

# Cotgrave & District



Quarterly Gazette

No 4

Winter 2016



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 happening in our U3A. If you want any items included in future issues please let the Editor know.



***Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year  
to all our readers***



This Gazette is produced by Cotgrave & District U3A. Views expressed are not necessarily those of U3A, the Committee or of the Editor. Any items for inclusion or comments please send them to the Editor at [cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:cotgraveu3a@hotmail.com)

## *From the Chairman*

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We could not survive and prosper as well as we do, if we didn't have such a hardworking and committed committee. We started off with a very small group which has developed and metamorphosed into the group it is today. It has been a pleasure to work with them all.

The Chairman is a figurehead who constantly talks too much. The work of the Treasurer and Secretary is vital and has been accomplished in a professional and efficient manner by Chris Soar and Peter Binder. June ODell has been a supportive and determined Vice Chair as well as doing a most splendid job as Speaker Finder. I think that we would all agree that the Speakers have been entertaining and informative and have provided a focus for our General Meetings. I don't know how she has coped with it all.

Of course, the U3A could not run without the others on the Committee. Barbara Bullin has been a tremendous asset as Group organiser. In some ways this has been the hardest job to do, requiring a commitment and determination without equal. She has had a more than able assistant in Pat Baxter who has given unfailing support to us all. Sue Childs has brought an organisation and efficiency to our membership that has been key to our development and has been a main reason behind our success.

John Haskell has been a mainstay of the group and his determination and plain speaking has pushed us all forward. He has done great work on the Gazette and the website. David Drakes has been a revelation with his enthusiasm and hard work on the website and general helper on the committee. Both have sorted our publicity out and, again, this has been a main contributor in our growth. Well done to you all.

And last, but certainly not least, our general factotum, or dogsbody, without whom we could not function - Malcolm Baxter. He does so much behind the scenes.

So, we also have the many Group leaders and people greeters who have been unstinting in their support. You are the key to our success.

We have made mistakes, of course, and it has not all been plain sailing by any means. We are definitely not a clique and can only develop and progress with new blood. So, please come and join us and help in any way you feel able. You will make more friends and get a feeling of happiness at a job well done. Come and join the Committee!!!

Michael

## Luncheon Club

September - The Gamston Lock

An easy venue, as they don't ask for menu choices in advance. Pleasant decor, reasonably priced, popular with the Luncheon Club.



October - The Plough at Normanton

Most people say that they enjoy the Luncheon Club for the company, and the food is of secondary

importance. I share this view, and so find it very difficult afterwards to remember what I ate and if I liked it - it's more likely that I will know who I sat next to and what we talked about.

So I have started asking people to write down comments at the time. The Plough is fairly inexpensive, and serves two sizes of portion, the smaller often being enough at lunch-time. The service was unanimously voted excellent.

We were not so keen on the food, which had a mixed response:

Salmon and noodles excellent.

Not many vegetables in the panini so disappointing

Meat pie tasty, meat well cooked, pastry overcooked but clearly nice and short. I am not a fan of oven chips

However, a number of people gave the experience 9 out of 10, so it was a successful outing.



Our November's outing was at The Royal Oak, Car Colston, an attractive pub on a village green. There was another group in at the same time as us, so it was a bit noisy. Apart from that,

comments were positive. "Very enjoyable; we'll come again." "Location, convenience, service, staff, food - all great. " There was an excellent choice of food. A number of us succumbed to puddings! Higher priced than the other two venues, but most people thought worth it.

## Painting for Pleasure

Eight of us visited the SAA Head Office at Newark to spend the day with the Society for All Artists.

We started the day with a workshop using acrylic paint and followed the direction of one



of their in-house artists and painted a landscape.

This was followed by a viewing of 32,283 miniature pieces of art work measuring just 3 1/2" x 2" were displayed.

It was an inspirational exhibition of art from all over the country by all ages. The diversity of subjects was astounding along with the talent shown.



