

Cotgrave & District



Quarterly Gazette

No 14

Summer 2019



Cotgrave & District U3A

The Story so far - see article on Page 3

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*

My first year as an Executive Committee Member



My wife and I joined the U3A in September 2017. I joined the Bridge Group and we both joined the Lunch Group. We were pleased to find Cotgrave & District U3A a very welcoming organisation where it was easy to fit in. Over the course of the first year we both joined a number of other groups and became more involved in U3A activities but had no thoughts of any higher level of involvement. Then, out of the blue in April 2018, the post of Secretary of the Executive became vacant and I decided to apply. My nomination was approved at the AGM on 8th May and I attended my first committee meeting on the 24th of the month.

Having now completed my first year as a committee member I can say that not only have I enjoyed my new role and learnt a lot about how the U3A operates, but I have gained an appreciation of just how much work the Executive does to keep things running smoothly. Prior to joining the committee, I had no knowledge of what it did nor how well it was run. I now know that it operates in a very professional manner. Members have complementary talents and, collectively, a good range of skills which inform debate and lead to good decision making. That may not be a totally unbiased view but I do believe it to be true.

The ethos of Cotgrave & District U3A is small and friendly and it is the policy of the committee to try to retain and encourage that feature. New members are still welcome, of course, not least because we need to keep our numbers at a viable level, so we have a Publicity Sub-Committee which looks at methods of informing the public about the organisation, its aims and its activities.

We are also keen to introduce new activities to give members a wider range of groups to choose to join, and this has seen quite a lot of success recently – Brenda Ainsley's Eco Group, Bernie Besnard's Chess Group, an embryonic Genealogy Group which will be led by Chris Soar and, if we can find a group leader, a revived Wine Group.

Perhaps we're a bit behind the curve as far as social media is concerned but we are trying to correct that to some degree by launching our own Facebook page which has been set up by Brenda Ainsley with the help of John Ainsley and June Boot. The last time I checked, which was 28th May, 29 members had joined – not bad but if you are not one of them please give it a try. With so much activity going on I believe Cotgrave U3A just keeps getting better. I hope in my first year I have made a contribution to that success and if my nomination is approved at the next AGM I look forward to serving for a second term.

Stuart Ellis

Cotgrave & district U3A – the story so far.....

This year saw the fifth anniversary of Cotgrave and District U3A and the time seems ripe for a pause for thought and a period of reflection.

The initial meeting, held in the Miners' Welfare was attended by only ten people but, with the help of local, regional and national groups, our journey could begin. The immediate target was to attract 50 members but this was soon reached, our current membership is 130 and we are looking to 150 in the near future, with 200 as a viable future target. Similarly, the number of specialist Groups is steadily increasing, having now reached the mid-twenties. We have placed emphasis on furthering the well-being of our members, together with a combination of life-long learning and the development of skills both social and educational.

The advantages of a small association seem obvious – we may not have the financial clout of larger branches but what we have we cherish. We are a friendly, compact and co-operative Branch, making a significant impact on community life in Cotgrave. Nowadays, when members shop or explore the town they are met by friendly faces and smiling, helpful people. The same applies to our monthly General Meetings, attended by over 40% of our members and characterised by much cheerful, friendly discourse.

We are fortunate in having a friendly, welcoming and enthusiastic committee whose membership is continually rotating, new blood being always welcomed in order to invigorate our debates. The committee has been extremely well-served by active Chair-persons, Treasurer and Secretaries – all hard-working and approachable, while our Membership Secretary and Group Co-ordinator have worked particularly hard and effectively. We have rarely had poor speakers at our General Meetings, which may well account for the high Membership turnout. The Branch could not have flourished, as it has, without a whole bevy of active gofers – those people who give their time and energy to the cause in which they so obviously believe. In particular, we are fortunate to have a group of highly dedicated Group Leaders. Our publicity and advertising have been key. We have a monthly Diary and quarterly Gazette. We are very much in the digital age, with an excellent website and electronic communications – news, articles and quizzes. On the other hand, for those without access to the Internet, we also deliver by hand. We have close connection with local shops, doctors, leisure-centre, miners' welfare, pubs, library, schools and churches. It all adds to the richness of community life.

