

Cotgrave & District



Quarterly Gazette

No 12

Winter 2018



Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to all our readers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Quarterly Gazette of Cotgrave & District U3A. We cover news from the Groups, forthcoming events and other interesting items relevant to our U3A.

If you have any items for inclusion or comments please send them to
The Editor at cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com

*This Gazette is produced by Cotgrave & District U3A.
Views expressed are not necessarily those of the U3A, the Committee or of the Editor*

The Trials & Tribulations of a Group Leader(s) – Luncheon Group



Desna and I started the Luncheon Group soon after we joined the U3A when it was in its infancy.

Our only qualification for running the group, apart from my size, was that we enjoyed food and also enjoyed eating out. But how do you run a luncheon Group? Luckily we had some advice from established U3A Luncheon Groups in the area, some of it conflicting.

Some groups thought it a good idea to collect the monies up front; some thought it reasonable to sort out the bill at the table following the meal and others paid the organiser and then left them to sort out the final bill. Initially we thought that collecting the money up front after members had made their selections would be easiest. This soon proved to be the wrong choice and was quickly changed to individuals paying directly to the venue after the meal – especially as the Group grew larger

The other lesson we learnt early on was the need to order a few days ahead, as this hopefully would avoid long waits for the food.

Then there is the problem of how to choose the venue; certainly in the early days this involved visits and trials, it was an onerous task but somebody had to do it.

Venues range from pubs to restaurants and bistros. We have visited the two pubs in the village, been out to the Vale of Belvoir and also visited establishments in West Bridgford and Nottingham. In choosing where to go one needs to be conscious of the price range of the menu.

We gave up running the Group for a couple of years when we were busy boating in Ireland, the Group being taken over by Anna Franks who introduced a good selection of different types of venue, i.e. Adams Restaurant, part of Nottingham College and Carluccio's.

We were invited to take over the reins again after our return, as Anna was busy setting up the Theatre Group, and doing a great job.

I think we have now established a system that works well, visit the venue if it's new to us, get copies of the menus, email all the members of the group, get their choices. We also, if possible, take the menus to the General Meeting so those without internet access can see the real menu and order. Then we send off all the details to the venue. Numbers are usually between 20 and 26, but we have had as many as 34.

We do have problems, it's that phone call usually the evening before or on the morning of the Lunch "oops sorry can't make it, not well, car won't start, friends coming" so back to the venue to change things.

Then of course there are problems in the restaurant, people sometimes forget what they ordered and if there are two similar options have the one they think is theirs. Some places struggle to cope with the numbers, - waiting over an hour for the main course, some having finished their meal whilst others are still waiting for their starter, lessons are learnt and we don't normally make a return visit. But in general it goes well and there's plenty of good-humoured chat and normally good food.

And when people say, "thanks for organising it" it makes it all worthwhile.

Science Group

The October meeting of the Science Group turned out to be a tremendous success. Because of a wedding at the Manvers Arms we were obliged to meet in my house in Scrimshire Lane but the important factor was the choice of speaker. Mike Merrifield, Head of Astronomy Department, University of Nottingham gave us a beautifully illustrated talk on 'Twenty-First Century Telescopes'. He held everyone's attention for a whole hour and answered a multitude of questions afterwards. Topics included Black Holes and the Big Bang. And what came before the Big Bang? "Nothing" said Mike! Consternation among Cotgrave Science Group members! It was a thoroughly stimulating and entertaining afternoon, we all agreed.

November will see us beginning a potentially lengthy series of talks by John Ainsley on subjects like "Where does our petrol come from?" But we also have a visiting speaker in December, Mike Seymour, who will describe his experience at BP concerned with oil exploration. Perhaps we need to balance all this with something on wind turbines – I shall see what can be done!

Our April meeting will be concerned with the temptingly attractive subject of 'Recycling', possibly followed by a visit to the recycling depot in Mansfield. We are nothing if not versatile.

Walking Group

Our first short walk of this quarter was a visit to Nottingham Arboretum to view the dahlia borders that run the length of the park. At the time of the walk they were in full bloom and gave us a splendid show in a variety of colours.



