

GROUCHY GIRLS 2022

Views expressed on this page are not necessarily those of Carlton & Gedling u3a.

JANUARY 2022

We first discussed **how relevant some churches are these days**. Often the impression is that most congregations are largely older people which raises questions of how much longer they can keep going. We're all aware of the expense of heating and maintaining these ancient buildings. This was felt to be a concern as they provide a community as well as a religious observance. Would our grandparents have believed that some churches are turned into pubs eg The Pitcher and Piano?

Some members are aware of new churches in newer buildings around Nottingham with large and often young congregations, for example St Nicholas on Maid Marian Way and The Trinity Church on Mansfield Road. We also wondered how this compares with other faith groups.

Crackers!

Always thinking of ways to help our beautiful, abused planet, we Grouchy Girls hate unnecessary waste and wondered if it is time to do without crackers at Christmas. We had to agree it seems daft to just throw them away. I was the only one who admitted to liking the jokes. The origin of crackers was a large sweet in a pretty wrapper by your plate. Now that makes sense as we all love chocolate.

So Common!

Was this slur aimed at women by women? We're sad to admit we think it was and we are glad we no longer hear that word. It was generally aimed at the sort of women who were whistled at by workmen in those bygone days. However, it is still sad but true, that insulting words aimed at women far outnumber those for men. The woman called 'a slag' might be called 'a bit of a lad' if this was reversed.

{+++++++}

MARCH 2022 - part 1

As you can see from the photo a good time was had by all, and numbers are now building up again.



The New Highway Code is a bit of a mystery to us all. We certainly need to know more details, as all we are sure of is that *pedestrians now have priority*. Respecting all road and pavement users is essential as there has been much criticism of cyclists and that can be divisive. 'Fines for cyclists who use the road or pavement when there is a well- maintained cycle path' was the cry! Potholes and overgrown brambles cause problems. Why don't all cyclists have lights on and wear bright colours?

Different speed restrictions can be confusing and we thought that having 20mph for residential side streets would be safer once we got used to it. We hope common sense will prevail as we imagined a pedestrian with earphones stepping out between parked cars when a silent electric vehicle was passing- 'I have priority' – screech!

Food Fads based on research make us cynical. Latest says 3 cups of coffee a day will make you live longer but drink 2 glasses of wine and you're over your daily sugar intake. I wasn't alone in thinking my evening glass of red will do me good and we all agreed 'moderation in all things'. We are well aware of what we should do. Cabbage is good for our health and cake is good for our mental health. One thing noted was how dinner plates are now much bigger, encouraging us to eat more than we need.

We then laughed at **Embarrassing Moments** we'd experienced, but . . . they are top secret !!!

{+++++++}

MARCH 2022 - part 2

In the past 12 months **Politicians have made 1,812 "I'm sorrys"** between the 2 houses. Is it an apology when they say *'I'm sorry if...'*

I 'M SORRY!



FEMICIDE is mainly domestic & the 128 victims so far this year aren't heard of. If a domestic implement is used lighter sentences are given. What can be done to help women leave before things escalate?



How do you keep yourself in a 'good place' when the news, or personal troubles, seem unbearable?



Ideas please ...

When Grouchy Girls started, we agreed to have 3 topics:

1. General
2. Local
3. Women's issues

We've shared issues from our younger days- e.g. bosses who got away with groping & how the young women would react now. It is good to have a light hearted topic to end with.

{+++++++}

April 2022 – part 1: ZOOMING AGAIN

Realising some members of the group are unable to access The Willowbrook, I hosted an inclusive Zoom. It was great to see those Grouchy Girls again.

Is the idea of a Royal Family outdated?

Time for the queen to abdicate?

The general feeling among the Grouchies was that she is duty bound and will remain in post until she drops.



If we're wrong, her 70th jubilee could be the right timing. We feel that monarchy will never be the same after Elizabeth II. Prince Charles will want to succeed, he has waited so long, and we've noticed Camilla having some promotion in the media of late.

The monarchy had some romance in the past, but we now know too much about their private lives to put them on a gilded pedestal. Some felt that Prince Wills and Kate slipped up on their tour and that they should use their influence to bring the royals up to date. One member said she'd never been able to take the royals seriously since reading the Gormanghast books in her youth. Put her in the Tower!

Does Formula One glorify the polluting gas-guzzling car?

Should we put Lewis Hamilton on the shelf with the queen? The Grouchy Girls don't see the point of watching the blur of F1 and thought Scalextric better. We feel that we're made to feel guilty running cars on fossil fuel while the privileged few roar around the track.



Bring on the electric cars as they'd be slower so at least we could see them! An alternative is The Goodwood revival event where cars like Hillman Imps feature.

Memories of Easter bonnets and old traditions made us laugh.

We went so far down Memory Lane we got lost! Many traditions were linked to our churches, although seeming pagan. Lesley was thrown out of the maypole dancing for going the wrong way and causing a massive tangle!



