



## Cotgrave and District U3A

### Keeping in Touch 8

#### Administrative

Brenda Ainsley has asked that we draw members' attention to the U3A Trust, a new development which offers people an opportunity to join Group activities during the lockdown period. For further information e-mail to: [secretary@trustu3a.online](mailto:secretary@trustu3a.online).

It has come to our notice that some members may be missing out on the delights of our own Weekly Letter by the unfortunate fact that they haven't been receiving it. If you have friends in this category, please let them know that all the Letters are posted on the Cotgrave U3A Website. Just type 'Cotgrave U3A' into Google and click on 'Cotgrave U3A – home', then click on 'News'.

#### U3A Adaptation to Change

Barbara Bullin has kindly sent us her comments on the way in which the U3A Branch has adapted to the new, and very unusual situation in which we find ourselves. Thank you Barbara.

A few days ago I decided to add a few new plants to the lovely gift of the colourful plant bowl I was presented with at our last Christmas Party. It had survived the winter but now needed a bit of a facelift. It was really beautiful last December but needed a few new plants to return it to its former glory.



It made me recall what a good evening we all had at the Welfare with our U3A friends sharing excellent food and a great musical interlude provided by our own singing group. Who would have suspected that a few months later Covid-19 would attack the whole world and most of us in our Cotgrave and District U3A group would find ourselves in lockdown. This change of fate with the rising death rate caused all meeting to be suspended. Our lives were going to change dramatically.

But like all human endeavours it does not take long for us to adapt to change. Group leaders began to think what they could do to keep their groups going in such changed circumstances. Well, it was obvious that U3A walks were out and joint coffee drinking at various venues could not take place but we could keep in touch and many more group activities could take place with a bit of imagination. The weekly newsletter appeared with inputs from various members, various quiz were invented and sent online, virtual meals were prepared, some continued to play bridge with the help of a tablet and phone, examples of paintings and finished examples of knitting were displayed, book reviews were written and 'the zoom' appeared helping us to continue looking after our environment, plant swapping occurred, numerous phone calls were made checking on members to see if they were alright etc. Our U3A continues to survive but in different forms.

We all miss seeing our friends at our general meetings and group meetings. However, our U3A group have adapted to our changing circumstances with great success. I am also sure it will adapt, in the future, to the post covid-19 pandemic world.

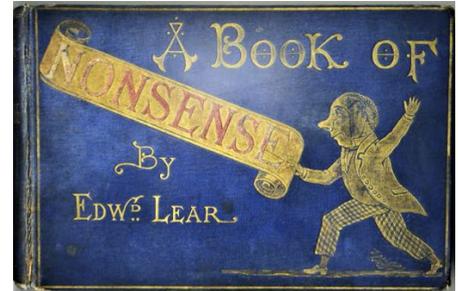
## The Limerick – Some Facts



It's about time I came clean with some information about the Limerick. It has a history going back to the early 1800s but was popularised by Edward Lear in the nineteenth century. Lear was musician, artist and writer and composed no less than 212 limericks (we obviously have a long way to go yet (by my reckoning, we are up to thirteen so far) but, if lockdown continues for another month or so, we may yet make it!).

He published a book in 1846 entitled 'A First Book of Nonsense' and his limericks were, indeed, mainly nonsense.

A typical example is the following:



*There was a young person of Smyrna  
Whose grandmother threatened to burn her  
But she seized on the cat  
And said: "Granny burn that,  
You incongruous old woman of Smyrna."*

Then there is this even sillier example:

*There was an old man of Aosta  
Who possessed a large cow, but he lost her.  
But they said "Don't you see,  
She has run up a tree,  
You invidious man of Aosta."*

I can only hope that these two make you feel a bit better about some of mine!

As in these examples, Lear's limericks usually involved a final line rhyme which used the same word as that which ended the first line but later authors felt the need to surmount the greater challenge of finding an alternative rhyme. I, myself, wouldn't dream of falling into his lax habits!