Our second walk took us through the streets of West Bridgford to join the footpath by the side of the River Trent where we walked past the Nottingham Forest Football Ground, the Boat Houses and under Trent Bridge before leaving the river at the Suspension Bridge using the streets to return to our starting point.

Our final walk was to follow the line of Arkwright Street from the Midland Station to Trent Bridge using photographs of old Nottingham to understand how the area had changed over the years. We continued by the Victoria Embankment playing fields to plot where the railway crossed the River Trent before its closure and then joined the Nottingham Canal footpath to return to the station.



Film Club

The Broadway productions have been their usual mixture of topics with two films being shown in Black and White: - a Polish film 'Cold War' telling the tale of two musicians from different backgrounds and with different temperaments who became close in the 1950's and 'The Marvellous Mabel Normand' with the story of Mabel and her comedy talent in silent films co-starring with Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keeton.



'Widows' first shown as a TV series, follows 4 widows who decide to take matters into their own hands when their husbands are killed during a daring heist, and 'A Star is Born' is a re-make of the love story between a seasoned musician and the struggling artist he discovered. 'First Man' follows the life of astronaut Neil Armstrong from his entry into NASA's space programme and his walk on the moon 8 years later, with 'Spitfire' following the aircraft and how it changed the course of war whilst 'Peterloo' tells the story of the peoples peacefully gathering to demand changes to the British electoral system and the events that led to what is known as the Peterloo massacre in St. Peter's Field, Manchester on the 16th August 1819.



Two comedy films were 'Swimming With Men' where in an attempt to turn his life round a man joins an all-male synchronised swimming team and 'Johnny English: Strikes Again' where the English spy comes out of retirement to identify who has carried out the cyber-attack revealing the identity of active undercover agents.

There were two films telling the story of how women discovered their identities when circumstances changed their way of life. 'The Wife' sees a 40 year devoted wife reach a breaking point when she realises she has sacrificed her own dreams to support her husband, ignoring his infidelities, and bad behaviour, and 'Wildlife' where the wife explores her new sense of independence when her husband loses his job and his sense of purpose in life.



'King of Thieves' tells the tale of a group of 60 and 70 year old bored criminals who carried out the jewellery theft from the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit Company in 2015 and a ghost story 'The Little Stranger' sees a doctor called to see a patient in a declining Hall where his mother once worked as a housemaid.

The films shown at Long Clawson where 'Finding Your Feet' were on the eve of her retirement a middle class snob discovers her husband has been having an affair and moves in with her bohemian sister who lives on a rundown inner city council estate.



'The Post' tells the story of an unlikely partnership between the Washington Post's first female owner and the editor as they race against time to expose a massive cover up of government secrets that spanned the terms of 4 US Presidents. 'The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society' is the story of a free-spirited female writer who in 1946 receives a letter from a literary club started in Nazi-occupied Guernsey, and her curiosity leads her to visit the island and meet the members, a meeting which changes the course of her life.

Table Tennis

The Group has now been running for 9 months and whilst it has not grown in numbers the regular attendees have shown great enthusiasm at each session. Normally playing doubles we have been able to ensure members get at least four sessions at the table at each meeting and this has resulted in everyone gaining experience and improving their table tennis skills.

Luncheon Club



In September we went to The Meadow Covert, the venue proving very popular with the members. The choices suited everybody as did the reasonable prices. The food was a little slow in coming for a few, this being due to all the vegetables being freshly cooked, but better this than the food being left under hot lamps. It was nice to see that most of the diners left clear plates.

October found us at The Apple Tree in Compton Acres for a return visit. 20 of us went and were seated in a nice section off the main dining area. The Starters and Puddings were good and ample; unfortunately the main courses were a bit disappointing obviously prepared early and when served they were a bit dry. On the plus side the chips were very good. Service was a bit slow, due to a lack of staff and a busy venue. We rated it a score of 5 out of 10.



A good number of us ventured out for the November outing that was to The Keyworth Tavern, recently taken over by a couple that had left a city pub to come into the village.

Typically the pub managed to seat us together and reasonably comfortably. Not many had starters, the prawn cocktail was OK except for the amount of onions. Main courses were good with a good range of choices and good sized portions.