We then had a tour of the



company and had an opportunity to try out new art materials and buy at competitive rates.

Great day out and well worth an entrance fee to see the exhibition.

# Group News

## Film

During the last 3 months the Film Group has had the opportunity to view 16 films at our 2 usual locations



The Long Clawson film nights have featured 3 critically acclaimed features recently released on disc.

Our first was the Eddie

Redmayne film 'The Danish Girl', the second 'The Revenant' starring Leonardo DiCaprio and the third 'Florence Foster Jenkins' a bitter sweet comedy starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant.



The Silver Screen presentations at the Broadway Cinema showed a variety of features. Among those shown were two animated new releases, the 'BFG' by Roald Dahl, with Oscar winning Mark Rylance as the voice of the giant and 'Ethel and Ernest', author Raymond Briggs tribute to his parents with the voices being provided by Brenda Blethyn



and Jim Broadbent.

'Ingrid Bergman – In Her Own Words' was based upon her diaries and memories of her children whilst 'Carman Jones' was the 1954 film of Bizet's opera Carman featuring Harry Belafonte. 'Swallow and Amazons' was a remake of the famous novel and 'The Girl on the Train' a film based on the bestselling debut novel by Paula Hawkins. Renee Zellweger and Colin Firth re-visited Bridget and Mark in 'Bridget Jones's Baby' and the film 'I, Daniel Blake', directed by Ken Loach, tells the often funny and intensely moving friendship between an unemployed carpenter and a single mother living in Newcastle.

## Walking

Following the success of the Walking Group a number of members asked if we could arrange a walk for those who were restricted in the distance they could walk – a distance of no more than 3 miles.



During the last quarter we were able to organise 3 walks, the first being to Colwick Park viewing the lake, Colwick Hall and the

ruins of St John's Church.

Our second walk took us from West Bridgford centre through residential streets to Rushcliffe School on Boundary Road where we then

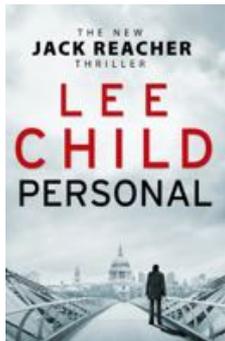


proceeded to take a seldom seen thoroughfare called Green Lane – formerly the Midland Railway track, to return to Melton Road and our start point.

The last walk in this quarter started with a tram ride to the Forest. Our walk through the Forest Recreation Ground showed us the underground prison cell situated in the Lodge and the sight of 13 windmills that once operated within the park. The walk then took us to the Arboretum, Nottingham's oldest park, through the University Halls of Residence and onto Theatre Square.

# Group News

## Book Club

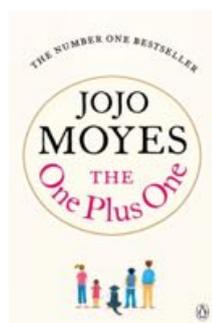


Over the recent 3 months the book club has "visited" America, Paris and many parts of the U.K.

The first book was the crime thriller Personal by Lee Childs involving Jack Reacher who tracks down a killer with a treacherous vendetta. This

book had mixed reviews and comments but we managed to finish it!!

The next book One plus One by Jojo Moyes. Just suppose your life sucks!! This is a tale of two lonely people from different "sides of the track" who collide, connect and then help each other both physically and mentally to unite. This



was a novel which gave the group an active discussion about life.

OVER ELEVEN YEARS, TEN MILLION & 1700 BILLION HIKES

**WILD**



Cheryl Strayed

15

The current book is a true story Wild by Cheryl Strayed, now a motion picture, a journey from lost to found. Cheryl, alone walks 1100

miles of the West coast of America to try and piece together her shattered life.

This should gives us plenty of scope for a discussion on Dec. 19th at our next meeting.

This, I hope, gives a taste of some of the literature covered by the group and all suggestions are acting on. We have completed a user feedback questionnaire which will be collated in the New Year.

