

Cotgrave & District



Quarterly Gazette

No 16

Winter 2019



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

**Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year to all**

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*

Your Committee Needs You.



At the next AGM a number of the committee will be retiring. The constitution puts a time limit on how long committee members can serve, and the Chair, Groups Coordinator, Membership Secretary have all reached that limit.

So, would you be willing to assist in the running of your U3A and serve on the committee.

What does the committee do? Would you like to find out by attending one or more meetings as an observer to see how a friendly harmonious group of people work together for the benefit of your U3A?

The committee consists of up to 12 people of whom 4 are Officers and elected into the posts of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer at the AGM. The other places are filled, by election at the AGM, and job roles decided at the committee meeting after the AGM, in reality most re-standing members will continue in the old roles.

If you are interested in helping or just attending a committee meeting (they are normally held on the 4th Thursday of the Month at 10am and last for about 1½ hours) please see any committee member.



Are you interesting in running or helping to run a group

Anna and Brian Franks are moving away from the area early in the New Year. Anna has run the Theatre Group with superb efficiency since it started and Brian had run the Creative Writing Group. Thank you both very much. A member has come forward to run the Creative writing Group but a leader is needed for the Theatre Group.

Can you help? Please contact Pat Baxter if you are interested.

Group News

Coffee and Chat

The Coffee and Chat group was set up initially to welcome new members so that they could get to know some of us in the Cotgrave and District U3A. The group continues to be one of the most popular. New members soon become old members and the original old members are still attending. We meet every fourth Wednesday morning of the month with usually over twenty members attending.

We have a four monthly cycle of three venues. The first month we go to the Wellington Cafe and Bistro, Bradmore. Here not only do we have refreshments but there is an opportunity to buy plants for the garden. The second venue on our cycle is the Rose and Crown, Cotgrave. This pub is very welcoming and it is liked by many as it is in walking distance for many members and not far for the members from the neighbouring villages. Thirdly, we



go to East Bridgford Garden Centre which provides good refreshments but also has a huge range of gifts and clothes etc. Finally, it is back to the

Rose and Crown. Lifts are always offered by some members to take non-drivers to Bradmore and East Bridgford when needed. All tables are mixed gender but somehow the men always have a separate table to discuss “manly matters” such as sport and the price of a pint etc. All meetings start at 10.30am.

During the coffee and tea drinking and putting the world to rights there is also the opportunity for book and puzzle exchange, jam buying and buying surplus allotment produce when available.

We always give a warm welcome to new members. Why don't you come along, if you don't already do so, and give it a try during these cold winter months?

Ring Barbara Bullin 0115 989 4488 or email barbarabullin123@outlook.com

Theatre

We had few theatre visits over the summer. A small party went to Agatha's Christie's *The Mousetrap*, and there was a good turnout for *Stepping Out* at the Lace Market Theatre.



Other visits we had planned did not happen, maybe because of cost factors.

In the autumn we bounced back and planned a number of trips: *The Lodger*, a silent film with live, scary music at The Old School, Cropwell Bishop in October and *Sleeping Beauty* (Playhouse pantomime), *Season's Greetings* (Lace Market Theatre) and *The Nutcracker* (Royal Centre) yet to come in late November, December and early January.

After that there are three more provisional bookings: *Nell Gwyn* and *A Servant with Two Masters* at the Lace Market and *Made in Dagenham, the Musical*, performed by West Bridgford Operatic Society at Nottingham Girls' High School. However, the sad news (for me at least) is that we may be leaving Cotgrave in the New Year, and so the group will need someone else to take it on. It isn't difficult, and people are very gracious and appreciative, so it is a pleasure to facilitate these trips.

I won't bore everyone with what is involved in running it, but do phone me (9899404) or email (annayarrowfranks@gmail.com) and I can explain it fully. The golden rule is to collect everybody's money before you commit to anything, as commitment means paying! It helps to be able to use a spreadsheet.

Warm Christmas wishes to everyone,

Eco-Group

This relatively new group is going from strength to strength, with a waiting list!

