument, the Martyrs' Memorial is one of Oxford's well-known landmarks.



Aslockton also has a Grade II Listed church, built in 1890 which draws an unusually acid comment from Nicholas Pevsner in his 'Buildings of England - Nottinghamshire' – "Utterly insensitive to the county or the

scenery". It also sports a well-preserved motte, named after Cranmer, about which Pevsner is much less critical! This is all that is left of Aslockton Castle, thought to have been built originally in the eleventh century.

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Bee Notices

It will not come as any sort of surprise to most readers to be told that there is an old wall at the bottom of Scrimshire Lane which serves as the home for a small colony of Red Mason bees.



This bit of wall, which forms part of the outhouses belonging to my home, almost certainly dates back to the time that the Scrimshire family lived in their Manor House somewhere near the top of our garden. It was probably part of the wall which delineated their property and this dates it to, at least, the sixteenth century and it may well be even older than that. It certainly vies with the red brick wall at the end of Risegate for the claim to be the oldest bit of masonry in Cotgrave. However,

that is not the point of this current article – it also happens to be the home of the aforementioned colony of bees. I am forcibly reminded of this fact because they have recently chosen to wake up and fly, an occurrence which demands my attention each spring in the shape of ‘Bee Notices’ – notices advising passers-by that they are harmless creatures who have never been known to sting, there being no need whatsoever for anyone to walk in the road to avoid them. My only advice would be “Keep your mouths closed so as not to risk swallowing one!”



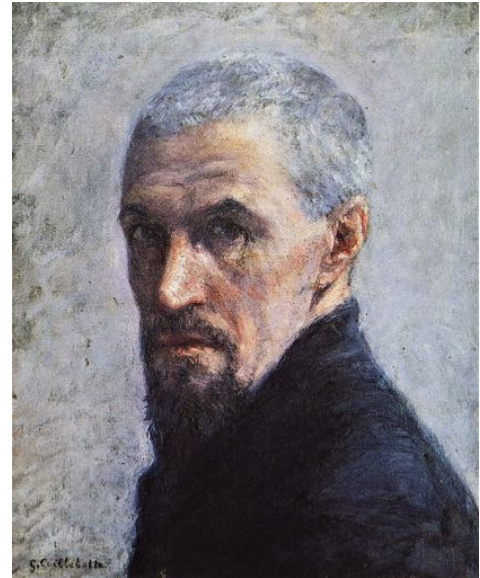
These Red Mason bees (or *Osmia Rufus*) are so-called on account of their covering of a mass of gingery hairs. They are solitary bees which do not live in large communities in a hive, as do honey bees but live individual lives, nesting in ready-made locations such as cracks between stones or flower stems, or, in this case, in an old wall – ‘old’ is significant because it implies the use of lime mortar which is softer than modern cement and therefore much easier to chew holes in!

These bees leave their homes in April and forage for pollen and nectar from a variety of flowers (the technical term is ‘polylectic’!). They are remarkable in having a tri-colour visual range, having visual sensors in the ultra-violet, the blue and the green spectral regions, which enables them to recognise the different flower species to which they are attracted. (Though, lacking a red sensor, one wonders how they recognise one another!) The females, which are larger than the males, mate only once, and then build cells from mud. Usually there will be six cells and the female lays one egg in each, also stocking each cell with food for the resulting offspring. The eggs hatch within a matter of weeks and reach adult status during the summer but these adults hibernate until the following Spring, when they become highly efficient pollinators during their short active lives of little more than three months. An interesting point is that the females lay female eggs at the back of the nest and male eggs towards the front, which means that the males leave the nest first in Spring and gather to await the arrival of the virgin females, when there is a bit of a set-to between the males. The males do not have a sting, so are obliged to fight in the manner of wrestlers!