## Singing for Pleasure

The group continues to meet weekly from 7.00pm to 8.30pm each Wednesday at 98 White Furrows. The last three months have seen little change as we continue to expand our repertoire and explore different types of songs – ranging between country, musical theatre, film songs, ballads, oldies-but-goodies, pop and even one by Offenbach which our valiant men tackle with gusto! Oh, and our version of Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious is.....well.....supercalifragilisticexpialidocious! We are currently preparing for the U3A Christmas Party and are looking forward to another evening of excellent company and seasonal song. That event, on 10<sup>th</sup> December, will be our final session for 2016 and we will re-commence on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Several of us have also signed up for a ‘Singing Day’ at Southwell next spring when we will be directed and tutored through a day of group singing by John Rutter.

Due to limited space we are just about at maximum capacity but any queries regarding the group can be sent to the leader (Sue Tattam) or to the deputy (Maureen Johnson).

## Comedy Corner

I got chatting to a lumberjack in a pub.  
He seemed a decent feller

A Mummy covered in chocolate and nuts  
has just been discovered in Egypt.  
Archaeologists believe it could be the  
Pharaoh Rocher

## Group News

### Theatre

We enjoyed a new venue for our recent theatre trip -- The Grange at Radcliffe to see the play 'Instructions to American Servicemen in Britain'. The Theatre Group was joined by a number of the Singing for Pleasure group; and we found ourselves in a most unusual setting!

Instead of an auditorium we found ourselves in, what I can only describe as a dining room -- tables set around the hall. And immediately, as we sat down, the audience became part of the play. Our table had a pair of land-girls sitting with us, and we were invited by a wandering American Major to enjoy ourselves.

When he took to the stage he explained to the assembled newly arrived US service people! , (i.e. us) that during his 5 days there he had arranged for an English officer to explain their new base and its surrounding population.

But first he was joined by his senior officer, who embarked on sorting out individual 'soldiers' sitting in front of him about their rumbustious behaviour the previous night. And then went on to put forward *his* view on first the British Isles with the aid of a large map on a blackboard and then 'the English', each bringing a burst of laughter from the assembly. Later the English officer appeared, giving credence to the Colonel's expressed view. The first thing was the former being invited to explain the (former) English currency, again on the blackboard...which became completely covered.

This was the tone of the piece, with all the subsequent parts, in the appropriate accents, played by the same three. The whole experience was, to me, summed up by a nearly final scene when the trio dressed as Morris men and, with the aid of distributed paper napkins, got everybody on their feet to dance their version of this "all England" traditional activity.

At the final curtain call, I found myself not only applauding the actors, and their minimal set, but very much the writing -- done by those three plus one other.

The Director writes that he hopes the audience have "a joyous, fun evening and leave with a smile on their face". That certainly was the case for us.



A group of us went to see Northern Ballet's production of *Beauty and the Beast* on November 4th at the Theatre Royal.

The story opened with the arrogant Prince Orian admiring himself in mirrors, surrounded by admiring courtiers but not showing interest in anyone but himself. Suddenly and dramatically, a fairy bursts in to curse him and turn him into an ugly beast. She is followed by a gentler spirit who decrees that, if he can find love, he can turn back again. Then follows the story we all know, of Beauty, her father, a rose and a happy ending.

The choreography was amazing. The Prince and the Beast were danced by different people and the bestial movements for the latter were spectacular. The staging was most imaginative and included a removal van.

It has proved impractical to book for high-profile events at the Royal Centre. We would need to plan, and pay up, well in advance to secure good seats, which is just too complicated.

Instead, perhaps people could use the email list to express their interest in a forthcoming show and get together in small groups to organise outings themselves.

If you are not on the theatre groups mailing list and would like to be, please let Anna Franks know - annaarrowfranks@gmail.com, 0115 9899404.



