

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 83, April 2024



Comments from the Chair

As we all know things don't always go to plan, and last month's general meeting was no exception. We were expecting a talk from the Alzheimer's Society, but the speaker fell ill the day before and sent me an email apologising. I immediately wrote back to tell her not to worry and wished her a speedy recovery. The next thing to do was to think of what to do as it was too late to book anyone else. My first thought was 'Don't Panic,' an expression which brings 'Dad's Army' to mind. After a few deep breathes I came up with the solution: why not have a quiz followed by free refreshments. I did not want to ask our Quiz Team at such short notice. Fortunately, I had a pub quiz

of my own which I had prepared earlier and so after pruning it to last about 30 minutes rather than an hour I was ready with the alternative programme for the following day. I then sent out an email to you to let you know of the change of plan. There was still a good turnout and we explained to everyone who came in the situation. One or two members turned back but most stayed.

The quiz proved to be recently successful and there were no complaints about the questions being too hard. It just goes to show that when things don't work out as expected it can lead to a positive result. I hope to invite the Alzheimer's Society to come back at a future date, but it will have to be next year as there are no gaps in the calendar until then.

Next month's guest speaker is Olly Burton who will be talking to us on Staine Glass Widows. Olly is always entertaining and informative, so I am looking forward to his visit. I hope to see many of you there.

Meanwhile,

Take care everybody,

Roger

Archaeology & History Group in Newcastle.

Chris McLoughlin.

Archaeology & History were out and about on the first of their 2024 field trips in March taking in an intriguing walk around Newcastle Central Station as they were guided through the lives of George Stephenson and his son Robert, railway engineers, born and raised on Tyneside, rising from very humble beginnings to international renown.



Group members inside the Station Portico listening to Keiran Ann our Walk Leader. Photo © Kevin Hardy



Hall of the Mining Museum. Photo © Kevin Hardy

The story unfolded at various points starting within the Central Station itself, then on to the George Stephenson Statue opposite the Lit & Phil via the Station Hotel, before a surprise bonus visit to the Mining Institute nearby, (what a Victorian gem that building is) and we were able to use the Lecture room where Geordie Stephenson himself lectured on his Safety lamp, to hear more of his life and times.



Chris on the way to the Boiler Shop. © Kevin Hardy

It was however at the back of the Central Station (accessed through Orchard Street, which is an underpass beneath the Station) that was most surprising, for part of Stephenson's original workshop has survived and is now known as the Boiler Shop. It has been revamped into a huge Music Venue (and Grade II Listed) whilst the site of the Pattern shop is in the process of also being revitalized as part of on-going developments (a large section of the Town Walls also survives here). We rounded off the walk by a return to the Central Station taking in the view of the lofty spired Cathedral of St Mary's, another noteworthy building and containing much Pugin work.

Final note, if you are on the Central Station and looking for a coffee etc., the Centurion Bar is worth a visit, not least because the interior is a riot of Victorian Tiling work.

Holidays of a Lifetime, a Reminiscence,
by Christine Robinson, Member 87 (though I am not a number!)



Holidays in the fifties were ‘A Good Thing’ but were mostly confined to day trips. The annual Sunday School Treat brought me from Hetton to Seaton Carew with parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties and cousins to cluster round a couple of those square green tents on the beach. The children made pot-pies and sandcastles and froze in scrunchy nylon cozzies, while the ladies sat in their deckchairs, with their coats on, knitting things. We usually had pop and sandwiches – lots of sand plus some egg and tomato. I don’t remember the male members of the party being around much. Dad

would build me a sand Morris Minor to ‘drive’ along the beach, then I guess he went for a pint! There were a lot of cousins and I was the youngest. It must have been fun because we’re all laughing in the photos!

We have been self-catering in France for 30+ years now and have enjoyed a variety of accommodation.