If I am asked to explain the 'raison-d'etre' of the U3A, I think of those members who used to be alone, isolated and frustrated. We have certainly given new life to many and a meaning and usefulness to everyday matters. All in all, a great five years was celebrated by an admirable Christmas social, splendidly entertained by our 'Singing for Pleasure' and 'Ukulele' Groups. New Groups are coming on line and everyone remains enthusiastic and committed. Five years ago, I would never have thought it possible. We have come a long way and we look forward with confidence to the future. Community life in Cotgrave has never been so fulfilling and progressive. 'Small' is certainly friendly – so here's an overwhelming vote of thanks to everyone involved and best wishes for the future.

Our motto is:

Coming along and getting
Out and about to
Meet up with
More of your previously
Unknown
Neighbours
If you are of, or approaching retirement age
There's a warm welcome waiting for
You

By Michael O'Connor

Group News

Luncheon Group



The Lady Bay, surprisingly in Lady Bay, was the venue for March's meal. Most enjoyed their food, the fish & chips was better than a F&C shop meal, the pies looked enticing, those of us who had starters were 'well pleased' with the quality and amount served. Service was average with apologies from the Manager; apparently the two new chefs were having problems co-ordinating the service. Those that had the sweets had large portions and managed to eat the lot, so I guess they enjoyed it.



In April Cropwell Butler was our choice for the Luncheon Club at The Plough, 26 of us dined from a good varied menu, only 3 had starters, the mains ranged from Fish & Chips, Salmon, curry and BBQ ribs etc. Every one had empty plates, some found space for puds. The most popular choice was apple and blackcurrant crumble and really enjoyed by those who had it. The venue seemed popular with the group so we will probably return some time.

May found us at The Willow Tree in Edwalton. Again we had 26 diners which cause a bit of difficulty with the seating, some found it difficult to get around the L shaped table.



The food service was very slow, the Mains only being served after an hour, the fish pie was more potato than fish but the Steak pie was well received. So on average the food was fair, service poor but the company was excellent.

Croquet Group

Hail to the Croquet Players!

The 2nd croquet day of the year, on 25th April, attracted only 6 intrepid members, due, possibly, to the slight inclemency of the weather!



Nevertheless, all members, warmed by steaming mugs of coffee, enjoyed 3 or 4 games, between the thunder, lightning, and hail showers.

In fact, the weather was quite enjoyably spectacular!

The lawn had been mown only an hour before the meeting to remove leaves, rose petals, and blossom, scattered by the previous bursts of gale force wind, so there was nothing to trip over! It just shows, doesn't it, that some U3A members are not daunted by a few meteorological antics?!

Comedy Corner

At the age of 70 I started collecting wristwatches. I guess I was just buying time.

Some people have trouble sleeping...but I can do it with my eyes closed

Group News

History.

In March we visited the Nottingham University Archives in Lenton Lane (the old ATV Studios) where we were treated to a wonderful selection of historical documents and maps of the Cotgrave area complemented by resident staff explaining the work undertaken there. Members were able to examine the documents on display and ask questions with the staff.

In April due to delays in the refurbishment of Ruddington Kitting Frame Museum one of our group members (John Orton) stepped into the breach and gave a talk on the 'Witches of Bottesford' and their fates as well as describing the methods used in identifying potential/accused Witches. It was noted that males seemed to be excluded from any similar evil practises probably because it was a totally male dominated society?



In May our meeting was a long time favourite of mine. Our local Prince of Nigeria is going to take us through his history and African roots. We had this talk in our early years and was greatly appreciated and received. It is so long ago most members cannot remember it or were not with us at that time! On display was a commemorative plaque given to Victor and he wore his colourful clothing attire to complement the proceedings. It was an interesting and revealing story that was told.

Next month we are finally going to Bletchley Park so a detailed report for the next issue subject to coded approval by the powers that be!!!

So...second Monday of each month is the date, 2pm the time. We have a regular group of 15-20. Come and join us, I am sure that you would find it most useful...we do do a lot of research on Cotgrave and district and some of our members are successfully finding out a great deal about our village background.

