

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 77, October 2023



Comments from the Chair

I recently attended a meeting of South Durham Chairs and am delighted to let you know how well our u3a is doing in the grand scheme of things compared to other groups. We are financially sound and have a remarkable number of interest groups relative to the number of members we have. The u3a has a ball-park figure of 1 group per 10 members while we have 22 groups with a membership of just over 100. Hearty congratulations to the Groups Coordinator, Group Leaders, and the vast majority of members who have joined one or more of these groups. Although we are already

spoilt for choice, we continue to encourage new groups, so if anyone has any ideas about starting one, please let us know. The more groups we have the more chances we have of attracting new members.

I was at the Central Hub on Wednesday 20th of September to promote our u3a. Although the weather was somewhat inclement, the Hub was quite busy and people came up to ask me what the u3a is and does and were surprised to learn what we are about. Hopefully, events like this will help to boost our membership. There are huge numbers of potential members out there who are completely unaware of our existence, so please spread the word whenever you can.

This month's speaker is Olly Burton who will be telling us all about Heraldry and Cracking the Medieval code. I look forward to seeing you all on Friday October 6th at 2 pm.

Meanwhile,

Take care everybody,

Roger.

My Cultural Life

Irene Williams

I have been invited to write a few words about my involvement with the U3A and it is a story that goes back quite a few years. My brother, who has lived in Australia for many years, is an enthusiastic U3A member and urged me to join the organisation in Hartlepool. However, at that time there was no U3A in the town, but soon afterwards my friend Jessica Scott became involved in discussions to establish a local U3A and we both attended the inaugural meeting. We volunteered to each run an Interest group – Jessica established an Italian Conversation Group and I formed the Reading Group.

There were eight of us in the Reading Group and we had a monthly meeting in my sitting room. All went well for many years and we became good friends. However, everything came to a halt with the Covid lockdown. By the time we were able to meet again, I had given up driving and I was unable to collect and return the books which the library kindly supplied. So the Reading Group has now restarted under the guidance of Andrea, but I continue to run the Board Games group which I established some years ago. We meet on an afternoon to play Rummikub and Yahtzee.

Over the years I have been a member of several groups including Gardening, Music Appreciation, History, Luncheon, Quiz and German Conversation. Plus others! Joining the U3A and being involved with so many groups, has been a wonderful way to meet new people and make friends, especially as I have no family living nearby.

My fantasy dinner party.

This has been difficult – choosing compatible guests. I decided to choose Nigella Lawson, providing she prepared the meal in advance, as she would provide some glamour to the occasion. My next guest would have to be Billy Connolly (on the understanding that that he would be moderating his language) as he can tell some funny stories. Another Scot to join us would be Andrew Carnegie. He was born in Dunfermline but his father took the family to America where Andrew became a billionaire because he invested in the railways which were then expanding over the country. He funded the building of public libraries in the USA and Great Britain, for which we can all be grateful. I would also like to invite Judie Dench as she is full of fun and would keep Billy Connolly in check, after playing Queen Victoria to his John Brown. My final guest would be David Attenborough whom I have always admired and who would have some fascinating stories to tell us.

My favourite Music, Album and Composer

Noel Coward wrote: “Extraordinary how potent cheap music is”. I imagine he meant ‘popular’ music when he refers to “cheap”. And it is a fact that music can have a powerful effect on us, bringing back memories of happy or even sad times. When I was young and living in Scotland, what I heard most was Scottish Country Dance music and songs, but also the current hits of the day. Later, when I was working, I was able to choose music to match my own preferences, and this was singers such as Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee. On vinyl records my husband and I,

fortunately, had the same taste, and we had a trip once a month to choose a new addition to our collection. I first encountered classical music when a friend's father played his violin for us one afternoon. The music as part of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and I was enchanted, Mozart and Tchaikovsky are my favourite composers but I am still discovering others I enjoy.

My favourite TV comedy and Drama series.