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Art

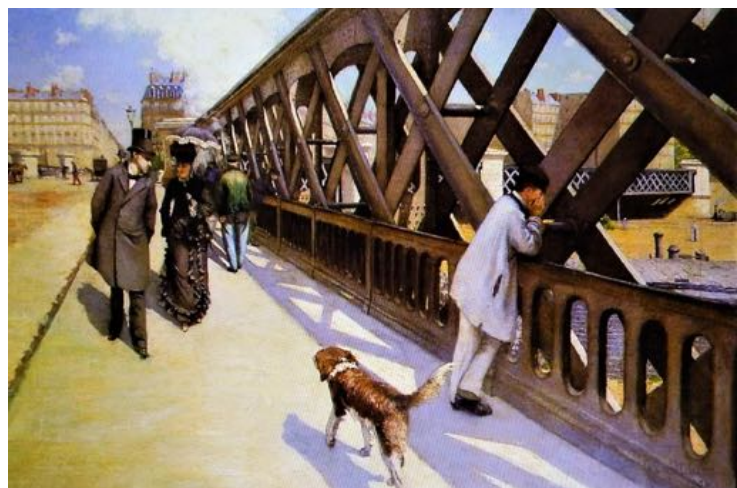
This week's Art contribution will be somewhat different! Joyce recently dug out a book on the work of the French artist Gustave Caillbotte. We think we bought it in Paris many years ago but neither of us can remember exactly where or when! No matter – it brought back memories of the time when we discovered this relatively unknown artist. It also reminded me that I had learned a certain amount of French when at school! Even more, it reminded us both of his paintings and I thought you might enjoy seeing a number of them, too. So, here goes! First, a self-portrait.



Caillbotte was unusual as an artist, being wealthy enough that he never needed to sell any of his work. He was born in Paris in 1848, the son of a rich businessman. He took a Law degree in 1868 and received a licence to work as a lawyer in 1870. He was also an engineer, as is well illustrated by several of his paintings. (As I said, he was an unusual artist!) He fought in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71, then took up the cause of

Impressionism in 1876 when he first exhibited a painting at the second Impressionist Exhibition.

This was 'Les Rabateurs de Parquet' (The Floor Scrapers) and reflected his interest in down-to-earth, practical scenes. Another example, which I happen to like, is 'Le Pont de l'Europe', a large bridge near Le Saint-Lazare railway station in Paris. (Only an engineer could have shown such an interest in a mere bridge!) It is also worth noting that his painting style is more realistic than that generally associated with Impressionism.



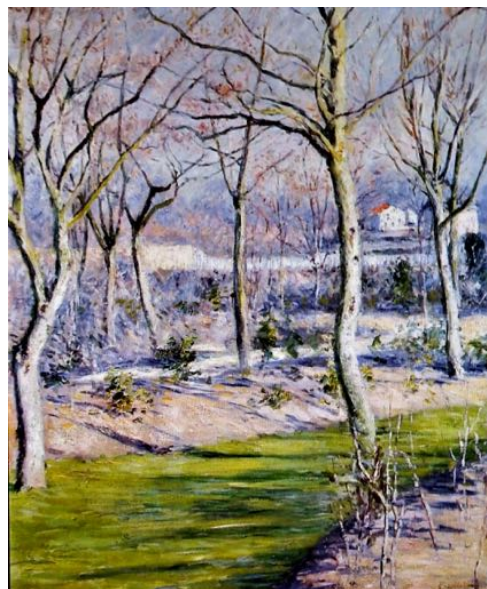
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Another feature of Caillbotte's oeuvre is his love of Parisian scenes as seen from a high vantage point such as the window or balcony of a multi-storey flat. Two examples are shown here, one with a woman as foreground, the other a man! The latter shows his brother Rene at the window of their home in Paris.



He painted many other domestic and family scenes, such as card players, piano-playing, embroidery, reading, dining, etc. One I particularly like is the depiction of a family member at his toilet, showing the type of bath currently in use during the late nineteenth century!

However, Caillbotte did not confine his paintings to Parisian scenes. He was also a keen gardener and obviously loved the countryside, as shown by his winter painting of the garden at Petit du Gennevilliers, where he moved in 1888, a place on the bank of the Seine near Argenteuil. He had a specialist interest in orchids.



He also painted many scenes on the river, including yachting and boating activities. Yet another of his interests was in racing yachts! He died in 1894 at the age of 45, leaving a huge collection of his work, together with a significant stamp collection. One wonders how he found time for these numerous interests.

As ever, it can all be summed up with an appropriate limerick:

Le section ici's about Art,
 So, in order to faire un bon start,
 J'ai dite vous a lot
 De l'artiste Caillbotte
 Et son oeuvre de work a la carte.