Unfortunately service was slow, starters were not served till 13:20, Mains started coming out at 13:40 and it was about 14:00 when the last main was served - this is in spite of pre-ordering. Consequently people were leaving before some would have ordered puddings.

It was a shame about the long wait for food, otherwise the place was a "typical pub" and we gave it a score of 5 for service and 7 for food.

Group News

Theatre Group

The Wipers Times by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

Before the Great War, Ypres in the Flanders region of Belgium was a delightful medieval town but after battles had rolled backwards and forwards over it several times it was totally destroyed. The town's name was too much for English-speaking troops and by the time a battalion of Sherwood Foresters was posted there early in 1916 it had become generally referred to as Wipers.

Soon after their arrival a group of the Foresters discovered a printing press which they were able to get working and with their Officers' approval they decided to produce a newspaper. Their intention was not to report on the war and trench conditions but to try to lift the spirits of front line troops.

For its August outing the Theatre Group went to see a stage production in words and music of Ian Hislop's and Nick Newman's take on this true story. The Wipers Times was produced monthly and widely distributed from February 1916 to December 1918 and on-stage the Hislop humour came through very strongly - in fact at times audience applause threatened to stop the show. Two awful years on the battlefield produced two hours of fine entertainment in Nottingham's Theatre Royal.



Kindertransport by Diane Samuels



Eighty years ago families were making the decision to send their most precious jewels, their children, away to a place of safety. The Kindertransport was a scheme that allowed Jewish children to travel from Germany to a place of safety in the UK and beyond.

At that time some folk in Britain generously took in these children with little knowledge of their family or circumstance. This play draws out the humanity that existed then as people sought to help refugees arriving with no money, speaking a foreign language. It explores the complex relationships that developed and were severed as a consequence. Small children settled into new homes and missed their German families, most of whom they never saw again.

The history of the horrific Nazi treatment of Jewish people, gypsies, gays and trade unionists is well documented. The emotional impact is not easily understood because of the horror of the atrocities. As parents and grandparents we cannot properly appreciate the scale of this genocide, certainly not the trauma of losing our children. The play helps us to understand by peeling back the relationships between daughter, mother, and grandparent. Love and loss are explored. Above all survival is celebrated but sometimes at a terrible cost.

It was a moving and compelling story with great impact on the audience. The stage set was simple, never changed but cleverly designed to allow memories to peep through time; to portray experiences of fear, travel and political bullying.

It was wonderful to see school pupils there; some aged no more than 10 years old. They responded well and it was a salutary lesson that we should never underestimate the capacity of our children to understand and empathise with suffering and vulnerability. They also have the capacity to abhor injustice and to develop into citizens of the future who forge a better, safer world.

Group News

Theatre Group (continued)

The Madness of George III by Alan Bennett



This was a stunning production in every way. It follows the descent into madness and subsequent recovery of a man who was all-powerful, in many ways admirable but also arrogant and irritating. Around him are two political factions, The Whigs and the Tories, with fears about the chaos that could ensue if the government should fall, and the need for the king to be presentable to maintain stability. The Prince Regent is waiting in the wings to seize power; there is little love within the King's family. Four different doctors (interestingly, some played by women in male costumes) have, by modern ideas, virtually no idea what ails the King or how to cure him. He is subjected to horrific remedies such as cupping while the audience looks on in horror. He is also separated from the Queen, whom he loves deeply. The couple in happier times referred to each other as Mr and Mrs King.

So lots of food for thought in the play, added to also by covert references to topical concerns - jokes about America and Europe made the audience laugh.

Mark Gatiss's performance as George was flawless. He was totally convincing at both ends of the spectrum, the kingly George and the deranged George, the latter twitched and uttering gobbledygook at high speed. The set was impressive - realistically portraying a number of rooms, all in perfect Georgian style - the palace, the King's bedroom, Parliament, and several more. The costumes too were perfect.

It was not surprising that this production was featured recently on National Theatre Live. It was as good as one could have seen anywhere.

Next visits for the Group are:

Thursday January 17th. Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood. Tickets still available, money needed by the end of this month. £14.25 a ticket.