### Board games

The group had its first session on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> September with 8 members attending. The following month the numbers increased to 12 and there are 14 members in total signed up. The premises can just about cope with this number so anyone else interested in joining will be added to a waiting list.

The format of the evening is very relaxed with around 7 or 8 different games being available to play. So far several people have learnt Rummicub and a few have learnt backgammon. At the most recent session, on 10 November, everyone had a go at Perudo, a Peruvian dice game of guesswork, bluff and luck which is believed to have been played since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This was new to many and caused some initial confusion but ended with us finding out who the sneakiest, most tactical, players are!



After an hour or so of playing various games, we all then got together for the final game which is

held in teams. Every event so far has ended with this game, called 'Jump!', literally being neck and neck throughout until the unbridled and triumphant "Hurrah" from the winning team (and groan of anguish and despair from the losers). The hostess would like to point out that she would like to be on the winning team sometime soon, please, as she has lost every time so far – even though she devised and developed the game herself!

The event is held on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 7.00pm, at 98 White Furrows, Cotgrave – the next planned event being 8<sup>th</sup> December when the format and some of the games will change slightly to reflect a pre-Christmas party theme. Those attending are invited (encouraged) to bring along and release their inner child!

Please contact the host, Sue Tattam (suetattam@yahoo.co.uk), if you have any queries.

### Badger watch 2016

Seventeen members of our U3A together with two guests enjoyed this year's Badger Watch over two evenings of 29<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> October at the Holwell Nature Reserve in North Leicestershire. Malcolm Baxter kindly led the September outing where good views of two badgers were enjoyed by all from the site hide.

The writer led the October event where probably the same two badgers, a mature sow and an adolescent, were joined by a buck Muntjac deer in front of the hide. The animals were all tucking into the peanuts laid down to attract them, with the Badgers being particularly noisy 'sniffers and snortlers' as they enjoyed their free treats.

As on previous visits, Mr George Kerr, our 'Host and Guide' from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust embellished the evening with his knowledge of the animals and the former ironstone quarry which forms the reserve. He also gave me an insight of the resident birds on site which has been very useful to the Birdwatching Group. Two highly enjoyable and informative evenings.



### Writing for Pleasure

This is a piece from the Writing for Pleasure group,

#### Worth Every Penny

It was raining in the village of Cotstone. Edna stared gloomily out of the window at the drops coursing down the window panes, and at the iron-grey sky beyond. On a sunny day she would potter down to the shops, and perhaps take a country walk. But what would they do today? Derek would settle down with his paper and not budge till lunch-time. She could feel gloom settle upon her.

She would not give into it, but would make something of the day. It was always nice, on an overcast day, to go into town, look at the shops, have a coffee somewhere. Trouble was, on Saturdays there were hardly any buses, and they were less reliable than in the week. Could she really face the trip with her umbrella down to the chilly shelter, to be sprayed by passing vehicles while waiting for a bus that might be late, or might not come at all? She looked up at the RSPB clock on the wall. The barn owl stared back and hooted mournfully, telling her that she had just missed the ten o'clock bus.

Derek was sitting hunched up in the lounge, absorbed in the newspaper.

"It's a miserable day today". No answer.

"I'm thinking of going into town".

Still no answer. He turned a leaf.

"The easiest way on a Saturday is to take the car and park it at the station."

Now he appeared to hear her. "Costs five pounds, does that", he remarked. "Can't be paying five pounds when we've got perfectly good bus passes. We're retired, you know. On a budget. Can't afford to be foolish."

She had known he would react like this, and sighed inwardly. Then she remembered her piggy bank. It had been a gift from one of their children, and she still occasionally put coins into it. She slipped out and checked. Yes, she had enough. Back she came.

"I'll be using money out of the piggy. It'll be miserable here all day in this rain."