It has been very obvious in the media that many people are worried about the waste that is being created and how to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. Environmentalists refer regularly to this helpful guide (the order of these is significant):

Refuse – learn to say ‘No’ to freebies, giveaways, circulars, paper copies of promotions and magazines*.

Reduce – buy less ‘stuff’.

Refill – keep your empty jars and containers and refill them at one of the ‘Zero waste’ shops that we now have. One of our nearest is ‘The Good Weigh’ in Lady Bay.

Re-use – can you get extra life from something, in another way?

Rot – dispose of organic materials in your home compost bin.

Recycle – this is the *last resort*, for anything you haven’t dealt with, above.



We’ve had some interesting discussions about all of these, with helpful suggestions from members of the group. Although recycling should be a last resort, we have continued to find out more about it, visiting the Veolia waste processing facility in Forest Town, near Mansfield.

*You may have noticed on the address sheet of U3A magazine that you can go online now and request an emailed copy. Sign up to receive an e-version of the U3A national newsletter at u3a.org.uk/email

Editors note: Brenda’s comment above is referring to a short newsletter about National U3A activities.

The online version of the TAM Magazine, available to read on the main U3A website

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/resources/publications/tam-text>, is text only, no photographs, sketches or adverts so this maybe not such a pleasant read but if you do decide its for you and you no longer wish to receive the printed version please let the membership Secretary know so your details can be removed from their mailing list.

We have also been learning about **Palm Oil** – and how difficult it is to avoid in so many manufactured foods (many biscuits, cakes, ready meals), cosmetics, household cleaners, pet foods etc.

Another fascinating visit was to the Hockerton Housing Project, near Southwell. We were taken on a guided tour of this very sustainable way of life, with water collection and disposal, use of solar panels and wind turbines, growing a large proportion of food and densely insulated homes. Many of us came away puzzled that very few of these methods have become ‘mainstream’; houses are still built with very few of these features...

Eco-Group (continued)

In conjunction with The Welfare and with much interest from the BGS at Keyworth, our crisp packet recycling is going well. Thank you to all of you who have contributed! We have now sent off 18kg to TerraCycle. (That's one heck of a lot of packets!). Their 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 makes 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. Crisp packets only, please – no popcorn, pretzel or peanut bags. It really helps us if you can flatten them and make sure they are empty. No fancy triangles please! We send the packets off to Terracycle, where they are separated by plastic type, cleaned, and extruded into plastic pellets to make new recycled products.

Although we recognise that recycling is not actually the answer, here are some tips:

- a) Mainly, aim to buy less 'stuff'! As Christmas approaches, buy cards, presents (and gifts!) made from recycled materials and which can be recycled again. No glitter, plastics, embellishments, ribbons etc. Use charity shops.
- b) Yoghurt pots and milk cartons can be recycled, but not their lids (low grade plastic). Dove House Hospice shop in the village will take your milk container tops, if you use plastic bottles.
- c) No shredded paper. Either use in your home composter or tie in a bag and place in the *general* waste. Bagging it means that it won't blow all over the place, on its way to the incinerator. Almost all of our non-recycled waste in Rushcliffe is incinerated and used for energy generation.

Facebook Group: 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.

We are really pleased at how well this has taken off! At present, about 36 members have signed up and are in receipt of regular reminders about meetings and events, national developments 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.

A help sheet is available if you aren't sure how to go about joining Facebook and accessing our group. Please contact Brenda Ainsley

Tony's Winter Quiz

1. What, at sea, did the initials RMS stand for?
2. Where are OPEC's headquarters?
3. What are also known as 'Equatorial Calms'?
4. Who's catchphrase was 'It's the way I tell 'em'?
5. In the film 'About a Boy' who plays the boy in question?
6. And on whose novel was the film based?
7. What strait separates Anglesey from the Welsh mainland?
8. From which country does 'Raga' music come?
9. Who did Sirhan Bissara Sirhan assassinate in 1968?
10. Who designed the present aviary at London Zoo?
11. What is 'digamy'?
12. What was the first credit card to be issued?
13. Move from square to touching square to find the longest word.
What is it?

N	T	K	O
E	T	O	S
	E	R	H

Answers on Page 12

Group News

Snooker



'Snooker Luppy nuts are we'?