Lear was remarkable for an achievement not of his own but of his parents, who produced twenty-one children at the rate of one per year. In fact, he was largely brought up by his eldest sister who was twenty-one years his senior. She doted upon him and looked after him until she died. He never married and managed only a few male relationships, none of which turned out well. In later life he suffered from epilepsy and deteriorating eyesight which meant he was no longer able to produce the finely detailed paintings of birds and wild life which characterised his youthful output. Remarkably, one may feel, several of his limericks were set to music by an Italian friend. Oh, and we should not forget that Lear was the author of 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat', surely everyone's favourite childhood verse.

Another Victorian writer and illustrator, Walter Crane was responsible for a rather good limerick take off of one of Aesop's Fables 'The God and the Waggoner', which we reproduce here for members' delectation.



While still on the subject of the limerick, I am much indebted to Anne Henton for the following fascinating example which well illustrates one of the vagaries of the English language – five different pronunciations of the same ‘ough’ combination.

*There was a young fellow from Slough,  
A Berkshire industrial borough.  
He was healthy, although  
He developed a cough  
Which caused him to feel rather rough.*

But that is surely enough on the limerick (for the time being!)

## Molly

Our six-year old prodigy has not been idle, as the following extract from her diary will confirm. Thanks to Sue Hillyard for keeping a record of her output.

Today my mummy sed cum and tork to nana on the phone so i did i sed hello nana and she sed hello Molly and then it went qwiet and then nana sed are you there and i sed yes then it went qwiet again and then nana sed what have you been doing and i sed nothing and she said nothing but she sed it like a qweston so i sed not really. it went qwiet agen so i sed yesterday i played

pikniks in the garden but peter nocked my teddyted over and nana sed it was just an axident then i sed goodby.

i love my nana a lot and i askd mummy if nana can cum and live with us but

mummy sed no becos we all have to stay at home for a bit longer becos of the little jerman things that are making everybodi coff. she sed nana is bizi with her nitting and i sed o i dont wont nana to have nits. my frend skylar toled me that she had nits and i didnt no wot they were so i sed to mummy that i wont sum nits as well but mummy sed no you dont wont nits and i sed skylar has them so i wont sum can i have sum iff i say plese. then my mummy toled me they are like litle ants that live in your hair andn i sed i dont want ants living in my hair.

i got wurrid becos nana has little ants in her hair and i sed to my mummy poor nana it must be ichy having ants in your hair. Mummy sed no nana dusnt have ants in her hair she is making a jumper with sum wull and sum needels and its corld nitting. she sed nana will make a jumper for you if you like but i sed no becos it mite hurt me. mummy sed it wont hurt you dont be a silly

sosidg but i sed but all the sharp needels will stick in me and i dont want to be like a hedghog so there.

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## The Quiz and the Quizzical

My thanks are due to Chris Soar for this amusing quiz from The Spectator. Can you decipher what common activities are banned under the lockdown rules? To make clear the nature of the puzzle, let me give you the answer to the first line: 'Drive to a holly day cottage'. Good luck with the rest.



Then we have a couple of contributions from Peter Shreyhane – thanks, Peter: The first is for cricket-lovers:

1. At Canterbury, before the big tree died (it was inside the boundary), a ball strikes the upper branches but still clears the boundary, What decision do you give?
2. A fielder, racing to stop the ball reaching the boundary, bends over. As he does so, his hat falls to the floor and the ball runs over it, slowing down enough to stop it going for ‘4’. What decision do you give?
3. It’s the last ball of a T20. The scores are equal. Last two batsmen at the crease. The last ball is delivered down the leg side and you call a ‘wide’. However, the batsman has left his crease and is stumped. What is your decision?
4. The sixth valid ball of an over is called and you call ‘over’. As the wicket-keeper is changing ends, he appeals for l.b.w. Do you answer the appeal?
5. In a local village match, a cow suddenly steps through a damaged fence onto the field of play. The batsman hits the ball, which bounces off the cow and is caught by a fielder. Is the batsman ‘out’?