He demurred. If she wanted to waste her money like that, it was up to her. But there would be a lot of traffic about. She might not manage it. More accidents happened in the rain. Parking might be difficult - lots of people would have thought of the station, some folks thought nothing of the five pounds. But she stood firm. At last he lumbered to his feet with a sigh and declared his intention of coming with her, to see that she was safe.

So they set off, and reached town without mishap. Derek decided that they might as well start at the little amateur theatre they often went to. Tickets were cheap there and the productions good. They could see what was on next, and maybe buy tickets. It was still raining, but huddled together under the umbrella they plodged up to the theatre door. It should have been open, but it wasn't. They looked for a bell, and rang it. Nothing happened. They rang again.

They were just about to go away when the theatre door flew open. A breathless woman, whom they knew by name as Heather, stood there. "Thank goodness someone's come," she panted. "I can't get the key cupboard open. Are you here instead of Roger? Look, it's stuck."

Derek grabbed the cupboard door and gave it a sharp yank. It flew open, Heather and Edna staggered backwards. A series of whistles pierced the dark of the entrance hall.

"Oh Lord," gasped Heather. "The alarm. That's the first thing you're meant to do, is switch it off"

The screeches continued. Panic started to rise as they all stared into the dark cupboard. Whatever should they do next. Suddenly, across the screeching, came the sound of a telephone bell. Heather shrieked and leapt for it. A voice boomed, "Police station here. Responding to alarm call. Have you your password, please?"

**Hopefully we will have the concluding part next issue, or** if our (Gazette) readers want to know more --- come and join us. We don't bite, literally nor verbally, and people are welcome to come initially without contributing.

### Birdwatching

The group was not particularly active during the later summer months due to holiday and child minding commitments. We also took into account that many of the adult birds would be skulking in the undergrowth cover whilst recovering from raising young and moulting and the young birds would also be taking as much cover as possible to avoid predation as they learned to survive independently. However, five members and two guests met for a walk around the local Skylarks Reserve at the end of August. We enjoyed fine sunny weather and the highlight for most of our party was good sightings of a



group of three/four adult and young Green Woodpeckers feeding on insects and ants in what is known as 'Woodpecker Field' to the East of Adbolton Road. Numerous Grey Heron and Little Egrets were present around Blotts Pit and adjacent scrapes together with good numbers of the more common waterfowl. The group further enjoyed sampling from the copious supply of juicy blackberries whilst admiring the butterflies attracted to the



brambles. The butterflies seen included Comma, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady and Speckled Wood. An enjoyable morning for all participants.

The November outings are taking place as this article is being written, and consist of small (2 to 3 persons) visits to Holwell Reserve, with the prime objective of obtaining close views of the resident Nuthatch and Marsh Tits plus the more common Great, Blue and Cole Tits. There are also a good number of winter migrant Redwing, Fieldfare, Blackbird and Thrush plus small groups of Bullfinch feeding on the berries in the bushes within and surrounding the reserve, and who knows, a cold spell may bring Waxwing into our area. One of the attractions of observing wildlife is the unpredictability of what may turn up.



### Coffee and Chat

What can be said about Coffee and Chat? Well, we don't knit, don't paint, don't play cards, don't write and certainly don't jump up and down! So what do we do? Well we talk, drink, talk, eat, talk and above all we have a splendid morning meeting new people and old friends. It's the ideal group to join if you are a new member, both male and female, to get to know other members.

This last quarter we have met once at the Manvers and twice at East Bridgford Garden Centre. Each meeting has run very well although some members spent quite a lot on nick-knacks at the garden centre!

We are planning our Christmas gathering at The Manvers with mince pies etc. If you don't usually join this group why don't you give it a go? Don't miss out on this relaxed happy morning. It's much better than cleaning the house, cleaning the car or whatever tasks you fill your mornings with. Hope to see you there! Every fourth Wednesday at 10.30am.

## Computing

### **Computer Club: change is in the air!**

For the past year we've very much relied upon the magic potion of our IT guru, Michael Bridges, to steer us through the pitfalls of the IT jungle.