Saturday February 23rd. Calamity Jane. A couple of places still available.

Money needed by the January meeting. £12.50 a ticket.

Chess

Chess is one of our newest Groups, led by one of our newer members, Bernie Besnard. He has been playing for many years and started playing at school where he was Guernsey Grammar School Champion.

He says: "having joined U3A in Cotgrave, I am attempting to establish a Chess Group. My recent first effort has unfortunately only produced five people so we have left the matter for the time being until the New Year when we shall look to set up an "introduction to the game of Chess" as we think some people did not put their names forward as they did not feel they knew enough about the game. Our aim will be to teach people how to play, leading eventually to matches taking place.

So if you may be interested look out after Christmas for our publicity. If you wish to discuss anything give me a call on my mobile 07903178424".

Tony's Winter Quiz 2018

1. What is a model of excellence or perfection?
2. Larimar, Sodalite and Aventurine are all types of what?
3. Which is the largest of the Florida Keys?
4. In which country was the emperor called the 'Son of Heaven' ?
5. Whose autobiography was self-deprecatingly called 'Dear Fatty' ?
6. What flower is associated with vanity and egoism?
7. Whose mistress was Clara Petacci ?
8. Alfred Jingle is a character in which Charles Dickens novel?
9. Which comedy writing duo created 'The Glums'?
10. What do the following words have in common?
PURSUE ENJOY JETSAM JUBILEE MISOGAMY

Answers on Page 17

It's a Cracker

I am reading a book on the history of Glue – I can't put it down

I used to have a job collecting leaves – I was raking it in.

What do you call a horse that moves around a lot – unstable

What did the ocean say to the shore – nothing, it just waved

What do you call someone that dresses up like a noodle – an impasta

Group News

Snooker Group



This Group continues to meet in the Cotgrave Welfare Social Club on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 2.00. The Welfare has two great tables and we have a regular group of 5 keen members. Some of us are good, some are ok and some are there to make up the numbers. But we all enjoy the relaxed and very

friendly atmosphere. If you feel a welcoming and entertaining Group is what you need...come and see us.

Art Group

The Art Group had an interesting and successful morning with Lynne Whitfield a local artist.

We painted a still life of red onion and tomato using wet-on-wet technique which was new to some of our members, the 3 hours flew by and the paintings show the success!

We are a thriving Group, always looking for new members. We are regularly getting 10-14 artists enjoying our Thursday mornings and the talent and different styles are always a delight.



Group News

Travel Discussion Group

Chatsworth House, Gardens, Christmas Market and Farm Shop

On Saturday 17th November the Travel Group ran its first day trip when 15 members visited Chatsworth House. The day out was operated and organised by Sharpe's Coaches and from being picked up in Cotgrave we proceeded to the Chatsworth Farm Shop in the village of Pilsley. The Farm Shop was well stocked with Christmas Fare including a great variety of cheeses and bread products, chocolates, biscuits, and game as well as the usual assortment of fruit and vegetables. There was even time to take a coffee/tea in the well-stocked café. Returning to the coach we were then taken in to Chatsworth Park not only to visit the Christmas Market but also for a booked time visit to the house and view of the rooms which were decorated to the theme of 'Once upon a Star'. The Christmas Market stalls were brimming with all manner of Christmas gifts ranging from wooden toys, decorations, all types of food and some liquid refreshments: the latter two allowing some free samples. With the weather turning warm in mid-afternoon some members enjoyed a walk around the gardens, particularly the cascade waterfall. As evening fell it was time to re-join the coach and travel home after what was a very enjoyable day.



General Open Group

First Aid

Following an advertising circular from the British Red Cross the Committee decided that we should take up the offer to run a simple First Aid session for our members. 17 members attended the 2 hour session and were shown how to deal with someone who was unconscious and not breathing. Using a dummy they were shown how to administer the appropriate means of resuscitation until a more qualified medical professional arrived at the scene. Being older members of society many members expressed their surprise that methods taught to them in their younger days had been superseded with new methods. They were shown how to deal with adults, children and babies by the use of dummies and even where people have trouble being able to bend, or have to use a walking stick to get about, how they can perform this first response task. They were then shown how to deal with someone choking, and how to place someone in the recovery position. The session ended with a discussion on how to treat everyday accidents, e.g. a fall, burns and cuts and how to use a community defibrillator which actually talks you through all stages of its operation. All members expressed their thanks to the Red Cross instructor and came away with the knowledge of what to do if faced with such incidents.