It was amazing when colour television replaced black and white. Every event in years past seemed to be in grey and it suddenly occurred to me that skies had actually been blue then too! My mother was a keen follower of snooker matches on TV and it transformed her viewing when she could see the colour of the balls.

There have been wonderful series on TV in recent years. My favourites are those made by David Attenborough but I enjoy most nature programmes and documentaries.

In previous years we also enjoyed the comedy series such as *The Good Life* and *The Two Ronnies* but I have some difficulty in finding current light entertainment, apart from *Would I Lie to You!*

My favourite radio programme.

The first programmes I remember were *Dick Barton Special Agent* and *Childrens Hour*. We had a large radio which stood in the corner and I was always intrigued by the list of stations which were shown on the dial but as far as I can remember, we listened only to the BBC. My parents listened to '*Friday Night is Music Night*' where all the popular music was played. Since then I have been a keen listener to the radio. Every morning I tune in to Radio 4 as there is always interesting interviews and I can learn something new. My favourite programme is on Sunday – *Desert Island Discs*. It's fascinating to hear the background story of other people's lives. I wonder if anyone else remembers ITMA with all the catchphrases ('Can I do you now, Sir?'), and Wilfred Pickles who asked questions -there was always a round of applause if the contestant said he was over a certain age (was it 75?). Some of you may even have heard *Workers Playtime* and *Housewives' Choice!*

My favourite book

How could I live without books? They open the door to life. To have a book you enjoy, which takes you into another world, is wonderful. If you have to force yourself to carry on reading your book, give it up and choose another – there are thousands more to choose from! It's impossible for me to choose a favourite book or author – too many to mention.

The first 'grown-up' book I read was *Tess of the D'urbervilles* which my father brought home from the Stirling Library when I was twelve and ill in bed. I think he thought it was a book for children like *Anne of Green Gables*.

Wartime Memories – ‘Our Street’

By Brenda Regan

“Good morning Mrs Moffatt. How’s your Walter doing?” My mother was cleaning the front window of our house. It was a matter of pride for every housewife to make sure the front of the house and pavement were kept very clean.

My mother, brother and I shared a house with my widowed, disabled grandmother, we called Granny Will – (her surname was Williamson), while my father was away fighting in the war. It was an old, terraced house.

We were very happy there as children because we had plenty of playmates in the neighbouring houses, and plenty of games to play. There was *kick the can*, *knockie knockie nine doors*, *chasies* and “*What time is it Mr Wolf?*” and lots of others. My elder cousin taught me how to tap-dance in the back street.

We sometimes had processions up the street, with a banner made of two long pieces of wood and a length of wallpaper, and a band of improvised instruments, including tin pan lids and toy drums.

My best friend Betty, who lived three doors up, sometimes arranged an entertainment of friends singing, dancing and reciting, in her back yard, with an old curtain slung across the end of the yard to make a stage.

Christmas was awaited for eagerly. Presents and food were bought and hidden away from us, waiting for Santa’s arrival. There was a nativity play at primary school each year, and once I was a shepherd. My mother made me a headdress from a tea towel and a belt, and the school provided a cloak. There was a similar play at the Sunday School I attended. So by Christmas Day we woke up very early to see if Santa had been. Our presents were simple. I always got a Rupert Bear annual from my grandmother, which I loved reading on Christmas afternoon. Other presents I had one year were a torch (for reading in bed) and a new toothbrush, and in our stockings we got an orange, an apple, nuts and a two-shilling piece. You could see we didn’t have much money to spare while my father was away.

We had a big Christmas dinner at midday, and played with our presents and were very contented.

We left our street, when my father came back from the war, to live in a new house, which had a lot more facilities, including two indoor toilets, a separate dining-room and a built-in shed,

But we never forgot how happy we were in the old street, and often went back to visit my grandmother and our old friends.

Notice Board

Christmas Lunch The Marine, Seaton Carew Monday 18th December at 12 noon.

1 course £10.95, 2 £14.95 and 3 £17.95.

There is a choice of 4 starters and 4 puddings.