In Lorraine, the toilet gave up the ghost as we were going out for the day. Luckily, our handy phrasebook was very helpful (La chasse d’eau ne marche pas = The flush doesn’t work.) You might need to know one day. Pronunciation lessons are available. (I try to be helpful!) I was despatched to speak to the landlord. Having interrupted his cheese-making, I used our phrase. He responded with a typical French phrase viz. ‘C’est bizarre.’ whereupon our handy friend Dave said ‘Tell him I’ve turned the water off at the stopcock!’ I can’t quite remember my response to Dave. Well, I can, but I don’t want to embarrass myself.

Just before Covid made holidays impossible, we went to a lovely old farmhouse not far from Albi, near Toulouse, birthplace of Toulouse-Lautrec. Lovely countryside, markets, food, wine, lots of places to visit. The farmhouse was well-equipped (wine glasses and a corkscrew) and had a tower of sorts. All was well until the night when I was reading in bed and was suddenly surprised by a small colony of bats, about half a dozen or so, flying around the room. I attracted the attention of my husband, the intrepid Brian, by shrieking and yelling at the top of my voice. He rushed upstairs to my aid and flapped at them with a towel, thus persuading them to leave by the window. One did attach itself to the wardrobe door but he had a word with it and it left, possibly returning to the tower. We had inadvertently left the door open. Oops.

Last year's house was not what we had hoped for. There's rustic and there's falling to bits! Luckily we had only booked for a week. We left the day after one of the wall light fittings slowly collapsed.

In spite of all this we have had so much fun, have seen so many wonderful places and met so many lovely people - France has been very good to us.

Cruising came late to us. The first of our three was definitely the best – up the North Sea to St. Petersburg and more. Everything was so new to us and so exciting, and you can eat 24/7 on a cruise ship! Not that we did, of course. I was too busy trying out all the cocktails.... Again, we met lovely people, some of whom we managed to see more than once! Maybe we'll do another one. I'll think about it – I don't want to spoil the memories.



Our most exciting trip was in 2001 when our son got married at Easter in Seoul, South Korea. What an experience it was. Such a vibrant, busy, ultra-modern city but with beautiful oases of calm where you can enjoy the palaces with their gardens, trees dressed in spring blossom and just wander the paths.

The wedding was a Korean ceremony at a traditional village in the heart of the city, a sort of 'Beamishy' tourist centre, so there were lots of tourists about! It was so different and so colourful, with guests in traditional Hanbok clothes.

Everything about the city was bright and busy, all day and most of the night. My daughter went shopping for 'designer' handbags at midnight! On a more serious note, we were able to go on a tour to the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas. The tours are organised through the American military and their personnel provided the guide and commentary. It was quite scary seeing the North Korean soldiers so close and being allowed into the building where the armistice was signed at the end of the war in 1953. A very strange experience.

My fantasy holiday would be me and him tootling around France, maybe wandering into Italy again, looking at the views, visiting the museums and galleries, enjoying the food and talking to the people. Just us having a laugh – not a fantasy, really. It's what we have always done.

Both Photographs © Christine Robinson

Notice Board

Natural History Group Meetings 2024

- **April**, Thursday 4th at 1.30 Saltholme. Meet in the visitors' centre.
- **May**, Thursday 2nd at 1.30 Crimdon. Meet outside of the cafe.
- **June**, Thursday 4th at 1.30 Spion Cop cemetery. Meet at the gates. See how many orchids we can see this year.
- **July**, Thursday 4th at 1.30 The Batts, Dalton Piercy. This is a new venue. Details about parking and where it is will follow. There are some beautiful meadows here.
- **August**, Thursday 2nd at 1.30 Cowpen Bewley. Meet in the car park for the Butterfly Count.
- **September**, Thursday 5th at 1.30 Hardwick Hall Country Park. Meet near the cafe. Please note that there is a car parking fee.
- **October**, Thursday 3rd at 1.30 Wynyard Woodland Park. Meet outside of the cafe.
- **November**, Thursday 7th at 1.30 the North Gare. Meet in the car park.
- **December**, no meeting

Irene Archer

COFFEE AND CHAT

The next Coffee and Chat is on Monday 8th April at 10.30 am at the Golden Lion. In the door, turn left. See you there.