But that's all come to a shuddering halt as, for personal domestic reasons, Michael is withdrawing his consultancy services, including his free service to the Computer Club. We thank Michael for his invaluable service but have to move on.

After due consultation with our members we have decided to re-orient our Computer Club sessions towards helping to solve members' basic computing problems and are calling future sessions "Questions from the floor/ Beginners' Guides".

Our November session proved to be an excellent example of what we had in mind as Malcolm Baxter treated us to "A Beginners' Guide to Excel Spreadsheets".

Using his own laptop and projecting onto our own portable U3A screen he was able to take us through how to set up and use spreadsheets . . . useful for those new to Excel and for those needing to refresh their memories.

So, if you've wanted to know how to take and store photos on your smartphone; wondered how to use Skype; queried how to download and use an "App" or any other myriad simple but infuriating computing questions you've been desperate to ask, then come along and we'll try our best to help. And do bring along your laptop, tablet and/or smartphone . . . there's really no substitute for hands on experience.

Come along and help us make a success of "Change in the air" and get a chance to air those questions you've perhaps hitherto been too shy to ask.

## History

### Cotgrave local history project update

Research into the Census information from 1841, 1851, 1861, 1901, 1911 and 1939 is now complete; 1891 is currently being compiled leaving 1871 and 1881 to undertake. All this data will give us a comprehensive insight of the demographics and life changes in the village as the social changes that took place.

Thanks go to John Orton and Steve Cockbill primarily and more latterly to Carole Pimblett for their hard work and endeavours and their continuing data collection.

The project is now accumulating a vast amount of photographs of village life and activities along with numerous photographs of residents all of which will require examination and verification to affirm dates, precise location, names and ages of individuals particularly where group photographs of school classes, sports clubs and social groups are concerned.

A website is to be created to accommodate all of this information and photographs in early 2017 thus giving everyone the opportunity to peruse and comment upon the information displayed. The project team are keen for website visitors to contact the website in order to comment, correct, amend and suggest improvements or additions to it.

Please take a few moments to visit the website as your observations and comments will help to improve the detail for future site visitors.

The website will be directly linked to the Cotgrave U3A website as it is a village wide project within the local history U3A group. Any offers of help/assistance with the project would be warmly welcomed and contact should be made through either Paul Childs or Malcolm Baxter in the first instance.

Paul Childs –November 2016

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinselitis!

## Tony's Christmassy Quiz 2016

1. In which year did the British Post Office first issue special 'Christmas Stamps'?
2. Who sang about a 'Blue Christmas' in 1957?
3. Which race horse with a Christmassy name won the 1964 Epsom Derby?
4. In the Dickens novel 'A Christmas Carol' what was the name of Scrooge's clerk?
5. Which Biblical town translates to 'House of Bread' in Hebrew?
6. What was stolen from Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1950?
7. Which member of 'The Beatles' announced his engagement on Christmas Day 1967, and to whom?
8. Who composed the music for the festive ballet 'The Nutcracker'?
9. Who played 'Patch' in the 1985 movie 'Santa Clause: The Movie'?
10. The carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter' is based upon a poem by which writer?

Answers on Page 14

### Newcomers

In June we did leave the North  
And to the Midlands sallied forth.  
Places and people few did we know.  
Oh dear, what to do, where to go ?  
Then an idea came to mind,  
We would the U3A find.  
Friendly faces, happy greetings.  
Now we look forward to the meetings.  
Games and walks,  
Interesting talks .  
All add up to make us see,  
Cotgrave is the place to be !

