



Cotgrave and District U3A

Keeping in Touch 5

Good News

There's nothing 'serious' this week so we can begin with a smile.

Whilst it may not be 'serious', it is important because it really is good news. On this day, as I write (Monday, April 20th), Barbara Bullin, our Chairman, celebrates her eightieth birthday and I'm sure that every member will want to join me in wishing her a very Happy Birthday. As is clear from the photograph (courtesy of Peter Shreyhane), Barbara doesn't look anywhere near eighty and we look forward to seeing her again in her youthful capacity, welcoming visiting speakers to our monthly meetings, when this frustrating lock-down is all over. Thank you, Barbara, for all your hard work on behalf of the Cotgrave and District U3A Branch.



It just has to be celebrated by yet another awful limerick:

*The Chairman of our U3A
Was eighty years old t'other day
But, though April is breezier,
The rhyme had been easier
If only she'd waited till May.*

Cricket

April would normally see the start of the cricket season so there is every good reason for us to note the fact in our Weekly Letter. We might, perhaps, recall the definition of a 'Cricket Lover' as a man (it has to be a man!) who recognises in September that his wife left him in April. And that reminds me of the story about the two Yorkshire friends who arranged to meet at Headingley to watch the Roses match (quite a few years ago!). Bob (a palindromic name, readers will note) was there at the start but was somewhat surprised by his companion (Jack)'s lateness. On his finally arriving, it was obvious that Jack was far from his usual relaxed self: "Ah've got bad news for thee" he said, awkwardly "Tha wife's left thee this mornin". "Aye, ah've got bad news for thee, too" came the reply "'utton's out". (Sir Leonard Hutton of Pudsey, the first professional to captain England and the compiler of the then record score of 364 against the Australians at the Oval in 1938.)

Mention of Headingley, provides me with the excuse to introduce a bit of my own creative writing into the Weekly Letters. I first wrote this for the Cross magazine in September 2015. Whether anyone actually read it is not recorded but I expect U3A readers will be nothing less than entranced by it. It goes under the title of 'Overheard at Headingley'.

Overheard at Headingley

D' ye see that! First ball and e's it it fer six!

It wer a slog – nowt but a bloody slog.

But it were six!

Ah don't care – it wer a slog – agin t spin, too.

It went reight ter't back o't rugby stand.

Ah knows that but it went reight over 'cow corner'. Thah never should it anything over cow corner, and thah knows that, thisel. Utton would never av dreamed o doing it – e'd av played it with a straight bat, straight an proper like.

Ay but it would av been 'no run' – this lad it it fer six!

Tha means what these commentator chaps call 'a dot-ball' these days, ah suppose. Dot ball, indeed! Why can't they use proper Yorkshire – 'no run'. Utton would likely not av known what a dot ball was. But, by gum, e could play a straight bat like no batsman I ever saw.

Well, this lad ere is not a bad batter – tha as to admit.

'Batter'!! Tha means 'batsman'. Batter's what t' missus mixes up ter make Yorkshire puddin.

Oo, look – e's done it again! Six more. It would av took Utton half an hour ter score twelve an this lad's done it in is first over.

Ay, but it were nothin but a slog, a rotten cross-batted slog. When I were a lad an tryin ter get in ter first team, they used ter tell me never ter play wi a cross bat – 'play straight' they alus said an tha may stand a chance. Don't take it fer granted, mind but ther's alus a chance if tha learns ta play it straight.

Ay, an Ah remember bein told by our old groundsman that Ah'd never be a cricketer until Ah'd learned ow ter roll t pitch proper-like. We ad this gert big eavy roller an it took ten of us ter push it. Up and down t pitch it went dozens o times. An, whatever tha did, it must never go over t battin crease. Cos that ud pick up whitwash and leave white lines all t way down pitch. Tha'd get a real earful from t' groundsman if tha ever did that. Pushin that bloody roller - that really *was* a slog, a reight bloody slog.

Ere, tha should mind thi language, tha knows. There be young lasses ere today. Ah'm not so sure at Ah like it, mind – it never appened when Ah were a lad - but Ah s'pose we av ter move wit t' times. Even callin a 'no run' a 'dot ball', peraps but Ah still can't abide a slog – not when it's agin t spin and over cow corner. No, that really does go agin t grain. What Ah want ter know is just what's wrong wi a good old-fashioned cover drive? Old Len wud a bin proud ter show off is cover drive. Better than a slog any day even if it did only count fer four. Sloggin's fer mountaineers, not batters – 'batters', indeed! Ah really don't know what cricket's cumin ter.