There's a snooker player called Paul
Who is very good with Cue and the balls
He keeps potting away throughout the play
And amasses a wonderful score.

Brian, another player of much delight
with shots of finesse and such might
when on form the balls whizz & zoom about
Tis a pity his cue seems attracted to white.

A jester, joker this Paul whose white ball can be seen
Flying round like in a pin-ball machine
So pockets look out his cue ball is about
and bound to go 'in-off' without doubt.

Peter's a canny player making shots all over the table
His scores are not great when he steps 'to the plate'
Which is sad because he's quite able
Tis a shame for an old codger, mate.

Now Michael and Mike are a formidable duo
Who entertain us with stories told with gusto
Their cue shots are fine but take an awful long time
so the rest of the game becomes very so-so.

So along come ye one and all
And join in this spectacular 'ball'
Just pick up a Cue without any to-do
And show us your action, Yahoo!



History

History continues to be a strongly supported group. We have 20 regulars plus a random extra 10. We have relocated to the Miners Welfare, meeting at 2pm on the second Monday of every month.



Last month we visited the council house in the city centre.

We were guided around expertly and the history of the building and the city itself unfolded before us. It was a very worthwhile experience.



In December we hope to have a quiz and in the New Year we will be unveiling our timetable of meetings, visits and speakers for the whole of 2020. We are also working hard on setting up the Cotgrave history website with the help of Paul Childs, John Orton and especially John Haskell. Hopefully all of our documents can be available for all to benefit from and use. So come along and join in and contribute to a vibrant and thought provoking group.



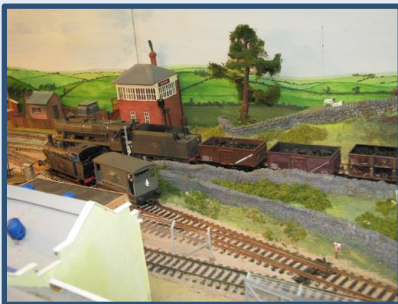
For your amusement.

With the festive season approaching, I thought it might be a nice idea to be reminded of the magic of Christmas from the viewpoint of the gifts we were given as a child. Below are the names of 12 of our members together with 12 different presents that they remember receiving. Can you match the person to their favourite gift? [Solution on page 12](#)

Victor Okrafo-Smart
Stuart Ellis
June Odell
Peter Smith
Sue Tattam
Barbara Bullin
Peter Binder
Tony Bullin
Anna Franks
John Haskell
Maureen Johnson
Sue Childs

Tin Plate Toy Car
Train Set
Water Colour Paints
Bike
Record Player
Doll's Pram
Scalextric
Camera
Doll's House
Meccano
Doll
Kid Brother

Hobbies.



Rod Steward recently published photographs of his model railway, his lifelong interest. This gives me the courage to admit that, this often mocked hobby, is also one of my hobbies. My layout, although not on the scale of the singer's, has given me many hours of pleasure. "What" I hear you say "how boring".

We all have an interest or hobby. A quick "think" about people I know revealed the follow hobbies -

Gardening, Fly Fishing, Horse Racing, Bowls, Stamp Collecting, Golf, Cycling, Wine Tasting and Collecting Old Bricks!

So why, I wonder, do we develop these interests that one person finds fascinating and others don't, or in some cases can't understand?

I don't stand on platforms taking numbers but, since childhood, I have been interested in railways and transport in general. Perhaps it came from my uncle who was a train driver in the days of steam.

My other lifelong interest has been cricket which I played for 60 years and continue to umpire. But, this didn't come from any family connection. In fact, as far as I can ascertain, no one in my immediate family and ancestors ever had any interest in the game.

So what makes us happy to stand in cold water fly fishing, or go round searching for old bricks?

I don't know but I think it would make a good thesis for some academic!

Peter



Group News

Travel

Saturday 19th October 2019 was a mild and pleasant morning as a small select group of U3A members set off on a day trip to Cirencester and Westonbirt.



Whilst the stop in Cirencester was quite short it was still interesting to walk the cobbled streets and alleyways exploring the historical past of the town. The church of St John Baptist was built during the 12th century with many additions since along with a monastery and some very fine stain-glass windows.