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Quiz Corner

Firstly, we have the answers to Peter Shreyhane's quiz of last week:

1. One Foot in the Grave *(I don't believe it.)*
2. Only Fools and Horses *(Lovely Jubbly)*
3. Catherine Tate Show *(Am I bovvered)*
4. Blue Peter *(Here's one I made earlier)*
5. Blackadder *(I have a cunning plan)*
6. Allo Allo *(Listen, I will say zis only wunce)*
7. Dads Army *(You stupid boy)*
8. Mastermind *(I've started so I'll finish)*
9. The Vicar of Dibley *(No, no ,no, no, yes)*
10. The Two Ronnies *(It's good night from me and it's goodnight from him)*
11. The Waltons *(Good night John boy)*
12. The Dick Emery Show *(Oh you are awful but I like you)*

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Then the answer to Sue Hillyard's puzzle from last week:

1 m is 1,000 times 1 mm

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For this week, we have another puzzle from Sue:

Three boys are talking about how many sweets they have.

A says "B has most sweets"

B says "If C gave me one sweet, I'd have twice as many as A"

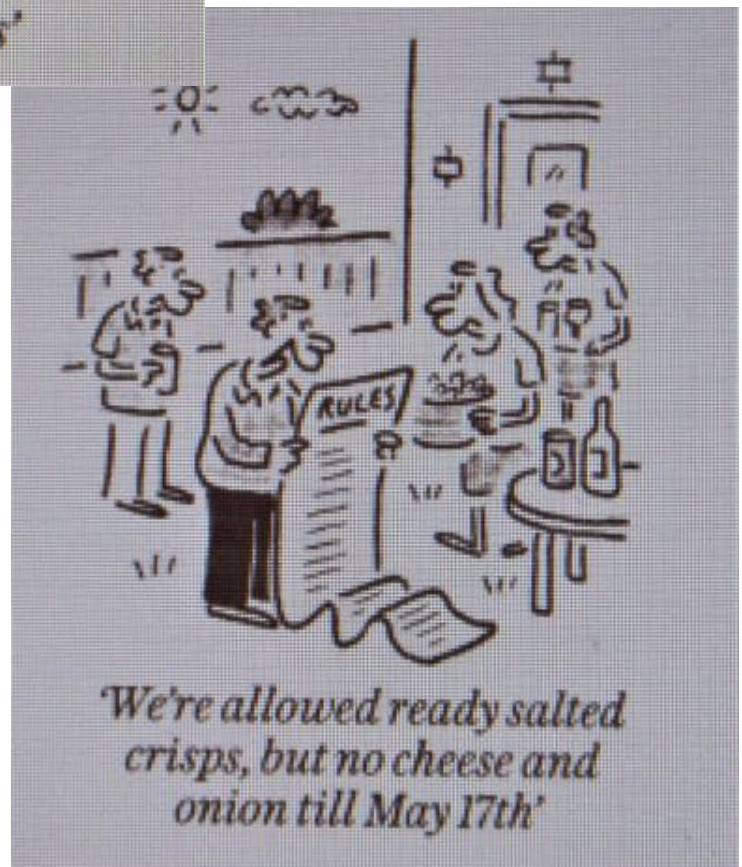
C says "It'd be better if B gave me two sweets; then we'd all have the same number."

How many sweets were there altogether?

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Cartoon Corner

Once again, we can bask in the luxury of two cartoons from Matt:



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Creative Writing Group

This week's contribution comes from Sue Hillyard on the topic of 'Settling in the Canadian Outback.'

Setting up home in the outbacks of Canada

Sue Hillyard

21 April 1798:

Dear Heavenly Father

The decision has been made - I am to go to Canada and make my way as a fur trader. I beg, Heavenly Father, that you will take good care of my wee Jenny and the bairn while I'm away. Watch over them, dear God, and keep them safe. I ask also, dear God, that you protect me too. Amen.

13 August 1798:

Dear God

Thank you, dear Lord, for saving me last night. The ship barely stayed afloat. There were never waves like these in the seas around Orkney. I pray that the bairn is thriving and that my bonny wee Jenny is well. God, give her the strength to cope. In Jesus' name. Amen.

28 August 1798:

Heavenly Father

Praise God that the crossing is over. The job will start now that I am in Canada. Quebec is not at all what I expected. So many French here, I pray that they are God fearing folk. Please, dear Lord, watch over Jenny and the bairn. Amen.

4 October 1798:

Dear God

Thank you for another day of successful hunting and for the bounty that you have provided. Dear God, Jenny would love it here. And, dear father, I ask that you watch over Jenny as her belly grows. I pray for a son this time. A little brother for our sweet Mary to love and care for. And, Lord, what a magnificent variety of animals and plants you have created. Jenny and Mary would love them all. Perhaps, dear Father, they would be scared of the wolves and bears but, dear Lord, I swear I would protect them with my life. Thank you for the safe delivery of my letters to Jenny. It has meant such a lot to get her news too, and I thank you for bringing her closer to me, if only on a piece of paper. And finally, God, thank you for providing Father McKenzie who is being kind enough to read and write the letters for Jenny. Amen.