By t way, when thar wer off makin use o t facilities, just now Ah ad a word wi one o them lasses and she knew quite a lot abaht cricket. She knew all abaht Utton's 364 at th Oval i 1938 an she wer tellin me how long it wer that Utton and Washbrook opened t' innins fer England. Ah said "Ay, it int often owt good comes out o' Lancashire but that Cyril Washbrook wer certainly one of em."



“Actually, she said, I come from Lancashire!” Ah didn’t naw whier ter put mysen – Ah wer fair flummoxed. But she just laughed. She were quite good lookin, an all. Anyway, what about a pint?

Lunch time already, is it? Ah can’t believe it. An they’re nearly two undred fer three? Two undred afore lunch! Yer can tell they aven’t been playin straight. Utton ad just been getting is eye in by now, ready fer’t afternoon. Yes, lad, Ah’d love a pint. But it ad better be Theakstons – Ah’m not so fussed abaht Landlord. Sam Smiths is alreight but a pint o’

Theakstons Best ‘ll set *me* up fer’t afternoon. At least, that’s somat at doesn’t change – somat to remind a fellah of is youth, when cricket wer cricket an cow corner wer truly out er bounds. Cross-batted slog, indeed. But Ah s’pose it did elp t score on a bit.

Oh, an while Ah’m away, thee keep thi eyes off them lasses – they’re not fer t’ likes o’ thee!

Naw, nor thee, neither – just get on an fetch that pint. Ah’m workin up a fair thirst. An mak sure it’s Theakstons!

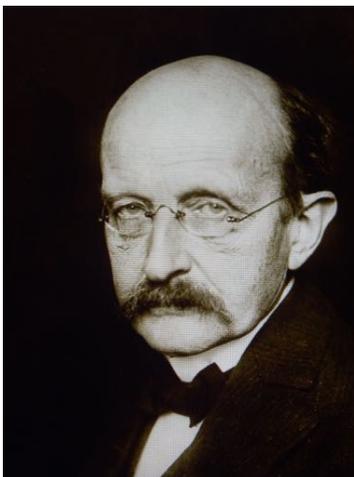
Well, cheers – ere’s ter keepin a straight bat.

John Orton

Science Group

So much for the noble game but I promised the Science Group that it would get a favourable mention this week, so here goes. And what better than to start with a limerick:

*This weird quantum theory of matter
Caused Newton’s mechanics to shatter
And the man we must thank
Was a fellow named Planck
Who just thought it math’matical patter.*



The Group touched on this some months ago and came to recognise the fact that, in the year 1900, the German theoretical physicist, Max Planck used the idea that light came in lumps (rather than continuous waves) to explain the behaviour of ‘black body radiation’. He won the 1918 Nobel Prize for this but, never to his dying day, could he accept that these so-called ‘quanta’ had any physical significance. He was convinced that his idea was nothing more than a bit of mathematical skulduggery which happened to solve a worrying problem. It’s even odder, when one bears in mind that, two centuries earlier, Isaac Newton had firmly believed that light consisted of a stream of tiny particles – though, unfortunately, this idea was quashed by experiments performed by Thomas Young in 1801 which showed that light came in the form of waves.

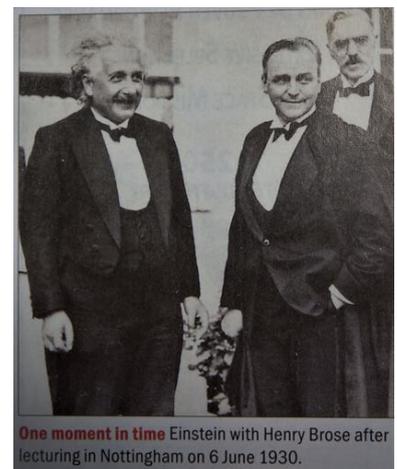
Science is often faced with such controversies, of course, but it took some time before this particular one was solved by the simple(?) expedient of accepting that light should be thought of as having BOTH wave AND particle properties. Then, the same sleight of hand was applied in reverse order to show that electrons (and, indeed, other particles, too) could show both particle and wave behaviour.