Real Ale Group

In September, R.A.G. (The Real Ale Group) travelled to its furthest venue yet, The Star Inn at Beeston.



We alighted from the bus outside Nottingham Station and walked through the station to the tram stop. That walk was about as long as our usual walk from the bus to a pub! We caught the tram to Beeston but, none of us having travelled that way before, we got off a stop too early and had to walk a quarter of a mile to the pub. The Star was what we once called a “spit and sawdust” pub, but the range of ales was very good, the staff very accommodating, and we had a room

to ourselves.

One intriguing item on the usual pub menu was “Bread and Dripping”. This was a nostalgic event not to be missed! However, the dripping was very runny and was, in fact, dipping dripping. It was quite pleasant however.

October saw us at the Test Match on Gordon Road, West Bridgford. This listed, art deco pub is one of our favourites and, again, it didn’t disappoint. As well as the pleasant surroundings, the choice of ales, the helpfulness of the staff, and the adequacy of the pub grub were well up to scratch.



In November, we went on yet another adventure catching the long haul bus from The Cross to Bingham. The run was about 45 minutes and seeing our surrounding countryside from a bus would have been novel and interesting. However, unfortunately, the bus hasn’t been cleaned for about five years, and the windows were filthy! Sitting at the rear of the bus, with the raised floor, allowed one to look over the dirtiest part of the window and see something. We arrived at The Butter Cross in Bingham and enjoyed an excellent selection of beers and good fish ‘n’ chips at an astonishingly low price (£11.50 for 3 pints and the meal).



On the way back we caught the Nottingham bus, alighted at Holme House, and 5 minutes later, were on the bus to Cotgrave.

December will see us at another favourite pub – The Stratford Haven, WB.

Our good friend, David, missed the Bingham trip, being in hospital, and, of course, he will accompany us no more. David only drank wine, but he never missed a R.A.G. meeting in 4 years. Although he said little or nothing at a meeting, he said he really enjoyed the banter and repartee, and the general companionship. 2019 will, hopefully, see us at some new venues, and maybe we may see a new member to fill David’s place.

Group News

Croquet Group

This year has been very successful, so far as the Croquet Group is concerned.

The weather has been exceptional, and, despite the drought, the lawn stayed in reasonable order, apart from Chaos Corner! This is the far corner of the lawn which slopes down due to ground shrinkage.

It has always been a challenge, but this year it was exceptional because of the very dry surface.

Whilst this causes frustration to the player, it provides huge amusement for the spectators.

The situation is that, after going through Hoop No. 2, you go across the top of the lawn to Hoop No. 3, which is situated in Chaos Corner. Whether you hit too short or too long, your ball will usually end up right in the corner against the honeysuckle. You try to gently hit it up the slope so that it is in front of the hoop, but, 9 times out of 10, it will slowly grind to a halt and trickle back down to you!



If you're unlucky, as most of us are at least some of the time, you may still be trying to get through Hoop 3, when the leading player has negotiated all 6 hoops, and hit the finishing post.

However, I intend to level out this corner over the Winter, which will speed play, but provide fewer moments of hysterical laughter from the onlookers.

The 2019 season will, weather permitting, start in April. You will, of course, be notified nearer the time.

Do try it at least once next year. We look forward to welcoming you.

Singing for Pleasure

It was a privilege and a pleasure to once again be invited to lead the singing at this year's U3A party which was held on 30th November. The large room at The Welfare was a big space to fill but we sincerely hope that our efforts went some way to making the evening enjoyable for those that attended.

As the celebration was in November this year, we didn't sing any Christmas carols but, instead, shared some of the songs that we sing as part of our usual weekly sessions. Malcolm Baxter was in charge of putting the words to songs up for the audience to sing and he did a great job of making sure everything was just perfect. The ukulele group joined us on stage for two songs and the cheerful strumming was well received by the audience.