Now, a cricketing quiz!

Two batsmen (not the last pair) are at the wicket, both on 94. Seven runs are required for victory, 3 balls are left. The batting side win the match and both batsmen make hundreds. How?

Finally, another quotation from the law courts:

Barrister: “When is your Birthday?”

Witness: “Twentieth of March”

Barrister: “Which year?”

Witness: “Every year.”

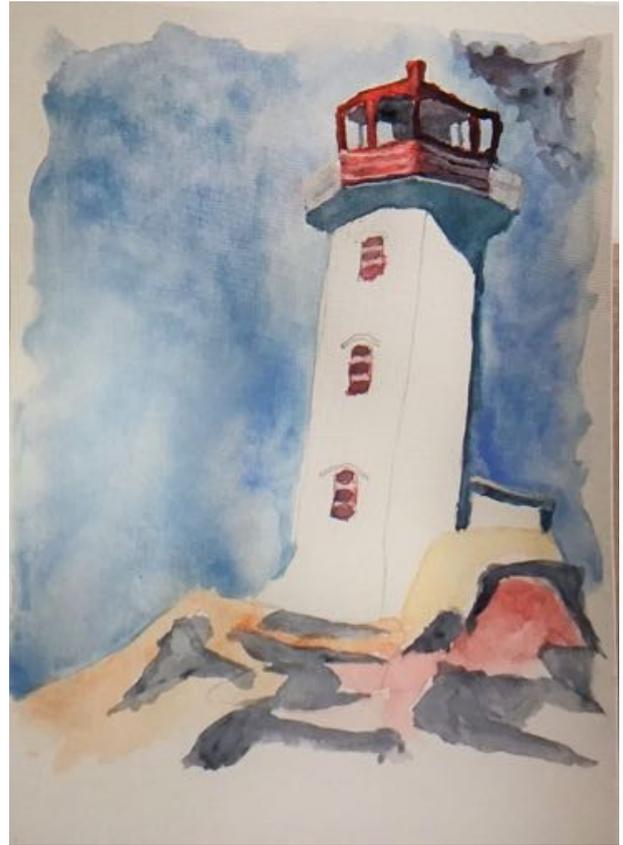
And we must not forget to include the answer to Malcolm’s Walking quiz.

#### TRAILFINDERS SOLUTIONS

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

## The Art Group

We always look forward to contributions from the Art Group – here are two more by Bernie Besnard:



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## The Creative Writing Group

This piece is from Heather Whatnall from a recent subject the writing group tackled. All were completely different as usual.

### Setting up Home in the Canadian Outback

As I sat on the plane with my first glass of champagne (I had treated myself to an upgrade as it was such a long flight) it began to hit me – I was actually doing it – I was on my way. What had I done??!!

It had all started one sunny afternoon not long after we had come out of lockdown. I had not been particularly productive during that time of isolation. Unlike many people (according to their posts on social media) I had not learned a new language, not done several exercise classes before 7am daily, not baked enough banana bread to feed the entire town. In fact, I had not done ... very much at all!

The one thing I had done a lot of was reflecting. I had reflected on numerous aspects of my life, various experiences, relationships and career choices. I had come to the conclusion that if and when we were able to come out of isolation I was going to make significant changes.

Initially, the elation of being able to go out again and the miracle of us all being vaccinated was enough change for me. However, it wasn't long before I started feeling restless again.

On the aforementioned sunny afternoon I was sitting in the garden and reading the newspapers. This was a habit I'd reinstated during lockdown. I had learned to enjoy so many simple things which I had previously thought "boring" – I'd usually be driving hundreds of miles each weekend to go to some flash Spa or the latest boutique hotel. I had taken to reading the newspapers (in the garden if it was warm enough) every Sunday afternoon.