Eco-Group

This new group got off to a good start at its first meeting in March. There are now 14 members! Our first meeting was used to establish what members would like to discuss and what they hoped to get out of belonging to the group. Since then, we have held our second meeting, at which we shared ideas for reducing single-use plastics in the home, including using re-usable water bottles, bamboo coffee cups, taking containers to the shops when buying meat and fish and returning to doorstep deliveries of glass milk bottles. We discussed the pros and cons of paper, plastic and cloth shopping bags, learning that it is all rather more complicated than you might think!

In April, we were invited to join the Science Group, for a really helpful talk by a representative of Veolia waste, who take all our 'blue bin' recycling to their facility in Forest Town for processing. We learned a great deal, especially that over-enthusiastic or 'wishful' inclusion of non-recyclable items in blue bins is not helpful, as it all has to be fished out again, by hand. If you are unsure, have a look on the Rushcliffe Borough Council website, for what you can include. Later in the year, we will visit the Veolia plant.

In May, we visited the Nottingham Zero Waste shop on St James's St. We took our own containers and came away with pulses, grains, tea, coffee, cleaning materials, small household items, brushes and cosmetics – **without a scrap of single-use plastic in sight!**

Group News

Art Group

In May the Art Group enjoyed a morning of art under the tuition of Maria Badshamiah. The medium used was watercolour, ink and pen. Here are some of our efforts:



Science Group

We have welcomed several new members to the Science Group during recent months – and would be happy to welcome even more! Our philosophy is to present complex scientific ideas in a simple manner, such that non-scientists can readily understand them. We run a varied programme, using both ‘home-grown’ and external presenters. This last quarter has seen discussions on the development of flat-screen displays for TV, computer and I-phone application, an excellent joint meeting with the new Eco Group on ‘Recycling’ and, most recently, a fascinating talk by Bill Pavlidis on the ‘Bio-chemistry of AIDS’. Bill had spent much of his working life researching the mysteries of the AIDS virus and learning how to control it. His talk was met with general acclaim – several members suggested we might invite him to address one of our general meetings. Coming up is a presentation on the recent exciting advance in understanding of that mysterious astronomical phenomenon, the ‘Black Hole’, followed by a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first manned moon-landing. Why not come and join us?

Singing For Pleasure and Card and Board Games

I think that most members know that I am fortunate enough to lead the singing and games groups. Both of these tick along nicely in their own sweet way – singing every Wednesday evening and games on the second Tuesday evening of each month. It is unusual to have anything notable to report so, this time, I have written this piece with information from one group presented in the style of the other group. So, if you feel inclined, have a go at this little puzzle. All you have to do is find 23 songs from our repertoire. They might be forward, backward, up, down or diagonal. Best of luck!

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| A | C | D | H | J | U | D | E | T | T | E | U | O | L | A |
| P | A | E | A | E | U | S | V | O | M | W | M | C | A | D |
| E | C | L | D | S | R | D | E | R | A | S | O | W | D | A |
| S | K | I | M | E | M | O | R | Y | E | F | O | R | O | O |
| E | N | L | F | F | L | A | S | G | R | R | N | O | H | R |
| S | I | A | N | D | O | W | N | E | D | G | L | O | C | E |
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| R | E | E | L | G | B | S | A | I | L | N | G | N | R | T |
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| P | Y | L | E | T | I | T | B | E | B | O | B | R | F | G |
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| L | L | I | T | R | A | E | H | N | E | D | O | O | W | K |

EDELWEISS

KING OF THE ROAD

MEMORY

ALOUETTE

LET'S GO FLY A KITE

SING

PAPER ROSES

RING OF FIRE

PIE JESU

MOONLIGHT BAY

DELILAH

WORDS

FEVER

OH BOY

GREEN DOOR

OH CAROL

WOODEN HEART

LILY THE PINK

MOON RIVER

LET IT BE

DREAM

THE ROSE

HEY JUDE

Group News

Theatre Group

Since the last gazette, the only show we have attended has been *Mack and Mabel*, performed by the Carlton Operatic Society. I was unable to go; I gather people enjoyed it and were impressed at how professional an amateur company can be.



Calendar Girls had to be cancelled, as only a couple of people booked for it. Four members are going to see *The Mousetrap* in June.