Please note that because of the Bank Holiday the previous week, we are meeting on the second Monday of the month in April.

Jacky Armstrong

QUIZ Group

The next Quiz is on Tuesday 16th April at 2 pm in the Community Room at the Central Hub (Library). The quiz master is Jacky.

Hartlepool are on a roll, having been the winners twice in a row. No doubt Stockton are girding their loins, ready to grasp the Golden Trolley Coin. So come on all quizzers, come and support your U3A.

Jacky Armstrong

How Time Flies

In my forties I had an appointment with the optician. During the examination he asked me how old I was, I replied 44. He looked at my date of birth in his notes and he told me I was actually 45. A week later was my birthday. So in the space of 7 days I had gone from 44 to 46! How time flies!

Barry Liddle

'Bird of the Month': Chosen by Ray Elliston

I took this photograph recently over at the Headland. The bird stretching its wings is obviously a Cormorant, but not sure what the White/Brown bird is on the left? It could be a Sanderling of some sort but the legs would normally be yellow or black. Any suggestions?



My Word of the Month

My word of the month is **Palindrome**. A palindrome is a word, phrase or sentence that reads the same backwards as forwards, a few simple examples include:

- madam; civic, radar, level, rotor, kayak.

Barry Liddle

My Latin Word of the Month.

Having an interest in gardening is not the same thing as having a practical knowledge of gardening. Particularly true in my case. However, a recent phone call from a friend of mine asking for some advice, reminded me that when it comes *Lathyrus Odoratus* (sweat peas) I do have a certain degree of expertise that I'm happy to share. For many years I grew them from seed and produced over a hundred plants each year that were trained up 6–8-foot canes to produce some beautiful long-stemmed flowers. (See photograph opposite), So my Latin word of the month for all sweat pea lovers is **Lathyrus Odoratus**.

Barry Liddle



Gardens & Gardening Group.

The March Gardens and Gardening group meeting is on Monday 25th and will be a return visit to Wynyard Hall gardens to see the spring bulbs that Wynyard are renowned for. We will finish with refreshments in the cafe. Meet at the Golden Lion /Aldi car park at 10.30am or 11am outside the Wynyard Hall Gardens. For anyone who hasn't let us know already, please do so if you plan to meet at the Golden Lion/Aldi car park and need a lift. There is a charge to visit the gardens of £6 for concessions and £9 for those lucky enough to not be old enough, but this is for an annual pass, so those people who went on the August garden group visit, don't forget to bring your tickets from last time.

Saturday April 27th will be a trip to the Harrogate spring flower show with Lees of Durham coaches, pick up at the Hartlepool transport interchange. The cost including admission to the show will be £42, anyone else who would like to go on the trip, please let us know as a matter of urgency, so we can book the tickets before they are sold out.

Monday May 27th will be a visit to Thornton Hall Gardens, near Darlington for their first open day and plant sale of the year.

Summer Months. We are still looking for places to visit over the summer, there are plenty of gardens to visit, including Crook Hall and Gardens, Durham University Botanic gardens, Paddock Farm Nursery and Water Gardens, Darlington. There are the charity open gardens etc. and Wynyard Hall gardens have their annual plant fair on 21st July. Details of other gardens worth visiting are always welcomed.

Autumn. We plan to go to the RHS autumn show at Newby Hall, again with Lees of Durham, on Sunday 15th September £42 including admission.

Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace



A treat for all steam train enthusiasts, from
Martin Green. *Photo © Martin Green*

Rosehip Syrup

When I was a youngster in the late 50s/early 60s living on the Central Estate in Hartlepool, I remember young children were often given a spoonful of Rosehip Syrup because of its high vitamin C content. Am I right in thinking that bottles of Rosehip Syrup were given out at local health clinics to those in need? If anyone remembers, please let me know.