We have now come to accept that ‘quantum theory’ is one of the most important developments in physics to emerge from the twentieth century. The other one, of course, is Einstein’s ‘general theory of relativity, which he published in 1915. This predicted all sorts of fascinating things, such as the fact that light is bent when it passes close to a large body (eg our sun), that clocks run more slowly when close to a large mass and that the coming together of two ‘black holes’ will generate gravitational waves. The bending effect was demonstrated by Sir Arthur Eddington in 1919, while the other two predictions have been verified quite recently, the first by taking an atomic clock up a mountain (which changed its time by some minute fraction of a second), the second by the so-called LIGO experiment in the USA. This makes use of the wave properties of light to demonstrate infinitesimal changes in the length of a light path when a gravitational wave passes through. An important feature of the theory of relativity concerns the fact that nothing can ever travel faster than light, which has given rise (amid a few other trivial things) to the following limerick (not, I hasten to add, one of mine!):



*There was a young lady from Wight
Who travelled much faster than light.
She departed one day
In a relative way
And returned on the previous night.*

But, coming closer to home, did you know that Einstein had given a lecture on Relativity in Nottingham? The University Physics Department still has the blackboard which he used, complete with chalked equations! It happened in 1930. The then Head of Department, Professor Henry Brose, had met Einstein in an internment camp during the First World War and they became good friends, so Einstein was happy to visit Nottingham and expound something of his wonderful theory to the resident physicists. Apparently, he arrived an hour and a half late on account of a diversion to Woolsthorpe to pay his respects to Isaac Newton but, that apart, the occasion went off extremely well.



He paid a similar visit to Oxford in 1933, when he lectured (in German) to a group of academics from Christ Church college. Those from the Language Department understood the German but none of the physics, those from the Science Faculty may just have understood the physics but very little of the German! The Dean of Christ Church is on record as having slept solidly throughout. The ‘History of Science’ Museum in Oxford still has two of the blackboards he used though one of them was rubbed clean by a conscientious cleaner some little time after the event!

Keeping Fit

Maggie Spencer has successfully moved house and we wish her every happiness in her new abode. But she isn't going to let us off the 'keep fit' hook, for all that. Here is her latest advice for all of us. Daily practice is surely due to make us all perfect – well, at least a bit better!

Hello all you Keep Active Members I hope you are all keeping safe and well and I hope you are all trying out a little exercise until we can resume the group again, I promise I am practising what I preach!! If you only do one exercise a day I strongly advocate the first exercise we do which is the **back exercise**, this is for putting everything in the spine in place.

For anyone wanting to try out this exercise this is it goes.

Stand with your feet hip-width apart place your hands on your hips
Keep your core in and stand tall
Keeping your head and back in line like a plank
Lean forward (head in line with the back) slowly and just let it go as far as it wants to go
without pushing or bending the spine (no need to try and push further just let it go by itself
and hold and you should feel a stretch down the back of the legs
Hold until you feel you want to come up then slowly raise the back still in line with the
head – shrug the shoulders and shake everything out.

You will find if you do this exercise regularly you will be going further down each time.
I do this exercise first thing in the morning to wake up the body - it makes me feel more alive,
alert and more supple. It certainly works for me. **Why not give it a try.**

It's always nice to receive contributions from members and here are two more, to keep the ball rolling. The first is from Malcolm Baxter (written by a relative):

*I don't know how to start this,
To put my feelings down.
This virus has caused emotions
And really made me frown.
I'm scared, I'm tired, churned up inside.
Sometimes I want to run and hide!
Other times I think I'll cope.
I try to smile and try to hope
That one day soon, not far away,
My friends and family
Will come and stay.
We'll hug and laugh and even sing
And carry on 'cos we've beat this thing.*

And from Peter Binder:

*We are all locked in to stay,
For the duration, some say.
I can't wait to dine out,
When Lunch Club comes about,
And enjoy a large Chardonnay.*

Emotions we can all relate to, indeed.

But what about this from Chris Soar?

*Every day I think about dying,
About plague, war, famine.
Global warming, the end of the world.
It helps to keep my mind off things.*

Makes us realise that we could (and should) concentrate on the more cheerful aspects of life, even in the present situation.