Our next show will be *Stepping Out*, at the Lace Market Theatre on July 27th. "Sway, sway, arm up, hat down... and let's get into this big tap routine you've all been waiting for!" A small class of amateur dancers meets for evening tap lessons each week in a run-down church hall. The group's dancing skills are as varied as their clashing personalities, but the prospect of performing in a local charity gala prompts the ladies (and the class's one man) to step up

their game, put aside their differences and put their dancing skills to the test. We have 9 people signed up for *Stepping Out* so far, and 16 tickets were booked.

Any interest in going to Toletorpe Hall, near Stamford, this summer, to see *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar* or Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*? Tickets are selling fast, especially for Saturday matinees. Could we make this one an evening trip? Let me know.

Best wishes,

Tony's Anagram Quiz Summer2019

“Around the World”

Countries

1. ULTRA ASIA
2. BIG MULE
3. COLD ANTS
4. NEAR GYM
5. NICE LAD
6. SLENDER THAN
7. ANY ROW
8. A SNIP
9. NEAR GIANT
10. LIZARDS WENT

Rivers

1. TRUE SHAPE
2. POLO IMP
3. IS GRIT
4. LINE
5. GET ZANY
6. TRIBE
7. HAS MET
8. A UBEND
9. SUMO IRIS
10. DRAGON IRE

Answers on Page 10

Yoga Group

The U3A Yoga Group has moved venue and is now held in the Main Hall at the Welfare. We meet for an hour, 10.30 to 11.30 every Tuesday morning, except the 2nd Tuesday in the month when the monthly U3A social meeting takes place. Now we are in a bigger space we have room for more people.



Jayne, who takes the class, is a very experienced yoga teacher who takes us through a series of easy stretches and breathing exercises which leave people feeling more supple, relaxed and energised. The class is suitable for complete beginners so if you have never tried

yoga please do come along. There is a charge of £5 per session.

If you would like more information please contact Liz Jennings email: ejennings464@hotmail.com.

We do not know who wrote the following poem, but it sums up what yoga can do for you:

Yoga is not about touching your toes, it is what you learn on the way down.

Yoga is like life - it is a balance of holding on and letting go.

Yoga does not change the way we see things, it transforms the person who sees.

Yoga is not for the flexible, it is for the willing.

Yoga takes you into the precise moment, the only place where life exists.

It is not your history but your presence on the mat that matters.

Yoga is not about self-improvement, it is about self-acceptance.

Warning: yoga has been known to cause health and happiness!

The most important pieces of equipment you need for doing yoga are your body and your mind.

Yoga teaches you how to listen to your body. Bend, so you don't break.

Calming the mind in yoga, not just standing on your head.

In yoga obstacles do not block your path, they are the path.

Don't practise yoga to get better at life, life is all about balance.

Snooker

Continues successfully with a regular membership of 6. Some of our group are getting quite proficient...others (like Michael) continue to under achieve. Our regular meeting days (2.00 in the Welfare on second and fourth Thursdays) prove popular. We would welcome any new members whatever your expertise...one of my aims is to take on some other U3A groups, although that may not happen soon or be what everybody wants! Michael can still barely get to 20 scored and is grateful to the others for their patience. The Welfare are quite hospitable and gave all the equipment. Come and join in!

Committee Minute Taker

In the committee I have a role,
To pick up my pen and scroll.
To take a note and stay alert
So all inaccuracies to avert.
But first of all there's time for a brew
Thanks to Malcolm and Pat too.
Then it's time to listen to one and all
As Matters Arising we recall.
Onward we go through the Agenda's list
Treasurer, Hon Sec, none must be missed.
About Groups and Speakers we are told
And how many members are in our fold.
Several items later, at last we come to AOB,
Then it's home to write up the minutes formerly.

Group News

Coffee and Chat



Coffee and Chat was one of the first group we set up in our U3A .Why was this? Well, we thought it was a group that could welcome new members to meet and get to know more established members in a relaxed atmosphere over a coffee. The group meets every fourth Wednesday morning at various venues. We meet regularly at the Manvers Arms, Cherry Lane Garden Centre Bradmore and East Bridgford Garden Centre and occasionally at Chocks Away, Nottingham Airport. The group is well attended usually by about twenty members. It has been a great success as once people join they usually continue to come whenever they are able. However, let's hear from the members themselves with some of their thoughts.