I want to close 2018 by thanking all of the singers for their continued support of the group and by wishing everyone Happy Christmas and a fabulous 2019!

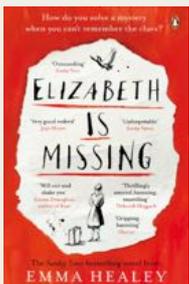
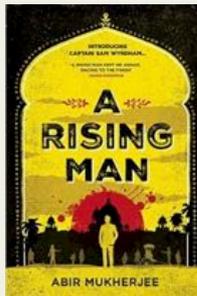
Book Club



The first book was *The Miniaturist* by Jessie Burton, this was a suspense fiction set in 1686 in Amsterdam. This scored an 8. It is a story about a newly married 18yr. old English girl who is presented with an extraordinary cabinet, the contents prove mysterious but mirror her real life. A story of love, obsession, betrayal and retribution.

Lots of feedback and discussion, very well written and enjoyed by all

This was followed by *A Rising Man* by Abir Mukherjee. This is set in Calcutta in 1919 and is a detective and mystery. It opens with murder but here is history, rebellion, Indian terrorism and political changes to the colonial and Raj ways. Lots of feedback and views from members about this excellently written book, receiving a score of 8. We will be visiting further books in the series.



The next book is *Elizabeth Is Missing* by Emma Healey. This is a complete change of topic. A book which promises to be thrilling, haunting and unsettling and will stir and shake you. The title is a note written by Maud who is determined to discover what has happened to her friend. This is a different type of book and should evoke a hearty and deep discussion at the next meeting in December.

And finally a poem from the Group Leader

I opened a book and in I strode.
Now nobody can find me.
I left my chair, my house, my road.
My town and all my world behind me.
I opened a book and found some friends
I shared their tears and laughter.
To the happy ever after.
I finished my book and out I came.
My chair and my house are just the same.
But I have a book inside me.

History

We are coming to the end of an excellent and fruitful year. We have had a planning meeting and have mapped out next year's format. This will revolve around speakers, visits and work on our Cotgrave project. Looking ahead we



have pencilled in the Framework Knitters Museum at Ruddington, a talk from a colleague about his African roots and family tree

and have not abandoned our interest in a visit to Bletchley Park and the code breakers. Our regular meetings on the second Monday of every month have remained very well attended. We have rarely had less than 15 and, when we have had our talk on the Cotgrave Mine, we have had nearly 40 attending. Many of our members give sterling support in research and hosting active debates. We couldn't function properly without the dedicated work of the members. So again, if you are interested in Cotgrave history and its impact on the wider world...come along to the Manvers and join us. Our meeting in December will concentrate on a quiz with prizes!

Comedy Corner

I can see two years into the future.

I have 2020 vision

Cotgrave & District U3A 5th Birthday Party

Oh what a party! 90 members and friends meet in the Welfare to enjoy an evening of music, singing, a monologue and buffet to celebrate five years since our U3A was formed. Entertainment was provided by Sue Tatum with the Singing for Pleasure Group and the Ukulele Group. There was also an entertaining monologue by Peter Shreyhane. Thanks must also go to Pat, Sue and Maureen who did all the organising..



Cotgrave & District U3A 5th Birthday Party (continued)

We were greatly entertained by Singing for Pleasure Group who performed a song to the tune of Cabaret with words by Sue Tatum called

COME, JOIN THE U3A

What good is sitting alone in your room, come hear the music play
Life is a cabaret, old chum. Come, join the U3A!

*Come join a group, come meet new friends
Come now and keep your noddle working, right this way you might try twerking*

Become a twitcher or watch a theatre show, catch up with films that are new
In Cotgrave-and-District U3A, old chum, there really is so much to do

*Write stories that cheer, try wine or beer
Learn Bridge or play the ukulele, it's all here there's something daily*

Start up your own group, suggest something new, it doesn't matter what you do
Spend your free time doing what you love, and others will do it too

*Come try IT, or history, there's travel, singing or play croquet
Chess or snooker, you'll be okay*

Try art, or yoga or take on the quiz, there's science, French or table top games
You'll be made welcome at any of the groups; keep active, that's one of our aims

*Come on a walk, have coffee and talk, there's table tennis, knit and natter
Or have lunch and just get fatter*

Don't just sit thinking of what might have been, or of things that used to be
Come, join the U3A, old chum, it's so cheap it's almost free

There're monthly meetings, with friendly greetings, we listen to a presentation
It's just right for our generation

What good is sitting alone in your room, please don't just waste away
Life is a cabaret, old chum, so come join the U3A, old chum
'Cos we love our U.....3.....A!