Christine & Peter Shreyhane

### National Parks and Other Places in Southern Florida

Our November meeting was addressed by Pat Smith who happens not only to be the Treasurer of the Nottingham U3A branch but also an intrepid traveller and, in particular, a great lover of the United States. In this instance his topic covered two remarkable Florida holiday venues, the well-known Everglades and the slightly less-well-known Florida Keys, that long, thin group of islands which curve gradually south-west from Miami to the southern-most point of the USA, Key West. Illustrated by a splendid collection of holiday snaps, he took us on an exciting trail of January/February sun-blessed experiences which contrasted spectacularly with the snow-covered relics left behind in 2009 Nottingham. It looked altogether fabulous apart from the occasional reminder of earlier hurricane damage which had not been repaired during the last several years. There were also ominous warning notices as to what to do in the event of any such future events.

Our journey began from Key Largo just south of Miami and followed the US1 highway which crosses no less than forty-two bridges on its way to Key West. Key Largo, itself is famous as one of Ernest Hemmingway's many homes, where he live with one of his several wives and worked on several of his books, together with one of his even larger number of drinking places, rejoicing in the name of 'Sloppy Joe's'. The house is now a popular tourist venue, containing specimens of Hemmingway cats which are unique in having six (rather than the more usual five) claws. Like much of the local wildlife, they have absolute priority – even chickens crossing roads to get to the other side have 'rite' of way over both cars and pedestrians! Key Largo is also the final resting place of the 'African Queen', the boat used in the eponymous film, starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn. Further along the way was the Dry Tortugas Park and the landing point for Cuban refugees – apparently, if caught before landing they are returned but once landed are allowed to stay! We thus gleaned all sorts of odd snippets of information, such as the name of the doctor who treated Abraham Lincoln's assailant – his name was Mudd, hence the phrase!



Then to the Everglades which, to my surprise, turns out to be a river, rather than a swamp. The variety of wildlife, particularly birdlife, is amazing (Tony's Birdwatching Group might like to think of it for their next outing?) and we were treated to several photographs of vultures, just sitting there waiting for something to happen! They really are the most ugly of creatures, as befits their well-known purpose in life. The odd alligator didn't exactly raise the tone very much, either. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the land thereabouts is remarkably flat, as illustrated by an official sign recording the existence of 'Rock Reef Pass'. What in many places might climb to perhaps three thousand feet here managed a mere three feet! Altogether a fascinating glimpse into a remarkable region of the world's surface, presented with gentle humour and throw-away lightness of touch. Well done, June, another very enjoyable meeting.

### Salt Mountains in Iran

Those of us fortunate enough (or dutiful enough?) to attend the September General Meeting were literally transported to the wonders of the East by a superb and supremely enthusiastic presentation by a local geologist, Tom Whatton. Prior to Tom's excellent talk, I doubt that many of us were aware of the existence of Salt Mountains anywhere in the world, never mind Iran but now we most certainly are – not only as a result of an admirable, throw-away lecturing style but by a series of superb photographs. This was an experience not to be missed, as well illustrated by the almost equally enthusiastic audience response. If you did miss it, I can offer little consolation – but just remember to book your holiday at a different time next year!



It was in 2008 that Tom, his wife and two friends flew to Iran with a view to explore the salt mountains near the southern tip of the country. It was obviously an adventure with a view, made all the more exciting by the magnificence of the views they encountered. It was also a delightful encounter with friendly people – “welcome to our country” was a constantly recurring theme. His photographic record of people, mosques, bazars and markets brought home the pleasure to be had from an exchange of different cultures. One fascinating contrast was that between the law which obliges even foreign women to cover their heads at all times and the totally relaxed attitude towards their visit to a Shiite mosque. As he pointed out, the sheer beauty of the external tiling and the exuberance of the six towering minarets also contrasted with the utter plainness of the inner décor – the inside was for prayer, not for artistic extravagance. Yet another contrast which may bring tears to our western eyes was that between our respective petrol prices – they, poor souls, were obliged to pay 8p per litre! (except on the black market, when the price was double; but, as my Yorkshire upbringing tells me, “twice nowt’s nowt” so what of it?). And, dwelling briefly on another motoring analogy, it was clear that the Iranian women were not only totally shrouded but that they could choose any colour at all, so long as it was black – Henry Ford would have been in his element. Why black, one wonders – black is quite the wrong colour to choose in a hot, sunny climate.