"I enjoy the social side of meeting new people."

"A catch up on what's going on in Cotgrave and other local villages".

"It's a good chance to really chat with other members that you don't always see at the U3A groups. It cements relationships and the coffee is good too."

"Lovely to see my husband socialising."

"Passes pleasantly a Wednesday morning. We put the world to rights and then watch some politician muck it up!"

"It's a good opportunity to make new friends especially as I come from a neighbouring village."

"A chance to meet with other people who do not go to the interest groups that I attend."

"We talk about sport. It's nice to meet with a group of men."

"New members become friends."

"I like the book exchange we have at our meeting"

"It helps us keep in touch with other members' well-being."

"I like the company."

"We get to know more members and that makes Open Meetings more comfortable and friendly."

"Great atmosphere with everyone enjoying good company.. and chat...and coffee."

"It is a good place for new members to meet together".

We hope this will encourage you too to join our Coffee and Chat group. So come along and give it a try!

Tony's Anagram Quiz Answers

Countries.

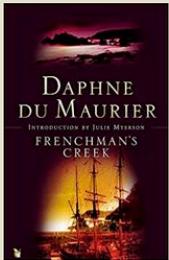
1. AUSTRALIA
2. BELGIUM,
3. SCOTLAND
4. GERMANY
5. ICELAND
6. NETHERLANDS
7. NORWAY
8. SPAIN
9. ARGENTINA
10. SWITZERLAND

Rivers.

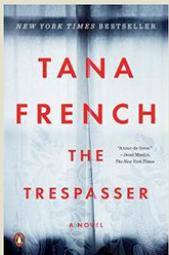
1. EUPHRATES
2. LIMPOPO
3. TIGRIS
4. NILE
5. YANGTZE
6. TIBER
7. THAMES
8. DANUBE
9. MISSOURI
10. RIO GRANDE

Group News

Book Club.



Since the last Gazette we have met on three occasions and read some very different books. The first was a vintage by Daphne Du Maurier called *Frenchman's Creek*. First published in 1941, this is set in Cornwall and when first read by some members over 40 years ago was excellent but time has not aged this well and we found it lacking in depth and substance and shows how reading perceptions have changed over the decades. Overall rating 5-6 (style good -8) Lesson to be learnt, not all books survive the test of time!!



The second one took us to Ireland *The Trespasser* by Tana French, an author we have not tried before. This book was a challenge, too long and could have been reduced by removing none related waffle, descriptions and abusive language by all the characters. The crime plot was muddled and the style of writing was awful, however most members did complete it and towards the end it improved a bit. We will not be returning as a group to this author. Just goes to show how reviews cannot always be relevant to a book!! Scored 4-5.



The final book is *The Temporary Gentleman* by Sebastian Barry. This author we have read before, so hopefully should be enjoyed and have lots of discussion and feed back. This is a powerful account of one man's attempt to come to terms with the savage realities of the past, a story of a couple's perilous marriage which oozes panache with Barry's flawless prose. Sounds interesting and to be discussed on 17th. June

Chess Group.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GREAT GAME OF CHESS

Are you perhaps interested in playing Chess or even learning how to play this great ancient game? Then come and join our U3A Chess group.

Don't worry if you don't know how to play, as we will teach you.

The group meets every Wednesday morning from 10.00am until about 12noon in the Family Room (conservatory at the back) at the Welfare Social Club, Candleby Lane, Cotgrave.

Please give us a try, as I am sure you will enjoy yourself.

Should you need any further information please phone me on landline 0115 9899845 or mobile 07903178424.

Or e-mail "aileenbernie@cwgsy.net"

Facebook: “Cotgrave & District U3A”



One of the many advantages of belonging to the U3A is the social interaction with other members. As you probably know, we now have a presence on the Social Media Platform ‘Facebook’. This is a ‘closed’ group, with details visible only to members of the Cotgrave & District U3A. Other users of Facebook can see that our group exists (from our visible ‘page’, but will not be able to access any information about the group or the people in it.

There are various ways in which members of our U3A group find out about events and stay in touch with each other: monthly meetings, website, newsletter and diary, this Gazette, word of mouth, email etc. Facebook is just another, very convenient, way of being reminded about what is going on.