Speakers Corner (1) - Roaming in Romania

Our September meeting was addressed in very gentle (but penetrating) style by Pat Smith who had enjoyed a fortnight's holiday in Romania a few years ago. Not only was his talk thoughtfully presented but beautifully illustrated by his excellent photographs. Perhaps the most significant point made was his comment about the friendliness of the Romanian people. We are too easily tempted to think of Romanians as immigrant workers who come to England intent on stealing our jobs and misusing our health service but meeting them in their own country is an altogether different experience. Many people speak English and are extremely welcoming to British travellers. What is more, the country itself is, without doubt, truly beautiful, with delightful small towns nestling endearingly beneath the striking mountain peaks of the Carpathian Mountains.



For Pat, it all began when he met two charming Romanian girls in Vienna and exchanged e-mail addresses – then, during a visit to Greece, he realised the distinct possibility of dropping off in Bucharest, where he took the opportunity of meeting up with them again. Where did they meet? In McDonalds, of course! But he was then invited to a Birthday party in a lovely old castle where he was made really welcome by all concerned. It was during his stay in Bucharest that he came across a number of surprising associations with France. I doubt that any of us was aware of a Romanian Arc de Triomphe, a Place Charles de Gaulle or a Champs Elysees (the latter being just six metres longer than its French counterpart!). He also visited a Romanian Orthodox Church (much like its Greek equivalent) and learned that Christianity had experienced a considerable revival, following the communist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu, whose Peoples Palace is the World's second most luxurious building – though, architecturally-speaking, one of the dullest. From here he set out by train to explore the Romanian countryside, leaving, of course, from the Gara de Nord!



His excellent hotel in Sinaia in the Carpathians cost a mere £20 per night. The magnificent scenery was made available by cable car, allowing a visit to the beautiful Peles Castle, built by King Carol I in the nineteenth century and used as a holiday home by the various kings of Romania. He was amused by the sight of an ambulance, donated by a town in his home county of Lancashire and by a street sign warning of the danger of horses and carts (of which there were many). On the train to his next destination, Brasov, and of obvious fascination for Nottingham folk, he met a lady lace-maker, while discovering that in the northern regions of Romania the first language is German and the local pastime is chess (played en masse in the town square). It was here that he came across a Romanian World War I cemetery – full of Russian graves! This was not, of course, the war that we in the West are used to thinking of. Finally, he came to Sighisoara where Count Dracula was born – otherwise known as 'Vlad the Impaler', not, one must say, a particularly nice man! The local restaurant cashed in on the infamy of the man by offering the unwary traveller a stake for lunch. The local church was also graced with a well-preserved wall painting of Saint George in the act of spearing his dragon. But all this happened ages ago – the present town is a scenic delight and well worth a visit. At £20 a night, it's a snip!



Speakers Corner (2) - Weather Forecasting

Notwithstanding his title, the October meeting was addressed at some considerable length(!) by Terry Scholey on the subject of weather and its origins, though with rather little consideration of weather forecasting as we usually understand it. His emphasis was on the question of water vapour in the atmosphere and the concept of the 'dew point' which determines whether precipitation will occur.

He proceeded to discuss the formation of numerous different types of cloud, showing a series of beautiful photographs of typical examples. We learned to recognise Cumulous, Cumulo-nimbus, Auto-cumulous (mackerel sky) Lenticular, Nacreous and Noctineous cloud formations and how to use their appearances to predict the likelihood of imminent rainfall or other forms of precipitation. He also provided detailed diagrams of mist or fog formation in coastal areas and how they depended on wind direction. We were encouraged to



note the distinction between various types of precipitation, such as hail, soft hail, sleet, snow, freezing rain and ice pellets, the latter of which can give rise to the highly dangerous (particularly for us old folk) condition of black ice. We learned about temperature inversion and how to distinguish Dew, Frost, Fog, Mist and Sea Fog.