Sadly none of us were May Queens but we played many games that were NOT on a screen- cat's cradle, clapping games, paperfolding fortune tellers, hopscotch, what's the time Mr. Wolf, 2 ball etc etc.

Gill remembered Easter whips and tops! Sounded a bit Victorian to us but she was insistent. We promised to try to teach these to children- if we can tear them away from those devices.

{+++++++}

April 2022 – part 2: BACK AT THE WILLOWBROOK

I arrived at the meeting in a proper grouchy mood and was cheered up by the fun we had discussing these topics.

Surprise parties- pleasure or pain?

A Kentucky man has been awarded \$450,00 after his company threw him a surprise party despite his warnings that it would trigger stress and anxiety.



Everyone had a story to tell, planning or being surprised. Bridget thought the lies necessary to plan them make them a nightmare. The rest of the group had a mix of good and awful events. Sue remembers her surprise party in Cornwall when she had to do the driving there and back. Sheila was sulking as she's never had one. Too many stories to cover, but lots of laughter recalling surprise parties, good and dreadful.

Households cancel streaming services

Netflix numbers are falling & prices increasing. What are the Grouchy Girls doing to cut costs? We still try to be eco-aware, and most of our ideas concerned saving fossil fuel energy.



If we bake, we fill that oven, and some are using less energy by cooking rice, veg. etc. in the microwave. Lynn's tip for perfect sprouts was to only boil for 2 mins. then leave on hob for 8 mins-lid on. We like to cook in bulk which saves energy and effort.

Deidre recommends using an air fryer for spuds in jackets and Ninja ovens were recommended. We turn off lights and our smart meters have made us realise that kettles and hair dryers use a lot of energy. Put on an extra jumper!

Calorie count on menus - helpful or spoil the fun?

We approve!

We can make an informed decision and decide whether to have that calorific sauce or not.

We like to know, but for those who don't worry, they can ignore it if they choose. The grouchy Girls want to be aware to keep healthy.



Green Tips

The Grouchy Girls have been busy collecting green tips for you. We recommend white vinegar, with some essential oil for most cleaning in the home and Christine S found this excellent way of avoiding chemicals going into our waterways



Nancy's Pure magic recipe

You will need:

- 200g citric acid
- 150ml just-boiled water
- 20ml eco washing-up liquid
- 10 drops tea tree oil
- a 400ml spray bottle

METHOD:

Pour the just-boiled water over the citric acid crystals and stir until clear.

Add the washing-up-liquid and tea tree oil and mix well using a whisk.

Leave, uncovered, to cool completely then pour into spray bottle.

Rinse the nozzle after use to prevent it becoming sticky.

Mary Berry uses this recipe instead of any chemicals and suggests adding lemon oil instead of tea tree as they both disinfect. Saves money too.

I am also collating a list of ways to save waste going to landfill by sending it for recycling instead. The rules for council recycling are confusing, plus when we think that every toothbrush we've ever used is still out there, not having rotted down, it does bring the message home that we all use too much plastic. I've joined a Tetra recycle group and am happy to collect old toothbrushes as well as plastic lids.

Watch this space for further information!

{+++++++}

MAY 2022:



Pornography- when is it OK to watch porn?

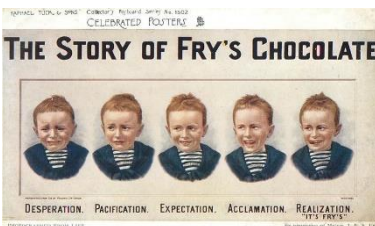
Not at work or on public transport, obviously, but is there a place where it is OK? When a mainstream TV programme shows naked bodies (creepily-without faces), is that soft porn?

The Grouchy Girls are a liberal bunch, and felt soft porn on home TV could relieve the sort of men who might behave in a sexually inappropriate way. Others felt it could give, youngsters in particular, the idea that women are sex objects and encourage misogynist attitudes. None of us were sure what was legal but some members had seen hard core images flash on to their TV screen when channel hopping late at night.



After more attacks on children, what should happen before people are allowed to keep a dog?

Some breeds are illegal, but some dog lovers in the group thought all problems are down to the owner not training the dog. All agreed that children should never be alone with a dog because dogs can react instinctively to unpredictable behaviour. It was also agreed that when a dog jumps up you, it adds insult to injury when the owner says 'It's OK, it won't hurt you'. Children should be taught not to approach dogs to pet them. All dogs should be chipped, but along with puppy farms, we don't think there is enough enforcement.



Advertisements- amusing or drive you crazy?

We had fun with this topic, and between us remembered the words for the 5 boys chocolate. Jean is driven mad by the adults with children's voices but we thought Specsavers ads amusing. We decided the ones we remembered had catchy jingles, and treated the Willowbrook to a few renditions. We notice how inclusive ads. can be these days.