All other methods of communication continue to be available. We are really pleased at how well this has taken off! At present, about 30 members have signed up and are in receipt of regular reminders about meetings and events and any changes to dates and times of meetings. To find the group, search for Cotgrave & District U3A in the blue search bar at the top of your Facebook page.

Stop Press!



We are delighted to announce that in conjunction with The Welfare, we are offering you a way to recycle crisp packets. The Walkers Crisp packet recycling scheme (this actually includes all brands of crisps but was initially set up with Walkers) provides a way to deal with these otherwise difficult-to-recycle packets – and make money for Ash Lea School into the bargain.

Please collect as many crisp packets as you can and bring them to our monthly meetings to place in the box. We will be sending the packets off to Terracycle, where they will be separated by plastic type, cleaned, and extruded into plastic pellets to make new recycled products.

Cotgrave & District U3A goes to Germany.

From Monday 29th April until 3rd May a group of U3A members from Cotgrave embarked on a short break to Germany. We travelled with Riviera Travel and flew from East Midlands Airport to Berlin, from where we were bussed to Dresden for two nights before returning to Berlin for the remaining two nights.



We left East Midlands in the fog and arrived in Berlin to equally dreary weather however this did not curtail our enthusiasm for the adventure ahead. The journey to Dresden was uneventful but on arrival we were pleasantly surprised by the 4 star hotel and its positioning, in the middle of a beautiful baroque square, not far from the rebuilt Church of Our Lady.

Our guide, Frank, was excellent. He was extremely well informed and went out of his way to make sure that we had plenty of information about each city we were visiting and about events that were taking place locally. On arrival in Dresden he gave us a quick tour of the area near the hotel pointing out places of interest and restaurants that he had experienced.

The following morning we embarked on a three hour guided walking tour of Dresden. It was extremely interesting to see the beautiful baroque style buildings that had been rebuilt after the war, some of which were rebuilt from just using old photographs. It was amazing to see the details that the craftsmen and builders employed to replicate the originals.



The afternoon was free time. Some of the group made use of the open-topped buses for an extended tour of the city whilst others had a trip on the river Elbe. Some went back to visit the other beautiful palaces, churches and museums. In the evening a few of us went to a Bach organ recital in the Church of Our Lady, a boat trip on the Elbe featuring a 'Dixie Music' show or to a concert in the opera house.



On day three we transferred to Berlin. On route we call at Meissen and had a guided tour of the porcelain factory. It was very interesting to see how the potters produced plates, cups, dishes, figurines, china flowers and other decorative items. We watched whilst artists hand painted the porcelain from before and after the firing process. The finished items were beautiful but due to the labour intensive nature of the business many articles were very expensive.



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Cotgrave & District U3A goes to Germany. (cont.)



Coldiz Castle

We travelled to Coldiz arriving at lunchtime. A local baker stayed open especially for us as many of the shops were closed due to it being a bank holiday. After an uphill trudge we were given a very entertaining guided tour of the castle by a gentleman named Alex who originated from Yorkshire. He brought to life the stories of the many escape attempts.



Coldiz

Much of Coldiz is now made over to a youth hostel as well as a music school so it was limiting as to what we could see. However we were able to see the Chapel and the escape tunnels that had been excavated underneath.

We arrived in Berlin about 7:00pm. Again the accommodation was in a 4 Star hotel. As before, Frank pointed out places to eat but we could have eaten in the hotel. The following morning we had a three hour bus tour of Berlin. Frank was able to point out all the interesting buildings including the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate, the Russian Memorial, Museum Island where there are five world famous museums to be found. We stopped at Check Point Charlie, the Holocaust Memorial and the Topography of Terrors which highlights the history of how the Jews in Berlin and across Germany before and during the war were treated. It is here that we saw a section of the Berlin wall. After this tour the afternoon was free time.



The Reichstag



Checkpoint Charlie



Holocaust Memorial

As with all of these types of holiday they are just a taster. There is so much to do and to see in Berlin that it is impossible to do it all in a few days. Visiting Berlin has been a very thought provoking experience for us and I am sure that some of our group will want to go back at another time.