12 December 1798:

Dear God

I beg that you keep me safe and I trust in your loving kindness. The cold here is dreadful and I can't get about much now. The snow is deep so at least I am able to track the caribou and racoons. Thank you for keeping my larder full, Lord, and protect me through the coming winter. Amen.

14th January 1799:

Dear God

Why did you bring me here to this freezing wilderness? Lord, is Jenny well? I pray for a sign that she has been safely delivered of a healthy child. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the kindness of the Iroquois people who helped me bring in more wood. God, they were truly sent from Heaven itself. Amen.

18 April 1799:

Father in Heaven

Thank you for delivering me and my mules. I ask that your blessings continue as I head for the trading post over the next few days. In Jesus' name, Amen.

12 May 1799:

Glorious Father in Heaven.

I give praise and thanks for the safe delivery of my son and pray that my family might one day join me in this land of opportunity. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for keeping Jenny and Mary and young Angus safe and well. Thank you for giving me this opportunity of providing for them even though I am far away.

Amen.

18 July 1799:

Heavenly Lord

God I am feeling so alone. I thank you for providing good food and plenty of beaver in my traps. Thank you for giving me the strength to fell the trees around my cabin. I pray that I continue with good health and good fortune and that you give me the strength to clear the land and start to build a home that Jenny and the bairns can share with me. Thank you, Lord, for the people of the Iroquois nation who have become my only friends. Amen.

23 September 1799:

Dear God

I praise and thank you for the bounty you provide. Dear Lord, I would never have had so much money if I had stayed on Orkney. The furs you have provided have brought in a record return and I pray that Jenny and the bairns will now have enough to see them through the winter. Thank you, Lord, for my friends the Iroquois, I trust that they will also show their gratitude to you for the rum and brandy that I will take back for them. Amen.

19 December 1799:

Oh dear God in Heaven

What have I done! Forgive me, Father, for straying from your path. I am truly a sinner. My only hope, dear Lord, is that you know me well and know that I am only a lowly man - the lowest of the beasts. I am weak but you know, dear Lord, that a man has needs. I was weak and she was a temptress. But she is kind and gentle and in so many ways, dear God, reminds me of my sweet Jenny. God, you know I have goodness in my heart. I pray that Jenny will never know of this. Dear God, help your poor servant. Amen.

4 February 1800:

Father in Heaven

You know that I am a weak man but, Father, I want to thank you for this women who is warming my bed at night. And thank you for giving her the skills to heal my wounds from the wolves. Without her patience and her knowledge I would surely have died. I talk to her often about Jenny and the bairns and have told her that they will come soon. I think she understands. Amen.

18 September 1800:

Father in Heaven

The land is cleared and the cabin is now re-built strong and secure with four good rooms. It matches anything on Orkney and is fit to raise a family. I thank you for another bountiful spring and summer and I pray that you will safely deliver my letter to Jenny asking her to join me.

Tanihana and her people moved on for the summer and she is starting a family with her childhood sweetheart, Tworivers. Praise God for these people, and especially for Tanihana who has helped me keep my sanity when I might otherwise have given in to excess with the needs of the flesh.

Thank you, Lord, for providing me with a gentle woman who has kept me from straying and becoming like so many others who take their carnal pleasures with multiple women at the post. Lord, I also thank you for providing me with more mules that can carry more hides and then return to the trading post to collect more furniture and provisions in readiness for my beloved Jenny and our two bairns. Amen.

18 October 1800:

Dear Lord in Heaven

Praise be, Jenny will join me next March, when spring is due to start. I pray that my friends, the Iroquois, will be close as the winter draws in, but, dear Lord, knowing that my Jenny will be here soon, I pray to you and thank you for the strength not to ever need another women in my bed. Jenny is all I need. She has said that Mary is a bonnie wee thing and that Angus has my red hair. My son! Jenny is my dearest love and I know she will make the cabin into a wonderful home for us all. Thank you, dear Lord, for the two wonderful women who have kept my life worth living.

Thank you, Father, for bringing me to this land. I pray that this beautiful land will prosper and that Jenny and I will prosper, too. Keep us all safe from the terrors of this world, keep my family safe as they journey across the ocean and, finally, Lord, God bless Canada. Amen.

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That's all for this week. Enjoy the Bank Holliday. Thank you to our contributors.

John