The Creative Writing Contribution

Last, but very far from least, we have the regular contribution from the Creative Writing Group which, this week is written by the new Group Leader, Chris Tomblin

This is another piece submitted for the Clumber Park Ornamental Bridge competition run by the National Trust to celebrate the restoration of the 250 year old bridge that was seriously damaged by vandals in March 2018.

Ornamental Bridge

Hi there everybody. How are you all doing its Bridget here but my friends call me Bridge for short. I'm not getting any visitors right now so I thought I'd reach out to you on this social media thingy. I'm a bit old for this technology stuff but I've had to move with the times. God knows I've done it before so nothing new for me there darling.



I'm having some work done, yes I know I said it's better to grow old gracefully and it's not for me but I was terribly down after my accident darling and they thought it might cheer me up so I've agreed. I've already had one or two things done and they weren't too painful so I'm going right ahead with it. I can see the improvement already when I look at my reflection from all angles and I do feel better. It's difficult for me darling I was so so beautiful when I was young. People came from miles around to see me I was quite the toast of society. Oh the parties we had when the old Duke was alive they were so wonderful, everybody dressed in their finery, laughing and enjoying themselves and oh the admirers I had. It was wonderful.

Everybody gets older though don't they darling, even me. They were all very kind though but I didn't have quite so many visitors or admirers. To tell the truth I didn't mind too much I still enjoyed the ones I saw. But then disaster struck you must have heard darling, we had that terrible fire and the house was ruined. Yes I know we rebuilt it but it was never the same after that and then that awful war changed everything and people stopped coming even the young Duke eventually. I'm afraid I slept most of the time.

I wasn't abandoned completely though the Duke arranged for somebody to look after me and very nice they were too. We started having visitors again young families with children and older people like me and it was all very jolly. But then I had my accident. To tell the truth I'm not sure what happened it's all a bit hazy darling but I remember the people looking after me were very upset. I looked terrible I could hardly bear to look at myself so when they suggested having work done I decided to go ahead and I feel better already. Just a few tweaks more and I'll look better than ever. I tell you what darling when all this Covid 19 is over let's have a party. It'll be just like the old days.

Puzzle Solutions

First the Sudoku from Stuart Ellis:

Gentle

1	8	6	5	9	4	3	7	2
7	4	2	6	1	3	5	9	8
3	9	5	8	7	2	4	1	6
6	1	7	2	3	8	9	5	4
4	3	8	1	5	9	6	2	7
2	5	9	4	6	7	1	8	3
9	7	4	3	2	1	8	6	5
5	2	3	9	8	6	7	4	1
8	6	1	7	4	5	2	3	9

Tough

1	3	2	5	4	7	9	8	6
6	8	9	2	3	1	4	5	7
4	7	5	6	8	9	3	2	1
2	1	7	3	9	4	8	6	5
5	4	8	1	2	6	7	3	9
3	9	6	7	5	8	1	4	2
7	5	1	8	6	3	2	9	4
8	2	4	9	1	5	6	7	3
9	6	3	4	7	2	5	1	8

And then the answers to Peter Shreyhane's quiz:

1. 12 = Months in a Year
2. 10 = Fingers and Toes
3. 90 = Degrees in a Right Angle
4. 186,000 = Miles per Second (Speed of Light)
5. 9 = Planets in the Solar System
6. 8 = Wives of Henry Eighth
7. 7 = Snow White and the Dwarfs
8. 50 = States in United States
9. 5 = Great Lakes of North America
10. 168 = Hours in a Week
11. 147 = Maximum Break at Snooker
12. 7 = Sides on a Fifty Pence Piece
13. 15 = Men on a Dead Man's Chest
14. 45 = Presidents of the United States of America
15. 7,836 = Population of Cotgrave

You may be amused to note a minor disparity in the number of Henry VIII's wives but, as Peter so aptly quotes Captain Mainwaring: "I was wondering when someone was going to spot that." Anyway, what's a couple of wives more or less to a King like Henry – he'd almost certainly have made it eight if he'd just lived a couple of years longer.

Keep well and keep cheerful. See you next week.

John

PS. *What did the Borneo head-hunter father say to his aspiring teenage son?*

"If you want to get ahead, get a head."