{+++++++}

JULY 2022:

Is there a point to self-service checkouts?



*The Grouchy Girls have had their say
Self service is not preferred to pay
We are going to make a fuss
We need help to scan our stuff*

*A few for those who're in a hurry
But they leave us in a flurry
We need our friendly check-out staff
Someone to talk to, have a laugh*

*One uses the portable scanner thin
No more shopping to the till to bring
Some staff will have lost their job
Its enough to make you scream and sob*

Should there be a fine if you miss a medical appointment?

Might it mean less time waiting for an appointment?



*Missed GP appointments make us rage
Is there an excuse in this iPhone age
To just ring up and say
'Sorry, can't make it today*

*This will then give someone else a shot
To come and tell what they have got
So, missed appointments have a fine, Before a slot
for another time?*

*To admin. this would not be bliss
How would you organise this?
Would the costs outweigh the gain
And leave us with much greater pain?*

What would be the first thing you would do if you could change gender for a day?



*Change gender for a day!
What good is that? some would say,
Extra muscles would be fun -
Get all the heavy lifting done*

*Sit spread eagled in a chair
Go topless in the heatwave air
No worry about the household task
Just slob around and read and bask*

Pat Axtel

{+++++++}

AUGUST 2022:

Is pre-booking always necessary?

Should you have to pay a fee (e.g. for the theatre) if you book online?



Try to avoid paying them! We're saving companies from printing and sending tickets. It was understandable after lockdown, but not now.

Places like zoos & NT properties have time slots, which avoid long queues and crowds, and that was thought a good idea.

Are we becoming an 'entitled' society?



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under

The consensus of opinion was- yes, and that entitlement runs through all sections of society, from top politicians to those at the lower end of the scale. Some felt that no-one is entitled to anything & benefits and rewards should be earned & responsibility comes before rights. Parents in well paid jobs expecting to have their children cared for an example of entitlement. Heated discussion ensued over whether refugees were entitled to free entry into the U.K. with different opinions.

Why is 'ask a busy person' the best thing to do when you need some help?



Overall, it was felt that some people are 'givers' and some 'takers', with some always willing to lend a hand. A busy person is often a good organiser, and the more one does, the more their confidence grows. This makes others see them as competent. Some people find it hard to say 'NO' and can sometimes over-stretch themselves.

One member said she was flattered to be asked to take on a role in an organisation, only to realise later that no-one else wanted the job!

{+++++++}

SEPTEMBER 2022:

Grouchy Girls are back in force with 23 meeting at The Willowbrook in September. We started by sharing more tips on **energy saving**. We're reluctant to use the oven unless it is full but recommend air-fryers or the microwave. You can get heated lap blankets, but a hot-water bottle on the lap also good. Pat is collecting dead wood for her wood-burner. Keep moving & bring back **liberty bodices & Directoire knickers!**

Serious grouching about **power companies making huge profits** while folks will struggle to keep warm this winter. Best protest is to cancel your standing order/debit as they must make millions in the summer investing the excess. Petition the government or use social media to protest. We're still considering one suggestion that the sight of naked grouchy girls protesting on Westminster Bridge could make the politicians take notice.

The increased number of supermarkets locally made us think about the best way to shop as they have to compete on prices. Members without cars are happy to have a supermarket nearby, and shopping late in the day means lower prices on many items. Most limit stress and car fuel with monthly shop.

{+++++++}

OCTOBER 2022:



The Grouchy Girls used the 'M' word!

Gone are the days when the **Menopause** was not talked about, and some women did not understand all the changes to their health; physical and mental.

Experiences varied widely with one member saying it had caused her to lose her job! Others felt nothing but relief at *the end of periods*, buying the, taxed, products, and PMT.

With two nurses in the group, we soon learned why some women suffered horribly with hot-flushes, headaches and even paranoia. Others only experience mild symptoms. Those who really suffered often did not feel understood or helped by GPs.

On a positive note, the M word is now being dealt with by newspapers and celebrities. One of our members is a practice nurse specialising in supporting women experiencing the menopause. So, a 'change' is coming and issues are at last out in the open.



The Grouchy Girls 'came out' as very sympathetic to people going through such a difficult dilemma when **considering gender-realignment**. We saw potential difficulties in spaces e.g. changing rooms, becoming non-gender. We fear for children who have identity issues receiving treatment of any sort before puberty.

Males who have transitioned to female after puberty would have far more muscle and therefore unfairly advantaged in many sports. During our lifetimes we have become happy that gay people have been accepted and valued, but generally feel this issue is more complicated.

Have you ever been stuck in a lift? One member said yes, and for a long time. One lady in with her was so desperate she used a pull-out ashtray for a pee!



Do you remember the floor to ceiling turnstiles? As a chubby girl, one member in a seaside toilet, decided to climb on one and swing round. The queues desperate to get in were matched in fury by the ones inside wanting to get out. Our friend is still traumatised!

{+++++++}