Speakers Corner (1) - Financial Planning for Care

The March meeting took a slightly different direction in that it was concerned with a rather practical, down-to-earth matter which may concern all of us at some time in the unpredictable future. Clive Langley of PSA (Financial Services Ltd) and his lawyer colleague provided a fact-packed hour's discussion of how best to plan for possible future care-home expenditure.

He began by reminding us of a few basic statistics. The NHS typically spends more on our individual healths in our last year than it does over the whole of the rest of our lives. One old person in three is confined to a care-home. The average stay in a care-home is five years. Typical cost of such care is £1,000 per week (yes, 'week'). The average couple's savings would last roughly two years at this rate! According to the 2014 Care Act your total assets in excess of £23,000 must be used to pay for care. Assuming one partner continues to live in the house, it should remain untouchable but Local Authorities (cash-strapped as they are) will try any trick they can think of to persuade that partner to sell the house and move to a cheap Council Flat! Sad though it may seem, his advice was that, in this context, one should regard Local Authorities as 'enemies'.

He strongly advised us all never to give the house to our children – there are too many examples of children selling it over their fond parents' heads! Hard to believe, perhaps, but statistics never lie! The thing to do is to set up a Will Trust which includes the house – this cannot be challenged by any Local Authority (nor children!). Needless to say, one should seek professional advice in order to ensure this is done properly and Clive strongly advised us to go to an independent financial adviser – lawyers, he assured us, are largely uninformed concerning such subtleties! (But he would, wouldn't he?) Cynicism apart though, he may well be correct. Talking of wills, he emphasised that we should make sure that our children know exactly where to find them. It might be a good idea to give them a copy but it is essential to keep the original safe – it will definitely be required at the appropriate time.

Finally, he also pointed out that savings invested in an Investment Bond are safe from the depredations of anyone - Local Authorities included – but this only applies if it can be seen that such a Bond was established well before the need for Care became obvious. Once again, it is important to think ahead and to make use of professional advice – a CF8 qualification seems important here. Being strictly fair, he did recommend Age UK.

In summary, I should say that Clive presented his material in a surprisingly interesting and light-hearted fashion – a subject which could have proved deadly boring turned out to be extremely stimulating and even amusing. We must thank him sincerely for that and we should also take to heart his excellent advice. And, what's more – do it now – before we know, it may be too late!

Speakers Corner (2) - People Watching

A tall and slim John Smith captivated our April meeting with his talk on 'People Watching', that fascinating occupation which, as he said, leads us to spend £2-50 on a cup of coffee in the local café simply to permit us the luxury of watching the (human) world go by - the number one human pastime. It all began six million years ago when we made the crucial decision to leave our apeful background behind us and learn to stand directly upright. This left us with no protection for our sensitive gut regions and led to a variety of compensating mechanisms such as fiddling with jacket cuffs, clasping hands together, buttoning jacket, playing with i-phone, etc, etc. On the other hand, if, for instance, one happened to be royalty, one could afford to stand with arms clasped behind one's back, there being no possibility of aggression from one's loyal subjects. Then again, when we know that we are certainly with friends, we have no hesitation in greeting them with open arms. The more formal handshake represents a kind of half-way house, ensuring that there can be no likelihood of attack from either side. There can, though, be huge significance in the length of time the friendly grip is maintained! Does it signify dominance, perhaps, or simply a degree of uncertainty in relative status? It's all a matter of who one can trust.

We all give away our state of mind by our gestures and attitudes, probably much more than we realise. Smokers, for instance, blow smoke upwards when in confident mode and downwards when depressed. Similarly, hands in the air express confidence and triumph, a lowering of the head the very opposite. Thumbs up shows cockiness – thumbs hidden away suggest uncertainty - thumbs down defeat. Open palms indicate nothing to hide, perfectly relaxed and comfortable. But upward palms may also express pleading. Finger geometry can express all manner of emotions but care is essential here because cultural differences can lead to serious misunderstanding! We should also recognise that space is extremely important. When in confident mood we stand tall, with feet apart, elbows out, taking up the maximum amount of it. When in defeat, we contrive to squeeze ourselves into insignificance, as though wishing to shrivel up completely and vanish from view. Then there are tiny hints of ownership – 'keep away, she's mine' sort of thing indicated by nothing more than a gentle touch of a hand or encircling of a waist.