In the afternoon we went to Westonbirt Arboretum initially owned by the Holford family in the 19th century and now owned by the Forestry England. It is an enormous area with numerous paths and trails weaving around the multitude of trees and shrubs all festooned with a wonderful array of autumn colour. There is even a substantial elevated walkway allowing you to gaze at tree-top height which offered a different perspective for visitors.



Needless to say that refreshments at the end of the walk were most welcomed.

Weekend Social

Three members of the Weekend Social Group spent a relaxed afternoon in November at Funky Pots in West Bridgford. The photo shows the results of their creative efforts.



Comedy Corner

What did the stamp say to the Envelope?
Stick with me and we will go places.

What is a Pirate's average grade?
Somewhere in the high Cs

Group News

Knit & natter



The Group continues to go from strength to strength, there is plenty of Natter (no politics) and knitting, very much a self-help group.

Poppies that were knitted for the local church were sold this year along with others for the British Legion funds.



Writing.

My name is Chris Tomblin and I'm the new leader of the writing group. I realise that Brian Franks will be a hard act to follow and he and Anna will be sorely missed by us all. Our group has been sadly depleted recently with the departure of Geoff Milner first and now Brian and Anna and other groups will be missing them too.

We would love to have some new members. We really enjoy getting together sharing our efforts and exchanging our ideas. It's very informal and not a bit scary.

I remember quite clearly walking round to Rectory Road in April 2018 for my first meeting. I felt very nervous indeed. I had arranged to go just to see what it was like and wouldn't write a piece as I only had two days' notice. The subject was rhubarb!

I couldn't resist it; I had lived within the Rhubarb triangle in Yorkshire! I attempted my first piece which was the first piece of fiction I had written since leaving school but although I took it with me, I had no intention of reading it to the group. But I was made so welcome and the group was so informal I did read it aloud and enjoyed every minute of it.

So, it would be lovely to see more of you at the group. If you're not sure come for a visit and see what you think.

If you need more information, then please contact me on 07765140472 or email christomblin@aol.com



Group News

Lunch

Unfortunately we can only report on two Lunch Group outings this month because the outing to The Goose at Gamston was cancelled. We received a telephone call at 10am on the morning of the lunch to tell us that the establishment could not open due to a “problem with the electrics”. After a few hopeful calls to other pubs, all to no avail, we had to phone the whole group to cancel.

The Royal Oak at Car Colston was a nice country venue for our October outing where 23 of us enjoyed our meals with well attended friendly service; our large prawn cocktails consisted of



prawns, smoked salmon and salad accompanied by bread; the pate also looked good.

The main courses eaten included a fair sized fish pie accompanied by freshly cooked broccoli/cauliflower, carrots; many had a steak & Ale pie; although some thought it a bit dry, it did come with a superb gravy; curry was also good. Overall the meals were enjoyed and some even had room for a sweet. Chocolate mints were served afterwards and those who had coffee had an extra one.

Definitely a place to visit again.

November saw us make a return visit to The Harvester in Wilford. We again had a good turn out; numbers seem to be averaging between 20 and 25 on most occasions. The Lunch Menu option was very popular, £8.99 for 2 courses and £2 extra for a third course, and of course there is also the Salad Cart. Portions were generous, some even needing help to finish their pudding. A few had the Harvester classics of Combo or Ribs. The service was prompt and efficient, and generally enjoyed by all.

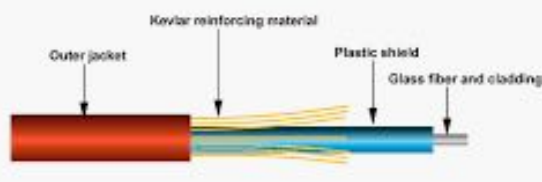


Science

The Labour Party announced its intention of providing free broadband services to the whole country on Friday November 15th. On Thursday November 21st the Science Group held a meeting to discuss the subject of Fibre-Optic Communications! Can you better that for a rapid response?