Enough of cultural matters – it was the salt of the Iranian earth, rather than the colour of Iranian ladies’ attire which was the subject of our talk. Salt, we were told, was deposited some five hundred million years ago when seawater evaporated. It was then covered by heavier rock which squeezed it upwards into vertical fissures in the rock (salt, it appears, is a highly squeezable commodity), eventually pressing it into the light of an Iranian day, whence it flowed gently downwards, forming salt summits and salt streams which played an important role in determining the local geology. There are even salt glaciers, would you believe, as much as four miles in length! One consequence of some concern to intrepid walkers (such as Tom and his friend obviously were) was the crumbly nature of the terrain, liable at any moment to open up and swallow anyone unfortunate to tread unwisely. But, far more appealing to our U3A audience was the breath-taking beauty of the resulting scenery – I do not exaggerate – several gasps of amazement could be heard (even by those of us with ageing hearing). The dramatic markings in rock faces and the even more remarkable salt stalactites they encountered in various caves not only amazed the listeners but obviously made worthwhile the numerous cuts and bruises picked up by the speaker and his companions en route to their discovery. This, as Tom himself declared, was “geology in action”! How very true and how very, very exciting for us to be privileged to share in it. Our thanks should go to June for laying it on at short notice – our programmed speaker having died, rather than face the challenge of addressing the Cotgrave U3A, red in tooth and claw.



### Jewels of the Bible

Cotgrave & District U3A is given a chemistry lesson

We entered our normal monthly meeting hall to be confronted by a “horse shoe” layout of tables designed to show off lots of . . . rocks!

In fact, it represented approximately 5% of the collection of Paul Roebuck, a former teacher and academic specialising in inorganic chemistry.

He had been invited to lead us on a whistle stop tour of the Bible, pointing out along the way the mention of minerals (“rocks” to you and me!)

For example, in the Old Testament there are 500 references to “Gold”, 300 to “Silver and a mere 80 to “Copper”.

Minerals to be found in the Old Testament are Ruby, Topaz, Beryl, Turquoise, Sapphire and Emerald, with the most popular being Diamond, Emerald, Ruby and Sapphire.

Paul selected some choice quotes from the Bible, read out by members present who were then invited to hand around the appropriate samples in order to appreciate their beauty.

Asked how he had collected such a large and valuable collection he replied that most had been purchased which apparently evoke the comment from his late wife that acquisition of the collection had left them “stony broke”!

But to us the title of the talk, “Jewels of the Bible”, fully reflected Paul’s passion for and knowledge of inorganic chemistry. . . if only our chemistry lessons at school had been so fascinating!



The Answers:  
1. 1966    2. Elvis Presley    3. Santa Clause    4. Bob Cratchit    5. Bethlehem  
6. The Stone of Scone    7. Paul McCartney (to Jane Asher, they never married)  
8. Tchaikovsky    9. Dudley Moore    10. Christina Rossetti

# Christmas Social

*The Cotgrave U3A Christmas Social was held in the Scout Hall on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>. There was a good turnout of about 50 members with entertainment provided by our own Singing for Pleasure Group with a raffle afterwards, catering was provided by June Odell, who put on an excellent spread.*



## And Finally

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Welcome to the new members who have joined since the Autumn issue of the Gazette (or during the last quarter)

Judith Perkins, Chris Elton, Yvonne Harriss & Maureen Grove..

*The Editor and his team would like to wish all our readers  
A*

*Merry Christmas and a happy New Year*

*and*

*thank all the contributors for the articles that make this Gazette possible*

Don't forget if you are booking a holiday with Riviera Travel to mention your membership of Cotgrave 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.)*

Don't forget, articles for inclusion in the next issue of the Gazette should be sent to the Editor by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017