Facial expression is, of course, of crucial importance in understanding our fellow being's states of mind. John illustrated six basic formats, corresponding to happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust and contempt. He then illustrated the point by referring to a famous political set-to between Richard Nixon and John F Kennedy which was broadcast on both radio and TV. The majority of those who only listened concluded that Nixon was by far the winner – he, indeed, was the one to trust - while those who watched the debate on TV came to the very opposite conclusion! Thus do we reveal our inner souls by our facial and bodily expressions?

Finally, we learned just a little of the subtleties of trying to detect lies. Did we know, for instance, (and, of course, we didn't!) that the human nose actually enlarges when its owner is telling a lie? It's not by very much but recent research has demonstrated the truth of the observation. John then made a remarkable statement and challenged us to decide whether it was true or not. The voting was roughly 50:50. So we only half rose to the challenge but we did all agree that society would surely collapse if it became obvious every time anyone was telling a fib, so it is just as well that lie-detection is still a distinctly dubious skill.

Finally, when challenged to 'mark' the audience's body language throughout the talk, John was obliged to admit that we had shown admirable powers of concentration. Summing up, it was an altogether enjoyable experience for all concerned.

Speakers Corner (3) - The White Rajahs of Sarawak

In the year 1841 an English adventurer, James Brooke became the ruler of a far-eastern country, Sarawak – Sarawak being a small part of the island of Brunei. How this unlikely incident came to pass was the subject of Brian Tuck's talk at our May meeting and a fascinating subject it certainly proved to be.

James came from a relatively wealthy family, his father being a senior employee of the British East India Company. Initially, his father arranged for him to take a commission in the Company's army and, while dealing with an insurgency, James was seriously wounded and invalided home with a four-and-a-half year recovery allowance. His half-hearted attempt to return to his military appointment proved inadequate (he really wished to follow in the footsteps of his idol, Stanford Raffles) and James was left temporarily unemployed until his father died and left him enough money to buy a ship. This he promptly did, took on a crew and set off on his adventures to the far-east.



China was first stop. Sarawak came next, somewhat by accident, where he helped the resident Rajah to put down an insurgency by the local tribe of headhunting Dyaks. This was followed by a successful attempt to clear the coastal waters of pirates and, aided by a significant bribe to the King of Brunei, James took over the task of ruling Sarawak from the incumbent Rajah.

Problems arose in shoals but James contrived to gain the affection of the Dyak tribesmen and gradually enlarged the area of his fiefdom to the size of roughly half that of the United Kingdom. His style was far from typical of the local rulers but, nevertheless, it seemed to work and Sarawak remained comfortably under his care until his death in 1868, when his brother Charles took over. Charles was much less of a romantic than James and began the process of dragging the country into the nineteenth century, establishing both rubber and oil industries with considerable success. He died in 1917, when his cousin Vyner Brooke assumed control. Vyner recognised the need for the country to be run from England and persuaded the British Government to take on Sarawak as a Colony. Thus ended a remarkable period of over a hundred years with Sarawak under the control of theoretically unqualified English rulers. This, in itself, was intriguing enough but there was a sequel of special interest to a Nottinghamshire audience.

James Brooke never married but during his convalescence in Bath he must have formed a temporary alliance with a local lady who later gave birth to a son who was brought up by foster parents in Brighton. Reuben George Brooke, as he later came to be known, was accepted by James as his son, married a Nottingham girl and, for several years, lived with her in Plumtree. How do we know all this? There is an elaborate tombstone in Plumtree churchyard recording the fact that Reuben George died by drowning when the ship 'British Admiral' was wrecked on its way to Australia in 1874. Why Reuben was on his way to Australia and who it was raised this stone represent a pair of mysteries which have not been solved by an approach to the Plumtree Church authorities. The stone could certainly not have been raised by James, who had himself died in 1868. Any help with finding a solution to these mysteries would be much appreciated.

And Finally



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

Nina Akehurst, Norma Furnell, Carol Reed, Sue Knowles, Doug & Liz Smith, John Branson, Pete Burnham, Rachel Tindsley and Stephen & Rachel Hibberd.

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 September 2019