It is a remarkable story but there is only space here to mention two features. Firstly, the so-called ‘Single-Mode’ glass Fibre which carries the world’s information traffic over thousands of miles is a mere nine microns in diameter and, to give you a rough idea of what this means, the diameter of a human hair is roughly one hundred microns! Just imagine the challenge of splicing (ie joining) a pair of such fibres accurately together! And would you believe that one hundred kilometres of such fibre contains a mere fifteen grams of quartz? Not exactly demanding on material supply! But it does have to be *very* pure to minimise absorption of the light signal.

Fiber Optic Cable



Answers Page.

Answers to Tony's Winter Quiz

1. Royal Mail Ship. 2. Vienna. 3. The Doldrums. 4. Frank Carson's 5. Nicholas Hoult. 6. Nick Hornby's. 7. Menai Strait. 8. India. 9. Robert Kennedy. 10. Lord Snowdon. 11. A legal second marriage. 12. Diners Club (1950). 13. TENTERHOOKS

Answers to Which Present

Victor Okrafo-Smart	Camera
Stuart Ellis	Record Player
June Odell	Doll
Peter Smith	Kid Brother
Sue Tattam	Bike
Barbara Bullin	Doll's House
Peter Binder	Meccano
Tony Bullin	Tin Plate Toy Car
Anna Franks	Train Set
John Haskell	Scalextric
Maureen Johnson	Water Colour Paints

Comedy Corner

Where do policemen live?

Letsby Avenue.

I am writing a musical about puns.

It's a play on words.

Group News

Chess

Chess is a game with deep historical origins dating back as far as the 6th. Century AD. Most evidence suggests the first version of the game emerged in India under the name of Chaturanga. From India the game quickly spread to Persia and subsequently the Arab world. Chess eventually spread to Europe in the 10th century AD because of increasing trade between Europe and the Arab world. Around the same time Chess reached Japan and other eastern nations. Many other scholars profess that another variation of Chess may have existed in China as far back as the 2nd century BCE although the game is thought to have differed widely from the game that exists today. Until the 15th century AD several of the pieces, most notably the Queen and the Bishop; were significantly less mobile than their modern counterparts. Around the end of the 15th century AD they developed their modern powers enhancing the speed and dynamics of the game and creating the game we love today.

In Europe Chess quickly became a hobby popular amongst the upper class who were the only people who could afford the luxury of the time to play. Fortunately for Chess more people began to play in the Middle Ages. These developments were of fundamental importance as now anyone can now play.

The accessibility of chess today to almost any citizen of the world is what has made the game as popular as it is today.

If you are interested come and join us at 10.00am until about 12noon on Wednesdays in the Family Room of the Welfare Social Centre.

If you don't know how to play we will teach you.

For more information contact me Group Leader Bernie Besnard Land Line 0115 9899845

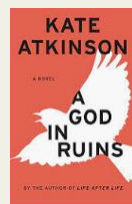
Book Club



The first book is *The lost Man* by Jane Harper, a very talented author who spent most of her early years in Australia returning to do further research in the Queensland outback. This starts with a murder of one of three brothers found near a Stockman's grave in the deserted outback. Did he choose to walk to his death? The family called Bright have a quiet existence three hours away from any other people and they are thrown into anguish and grief just before Christmas. This book explores the harsh extremes of the outback, the isolation of the inhospitable desert in Queensland. Answers are found by revisiting the brother's childhood and the battered mother terrorised by her husband. The atmosphere is so real you can taste the red-clay dust and the folklore surrounding the mysterious stockman, complete with a surprising end. This was an excellent book club read with lots of in depth discussion, would be highly recommend and scored 9.



The next book was *Love is Blind* by William Boyd, a very experienced author who covers a wide range of topics. This is a historical fiction set in Edinburgh in the late 17th century. Brodie, the main character, seizes the chance to flee his tyrannical clergyman father to work in Paris as a piano tuner. He meets two Irish brothers and a Russian opera singer called Lika Blum. His life is changed forever. He is obsessed by Lika and the love affair makes them move from St Petersburg, back to Scotland briefly then to the South of France. Brodie suffers a duel, violence, unhappiness and recurrence of T.B. This is written with great passion and very descriptive parts on the changes taking place in another century across the world. On the whole we all enjoyed this book but thought it could have been shorter but we had good feedback and discussion, scored 6/7.