A somewhat less satisfactory feature of the talk (apart from its length) was his tendency to concentrate on what he believed to be bias in BBC News, claiming that aspects of cyclic climate variation and relation of climate to sun-spot activity were criminally omitted from broadcasts. These features are all well-known and have been explained on many occasions. He also took exception to the fact that the BBC News reported carbon dioxide as being the largest component of green-house gas, when it should have been water vapour. He appeared to have missed the vital point that CO₂ is man-made, whereas H₂O is not, and it is therefore CO₂ which is largely responsible for global warming. For my feeling, at least, these 'bees-in-bonnets' spoiled what might have been an interesting and informative talk.

Answers To Tony's Quiz

1. Paragon. 2. Gemstones. 3. Key Largo. 4. China.
5. Dawn French. 6. Narcissus. 7. Benito Mussolini's.
8. The Pickwick Papers. 9. Frank Muir and Dennis Norden.
10. They all end in a three letter name.

Speakers Corner (3) - A Short Submarine Patrol

It all started in a pub! Young Neil Jarvis graduated from the bar to becoming an Artificer Apprentice in 1947 and became a submariner because he had a tendency to be seasick in surface craft! He rose to the rank of Commander, captained a nuclear submarine and enjoyed a fascinating career in Nato, lecturing widely on technical and military matters. It was obvious from this U3A presentation that he was good at his job. Of the many submarine films presented to the public he recommended, in particular, 'We Dive at Dawn' and the German counterpart 'Das Boots'.



He proceeded to show a series of excellent slides, revealing the extremely cramped inside of a typical submarine. His bunk, for example, measured a mere 5ft x 20ins, considerably less than his own quite generous dimensions but he learned to sleep in spite of it. He took delight in informing us just how disgustingly smelly an active submarine could become after a few weeks in operation, dramatically illustrated by the statistic that a single pair of underpants could last as long as eight weeks! But humanity can become accustomed to just about anything – crew members disembarking after a typical operation actually found fresh air rather offensive! Food was, of course either tinned or dried and not exactly of gourmet standard, supplies usually being designed for a seventeen week schedule. Then, there was the question of keeping in touch with day-time/night-time routine whilst under water for extended periods. This was dealt with by the simple artifice of working strict schedules of six hours on/six hours off.



Needless to say, a submarine was (and is) highly technical. Valves and dials, buttons and screens proliferate and it is vital that every member of the crew knows his responsibilities down to the last possible detail. As he pointed out, the diesel-electric hybrid power pack which is now the rage in automobile practice was well established in submarine technology roughly one hundred years ago! It is also essential that crew members get on well together and our speaker described how the selection of each commanding officer proceeds, in particular that the whole selection process takes place in full view of the potential crew. Thus it is ensured that crews can be confident that they are led by someone they can rely on to the nth degree.



The Commander provided us with a detailed account of how the order to fire was passed from Prime Minister to submarine commander and how the many safety requirements are implemented. It all gave his audience a feeling of involvement and excitement (even those, I suspect, who don't even agree with the idea of nuclear deterrence!). Finally, he answered a bevy of questions which certainly indicated that we had very much enjoyed his presentation. As our Chairman rightly said, we hadn't been addressed by a Commander before and our ex-speaker-finder, June O'Dell is certainly to be congratulated on her choice of this one.

And Finally



Welcome to the new members who have joined since the Autumn issue of the Gazette.

Margaret Denham, Christine Wolfe, Elsie Warby, David Croft,
Pam Croshaw, Helen & Will Brudenell,
Christopher & Frances Dudson

If you are booking a holiday with Riviera Travel don't forget to mention your membership of Cotgrave & District U3A at the time, as they kindly donate 10% of the cost of the holiday to your U3A.

(Please also let the Treasurer, Chris Soar, know so he can claim the money back.)

Articles for inclusion in the next edition of the Gazette should be sent to

The Editor by 1st March 2019