An odd article caught my eye shortly before I was due to go in and check on the chicken which was roasting in the oven. The article initially stood out because of the border around it - it looked like waves. Then the heading captured my interest further:

**“Help needed in the Canadian Outback”**

This sounded more interesting than the numerous articles the paper had contained (as it had every week recently) on the mistakes made with the Covid-19 global pandemic. I read further –

**“I am recently retired and looking to share my home with travellers from around the world. I could use help around the house with cleaning and cooking. A healthy, clean diet is essential for me. Other areas of help I need are gardening, shopping, general maintenance, help with computers and Farmstay”.**

That all sounds easy I said to myself – apart from “Farmstay” – but I am sure I could manage it. It was the next paragraph which really got my attention:

**“I live in a very peaceful part of the world with an abundance of nature and wildlife to explore. I love to fish. I live on the wild west coasts and enjoy exploring”.**

I still can't explain how I felt reading those few lines – it was the strangest feeling – as if something long dormant had awoken. I knew I had a similar sensation thirty years ago when I had gone to America on my own for a year – the decision seemed so odd at the time but it had been such a successful and fulfilling time of my life. At that time the crazy buzz of New York, the nights in Studio 54, the Blues clubs of Chicago, the baseball games, the rock concerts....they had all been amazing. Now, however, I was in such a different season of my life and Lockdown had shown me what I really craved now – it was peace, nature, wild water and wildlife.

The article continued to outline that I would share a three bed roomed house but have my own bedroom and bathroom (I had already decided at this point that I was the person to fulfil the “position”. The person requiring help was a lady whose son lived in the area but was extremely busy with his white water rafting business (something I had enjoyed greatly many years ago). I did wonder how old the son might be and if he was “attached”!!! – This was not the deciding factor in my decision (honest!).

So that very afternoon I e mailed the lady who needed “Help in the Canadian Outback” and after only a couple of e mails we agreed we would both like me to take the position and to arrange to fly out as soon as possible. As soon as possible turned out to be two weeks later – Lockdown had left me without a job, I had savings and a friend who had returned from travelling came to stay in my home and look after all my plants both indoor and outdoor. I didn't want to do anything more permanent with my home and possessions until I had decided if it was to be a long term move..

So, as I sat on the plane with my fifth glass of champagne I raised the glass to toast myself.. “You're on your way. Here's to setting up home in the Canadian Outback. Cheers”.

## A Little Modern History

I don't reckon to count myself a TV addict but I was more than delighted to watch the first instalment of Andrew Maar's 'History of Modern Britain' on BBC 4. Full of fascinating details of which I was totally unaware – and a great many more which brought back memories. Rationing, snoek, the Festival of Britain, nationalisation of the coal industry, the coming of the NHS, the Marshall Plan, the European Coal and Steel Community, the Korean War (a university friend fought in it), Indian independence, the end of the Commonwealth, etc,etc! I can strongly recommend it to locked-in seniors. Monday nights at 8 pm – don't miss it. Maar brings a depth of research and a dry humour to enlighten us all.

### Snoek (Snook)

7th July 2011 by Antonia Ann

During World War II when everything was scarce, food rationing was rife and cheap sources of protein were few and far between, somebody had the bright idea to catch cheap fish in South Africa, can it and ship it to England. Suffice to say it did not go down too well over here. The Web is full of war years recollections penned by people who remember this weird fish with the hugely amusing name arriving and being inedible. A large proportion of the tins that were imported remained firmly on shop shelves (despite optimistic suggestions from the Ministry of Food – like Snoek Piquante which seems to have become a kind of shorthand for everything unpalatable about food rationing!).



A tin of Snoek cost 1s 4d and towards the end of the war the unsold tins were relabelled as "Selected cuts of fish for cats and kittens" and sold for 10p!

Poster Gallery



But more importantly, remember to be aware.

See you next week.

John