The last book *A God in Ruins* by Kate Atkinson, another experienced author who was awarded an M.B.E. This is set pre and post WW2 and is about a man called Teddy. He was a bomber pilot, a poet, husband, father and Grandfather. He tries to navigate the perils and progress of the twentieth century. For all Teddy endures in battle, his greatest challenge will be to face living in a future he never expected to have. This book will be discussed at our meeting on Dec. 16th and should involve some interesting feedback.

Speakers Corner - Farmer Barnes Dairy.



Jane Barnes could never be described as ‘A farmer’s Wife’ – she very clearly is a farmer in her own right, though apparently she does have a husband who is equally involved in running their dairy farm near Melton Mowbray. Before setting off for Cotgrave Jane had already fed something like two hundred and fifty Ayrshire cows, as she does each and every day. Nevertheless, she turned up looking spick and span and could easily have been mistaken for the manager of a supermarket or some kind of financial executive. Indeed, it is clear that Jane is every bit as much a business woman as a farmer. In addition to giving regular talks to U3As, WIs, etc. she organises visits to the farm in a seriously professional manner and is quick to take the opportunity to sell considerable amounts of Long Clawson Stilton cheese to her audience members – Cotgrave U3A being no exception. Her talk was delivered in an equally business-like manner, without a single note to aid her memory and showed total command of the whole business of dairy farming and an obvious love of every aspect. Each of their cows has a name and one felt sure that she knew them all – though she referred only to one particular favourite called ‘Honesty’. Honesty had been the matriarch for many years and even knew how to bully the bulls. She had kept the whole herd in good order for the full extent of her ‘reign’, which came to a sad end only a little while ago. I rather imagine that the very concept of a hierarchy within a herd of cows came as something of a surprise to many of us but it was clear from Jane’s account that such was certainly the case.

The question of hierarchy in the human life scale is also of importance, of course, and Jane assured us that all was well on that front too. Their son Harry, after taking appropriate agricultural courses, had decided he wanted to continue the family tradition and would take over the running of the farm when his parents felt ready to relinquish control. Though Jane, herself, looked to be in the prime of life and far from thinking of retirement, it was obviously important that the long-term future was taken care of. It also gave Jane and her husband the opportunity to travel, knowing that their precious cows would be in good hands and they recently visited the USA – to look at dairy farming in another country and to attend the Ayrshire Cattle Conference! – and planned to repeat the experience in Adelaide next year. But this was no more than an important detail. The really important fact was that, being confident of the future, they had recently invested some mind-boggling sum of money in building a brand new farm on their land in Melton and it would be this show-piece that would be on view to those of us interested in joining a visit. They have no less than 1.3 acres of roof under which the cows are milked and (in the winter months) housed. Son Harry claims that he walks as much as 4 miles at each milking session!

But what of the cows? In the interest of continuing milk supply, it is important that each cow gives birth to a new calf each year and these births are normally perfectly natural. Apparently, the mothers prefer to calve during the night when all is quiet. New-born calves are weaned from their mothers after a few days and are fed via an artificial rubber teat. One or two male calves are kept on the farm but most must be sold for beef – Jane was currently selling them on Facebook at £40 a head! Females can expect to have their first calves at the age of about two years. Their milk quality is dependent on the quality of the grass on which they feed – that around Melton being particularly good. All their milk goes to Long Clawson for making into stilton (though they also make Shropshire blue). Indeed, it is cheese-making which keeps English dairy farms in business so we were encouraged to buy British and not to fall for French publicity claiming the superiority of their product.

Speakers Corner - Cragside.



At our October meeting, an old friend, Colin Groves gave an admirable account of the Victorian industrialist William Armstrong and his idiosyncratic house at Cragside, in Northumberland. Born near Newcastle in 1810, he was a sickly child, yet lived to the age of ninety, made a name for himself as a scientist, inventor, technologist, philanthropist and highly successful industrialist, enjoying the friendship of the Prince of Wales and being raised to the Baronetcy in 1859. He formed the armament company

Armstrong Whitworth and is regarded as the first person to develop 'rifled' artillery, putting Newcastle well and truly on the industrial map.