Barry Liddle

Spring Day on the Headland

Winter relinquishing

Its icy grip

Wind now benign

Soothing not biting

Cirrus clouds floating overhead

On a westerly breeze

Sun providing welcome warmth

Warming soil

Warming backs

Warming hearts

Flowers re-emerging

Providing nectar and pollen

For nascent life

People re-emerging

Breathe in life

Spring in the air

Spring in the step

Spiritual reawakening

Roger Say

The Easter Surprise

It was the night we had all be waiting for. Easter Monday: the night the draw was going to be made. Tickets had been sold since the start of the year and at last the big day had come. The club was packed out. Not a spare seat to be had. You could feel the excitement and the tension. Who was going to win the big prize?

The prize for the lucky winner was a well-kept secret but rumours were rampant. An all-expenses trip to the Caribbean had been muted as a possibility, along with a whopping cheque or an adventure holiday such as a safari or a trip to the Australian outback. We would soon know the answer.

First of all, we had to sit through the entertainment. The evening started with a comedian who provided the first surprise because he was not very funny. In fact, he was not funny at all. This was followed by a singer who seemed to be suffering from laryngitis which may well have been a relief for our eardrums. After what seemed an eternity, it was at long last time for the draw. This was in the nick of time because we were all getting fidgety and desperately keen to find out who had won the big prize.

The President stood up and stepped onto the stage. He rolled the handle of the drum with all the tickets inside and then drew out the winning ticket. There was a hush. You could hear a pin drop. The President cleared his throat. "Ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of our annual Easter draw. It's Red 136". An over-excited voice shouted out "It's mine. It's mine!" That was the second surprise. The voice was mine. I had won! Trembling with excitement and anticipation I staggered up to the stage where I was handed the coveted white envelope by the President who told me to open it to find out what I had won. With trembling hands, I ripped open the envelope. The envelope was empty. There was nothing in it. Pandemonium ensued. Everyone was stunned and shocked and in a state of disbelief. Then came the final surprise of the evening. One of the committee had disappeared: the Treasurer!

Roger Say

The North-East of England Quiz

Compiled by Barry Liddle (Answers on page 11)

Q1 Tony Blair served as Prime Minister from 1997-2007. What was the name of his North-East Constituency?

Q2 Hartlepool is twinned with which German town?

Q3 In which town would you find The Bowes Museum?

Q4 Which professional football team has the nickname 'The Magpies'?

Q5 Which well-known actor and TV presenter also had several No1 singles in the 1990s with fellow actor Jerome Flynn?

Q6 The Tees Transporter Bridge opened in 1911 connecting Middlesbrough with a small village. What is its name?

Q7 The Northern Echo is a regional daily morning newspaper, first published in 1870. In which town does it have its headquarters?

Q8 Who was the Bishop of Durham during the turbulent years of the 1984-85 Miner's Strike?

Q9 A former miner, retiring in 1966, he was a member of the 'Pitman's Academy' and is well known for his paintings of the mining community life in and around Spennymoor. Who is he?

Q10 Currently one of the most popular dishes found in the North East and particularly Middlesbrough, is chicken coated with breadcrumbs covered in bechamel sauce and topped with cheese. What is it called?

Q11 Which Newcastle born theoretical physicist won the Nobel Prize for his work on the mass of subatomic particles?

Q12 Craster is a small Northumberland fishing village best known for a particular seafood speciality. What is it?

Q13 I am a comic actor born in Consett, famous for a number of comic roles including playing Mr Bean. Who am I?

Q14 A project of the former Teesside Development Corporation, it is made from hundreds of tonnes of reinforced concrete and steel and was built to stop flooding around Stockton-on Tees. What is it called?