He also formed a collaborative activity with Joseph Swan, who should probably be credited with being first to demonstrate an electric light bulb. Together they illuminated the house at Cragside with such devices, the necessary electricity being generated by hydro-power. Once again, this was a resounding 'first'. Armstrong endeared himself to his workforce by taking off his jacket and working alongside them, when the occasion demanded.



The house itself, which Colin described in some detail was designed by the famous Victorian architect Norman Shaw and is, without doubt, a remarkable structure. It has been described as 'Brewhouse Tudor' on account of its mixture of Tudor gables with Gothic arches. This was partly the result of Armstrong's frequent changes of mind as the house took shape but there can be little doubt as to its originality. Inside, it was extremely luxurious, sporting William Morris wallpaper and a prized collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Copying the principle of Elizabethan houses, it contained a splendid 'Long Gallery', though this

was used as a means of showing off the paintings, rather than for exercise. One room was noteworthy in having ceiling beams made from steel, though faced in wood to make them look authentic. The Kitchen was special in regard of its innovative technology, including a spit driven by hydro-electric power. The house as a whole was centrally heated – yet another significant innovation - while Armstrong was also well ahead of his time in forbidding smoking inside the house. So strict was the ban that it even applied to the Prince of Wales! The garden, too, was impressive, being planted with many exotic trees and containing as many as one hundred varieties of rhododendron. The greenhouses were heated ingeniously by solar energy, sunlight being focussed onto peach trees by means of rotating lenses. Was there no end to the man's originality? It certainly made for an entertaining hour's presentation.

Speakers Corner - The Mitfords.



Our November meeting was captivated by John Whitfield's account of the amazing Mitford family. David Mitford (Lord Redesdale) was an old-fashioned, set-in-his-ways, minor aristocrat who, lacking any competence with monetary affairs, saw his family's status drift inexorably downwards in spite of the notoriety generated by his six daughters. He had a son too but poor Tom lost his life at the very end of the Second World War Burma campaign, thus leaving the aristocratic line both bankrupt and lacking any male successor. The girls more than made up for this by their exotic lifestyles and it was these which obviously took our fancy. John described them with wit and candour. They all lacked any kind of formal education because their father, who claimed to have read only one book, didn't believe there was any point in educating girls but this seemed not to have any significant effect – they were all strong, forceful characters.

The eldest of them, Nancy, left home at the age of eighteen and became involved with a social circle of Oxford graduates – literary people – and turned out to be gay. She wrote several mediocre books, moved into London society, met General de Gaulle and then wrote two very successful novels 'The Pursuit of Love' and 'Love in a Cold Climate' which astutely reflected the life and times of pre-war London high society.



Pamela, the second daughter, was probably the most 'normal' of the sisters. She married Derek Jackson, an extremely rich Cambridge physicist who played roles in the development of the MRI scanner and in the development of radar. He also became a fighter pilot, specialising in the very dangerous practice of night-flying. Sadly, his brother was killed in such circumstances, a tragedy which sent poor Derek out of his mind.

The Mitford son, Tom followed the standard route through the Dragon School, Eton and Oxford and into the British Army where he fought in the Boer War but rebelled politically by becoming a convert to Fascism, like his younger sister Diana.

Diana first married a member of the Guinness family, then took up with Oswald Mosely and helped him found the 'British Union of Fascists'. She then left her husband and married Mosely. They were both imprisoned during the Second World War but Winston Churchill is reputed to have helped free them (it's who you know ----!).

Unity was surely the craziest member of the family, owning both a pet grass snake and a rat. She made a determined effort to learn German so that she could visit Germany and meet up with Hitler – which she did. She attended the infamous 1936 Olympics and later shot herself in the head but managed to survive for several years with the bullet lodged in her brain.

Jessica rebelled in a diametrically opposite direction by becoming a devout Communist. She took part in the Spanish Civil War and had to be forcibly returned to England – Sir Anthony Eden actually sent a British Naval destroyer to ferry her back.

Finally, Deborah proved to be the most balanced and practical of the sisters. She married Andrew, the second son of the Duke of Devonshire, who, on the death of his elder brother Billy (also at the very end of the Burma campaign), became the unwitting heir to the Devonshire Estate. Faced with enormous Death Duties, it was imperative for him to raise a considerable sum of money but it was Deborah who actually took over the running of the Estate and is responsible for all the commercial aspects which we are familiar with today.

Information.

Forthcoming Speakers.

Tuesday 14th January 2020

Steve Allen “My Musical History Show”

Steve uses musical examples to illustrate the story of the Industrial Revolution. Just how he does it will become clear on the day!

Tuesday 11th February 2020

Paul Dyson “Travels and Adventures of a Wildlife Artist”

Paul has entertained us previously with breathtaking photographs of wildlife. This time, he will concentrate more on the ‘adventures’ inherent in obtaining his images. He also produces beautiful drawings of animal life which will be for sale.

Tuesday 10th March

Roger Clifford “History of the Willoughby Family”

Roger has been recommended as giving an excellent talk about the Willoughby Family who built Wollaton Hall in Wollaton Park back in the sixteenth century.

Tuesday 14th April

Martin Lloyd “Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies”

Martin is an experienced lecturer who gives talks all round England. The complex relationship between Assassins and Spies and the humble Passport is an intriguing one.

New parking arrangements at “The Manvers”

To all U3A members who might use the Manvers car park as temporary parking while involved in some outside U3A activity.

Please note that there is a new surveillance system which records the registration number of the car as it enters the car park and again when leaving. If actually using the Manvers, one is then required to register the number on an automatic facility in the Manvers Garden Bar (ask the bar staff for details of exactly how to do this). One then has permission to leave the car in the park for up to 24 hours. However, if this registration is not made, one is liable to a hefty (£100) fine! Note that it means that if one merely drives into the park just to turn round, while dropping off a partner, one could fall foul of the system. Management assures me that there is a ten-minute window, so there should be no problem but it is well to be aware.

If using the Manvers for a U3A meeting, such as Bridge, Science Group or Computer Group, there is no problem so long as the car registration is keyed in. Similarly, if one is having a drink at the bar, there is no problem.



Christmas Party



On Friday 6th December U3A members, friends and family gathered together in The Welfare for our annual Christmas Party. Singing for Pleasure Group led by Sue Tattam together with the Ukulele Group led by Ken Hemsell entertained us during the evening with a mixture of numbers from their normal repertoire and a selection of Christmas songs and carols with the audience joining in when prompted by Sue and aided by the words projected on the big screen.

Two notable highlights during the singing was the solo performance, in German, by Eric Walton singing “Silent Night” and the whole audience singing “12 Days of Christmas” with each table singing a different ‘day’. The interpretation of Two Turtle Doves by Peter and Heather Binder will linger in the memory for a long time.

The buffet was excellent with good choices of savoury and sweet.

The evening was completed with a free raffle, prizes donated by Committee Members. Thanks go to the organisers and particularly to Sue Tattam for organising the entertainment and for writing a special version of “dreaming of a white Christmas” (see the following page) and to Peter Cadwallader for his technological input.

Finally a big thank you to Pat Baxter for keeping us all in order around the buffet and making the evening a great success.





Christmas Party



Written by Sue Tattam for the Christmas Party, to the tune of I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas

I'M DREAMING OF MY CHRISTMAS DINNER



I'm dreaming of my Christmas dinner, just like the ones I used to know
Where the turkey's golden, and we're all holdin', our wine glass with
faces all a-glow



I'm dreaming of my Christmas dinner, remembering what we've come here for
It's not just good living, or Christmas giving, it's all about who can eat more!

I'm dreaming of my Christmas dinner, When all the children cry and shout
"I will eat the roasties, I like them mostest, but I WILL NEVER EAT A
SPROUT!"



I'm dreaming of my Christmas dinner, with all the stuffing I can take
And with my full belly, I'll watch the telly, then stuff myself with Christmas cake



I'm dreaming of my Christmas dinner, with every sweet mince pie I bite
May you leave here merry, not tight, and may all your bread sauce be white.

And Finally



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

Mike Smith, Janet Bragg, Angela Donald
and
Ken & Sue McFadden

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, Malcolm Baxter 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 2020*