Q15 This well-known actress started out on the North East children's TV programme Byker Grove before winning roles in Coronation Street and Eastenders and starring in several TV series. She also won the second series of Strictly Come Dancing. Who is she?

Q16 The Angel of the North, located in Gateshead, has become an iconic symbol of the North. Can you name the sculptor who created it?

Q17 I am a British former long-distance runner, athletics commentator and founder of the Great North Run. Who am I?

Q18 This young woman achieved great fame in 1838 for heroically rescuing survivors from a merchant ship wrecked on the Farne Islands, off the coast of Northumberland. Who is she?

Q19 Whitby is associated with jewellery made from the fossilised wood of the Monkey Puzzle tree. What is its common name?

Q20 I was born in South Shields in 1937 and attended West Hartlepool College of Art. I became a world-famous film director in America specialising in science fiction films, crime and historical dramas and was knighted by King Charles in 2024. Who am I?

Down Memory Lane



The former Music Appreciation Group's version of 'Desert Island Discs' featuring Lesley Jones. Photo © Barry Liddle

Letter to the Editor

Martin Green writes: Dear Sir, your man toppling off his bike ('Memories of Playing Cricket' in last month's Newsletter) reminded me of the following (true as told) alcohol-based story.

"My first job after leaving university was over on the west coast of Cumberland (Cumbria today). Each Christmas a section dinner was organised at a hostelry somewhere up Wasdale. In those days there was no legal limit for driving and society rightly or wrongly was far more tolerant of driving home after an evening in the pub. On this occasion, when we all rolled into work the next day, my boss complained unashamedly that on the way home a telegraph pole had jumped out into the road and hit him. Not only that, he reported, but after he had reversed up and moved off once more, the same pole jumped out and hit him again!"

Directory

List of Committee Members for 2024

Chair, Speaker Finder & Web Admin.

Roger Say

Vice Chair–

Vacant

President & Minutes Secretary –

Linda Sargent

Business Secretary –

Wendy Borthwick

Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

Membership Secretary –

Andrea Reid

Group Co-ordinator & Beacon Admin.

Pauline Williamson

Committee – Keith Alder; Irene Archer

Interest Group Leaders

Archaeology/History Group: Chris McLoughlin.

Art Appreciation: Co-Leaders: Irene Archer, Andrea Reid.

Board Games: Irene Williams.

Bridge: Phil Jefferies.

Chess Group: Roger Say.

Coffee & Chat Jacky Armstrong

Creative Writing Group: Roger Say.

Family History: Co- Leaders: Jacky Armstrong, Pat Rutter.

Film Group: Contact Phil Jefferies.

Fun with Fabrics: Ann Say

Gardens and Gardening: Co-Leaders: Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace

Lawn Bowls: Ray Elliston.

Music: Steve Cole

Natural History Group: Co- Leaders: Irene Archer, Margaret Andrews and Beryl Turnbull.

Photography for Fun Group: Ray Elliston.

Quiz Team: John Campbell.

Reading Group: Andrea Reid

Shibashi Exercise Group: Marjorie Reynolds.

Tuesday Book Club: Mary Waldmeyer

'View to Vue': Roger Say.

Walking Group: Keith Alder

Roles of Non- Committee Members

Newsletter Editor-

Barry Liddle

Answers to Quiz on Page 9/10

Q1 Sedgefield; Q2 A Huckelhoven; Q3 Barnard Castle; Q4 Newcastle United; Q5 Robson Green;
Q6 Port Clarence; Q7 Darlington; Q8 The Right Reverend David Jenkins; Q9 Norman Cornish;
Q10 Chicken Parmo; Q11 Peter Higgs; Q12 Craster Kippers; Q13 Rowan Atkinson;
Q14 Tees Barrage; Q15 Jill Halfpenny; Q16 Antony Gormley; Q17 Brendan Foster;
Q18 Grace Darling; Q19 Whitby Jet; Q20 Sir Ridley Scott.