The main course is a festive carvery served with a selection of seasonal vegetables, potatoes, Yorkshire pudding and a rich roast gravy.

The Marine is on a bus route and has a free car park (drivers must record their number plate on to their computer when entering).

I have reserved 20 places. If you would like to go, please let Pauline Williamson or Jacky Armstrong know. The last date for names is the December meeting.

Jacky Armstrong

Natural History Group Meetings:

- October 5th at 1.30, Hardwick country park near Sedgfield. Meet outside of the cafe. Note there is a car park fee of £2 for 2 hours, £3 full day.
- November 2nd at 1.30, The Headland car park outside of the Borough Hall.
- December, No meeting

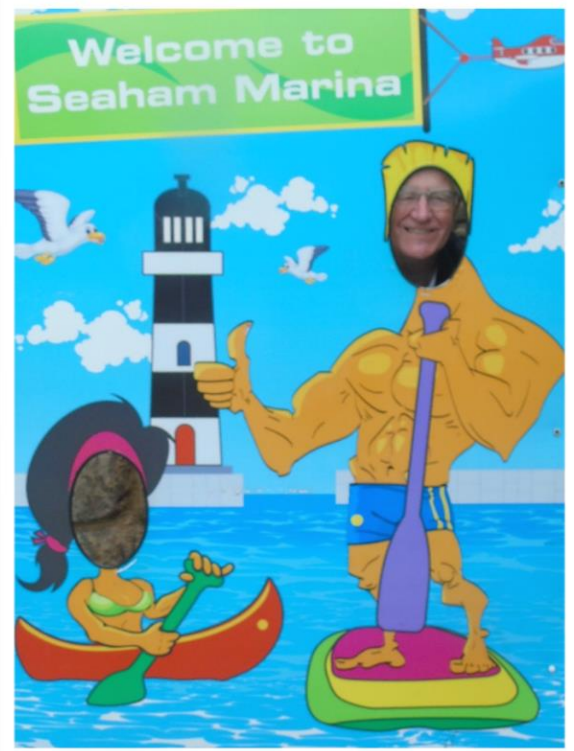
Irene Archer

Medical Joke

An elderly woman goes to the doctor with a bad knee. The Doctor says, "I'll give you some painkillers.... and come and see me in a week". The woman said " I'll tell you what Doctor, I'll come and see you when my leg is better!"

Barry Liddle

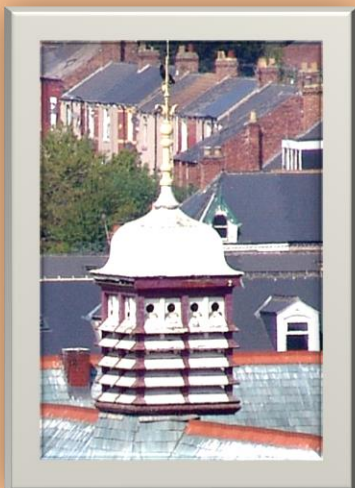
*As told to me by my late friend and neighbour,
Mrs Kirby*



Strongman Ray Elliston, the Photography for Fun Group Leader, on a recent visit to Seaham

Bill's Picture Quiz

Can you identify these 3 Buildings in Hartlepool. Answers on page 7.



1



2



3



Coffee and Chat

at 10.30 am on Monday 2nd October at the Golden Lion, Dunston Road (with Aldi next door). Ample parking. On a Bus route.

We will meet on the left as you go in.

See you there, Jacky Armstrong

My Word of the Month.

I surprised myself recently. I pulled out my credit card and bought something. Two things actually, two armchairs. These chairs have high backs, so I thought it might be a good idea to place a cloth over the chair back to prevent soiling. I thought there must be a word to describe this type of cloth, so I looked it up in my trusty dictionary. Therefore, my word of the month for October is ...'Antimacassar.'

Barry Liddle

Quiz Group

The next quiz is on Tuesday 17th October at 2 pm in the Community Room at the Hub (the Central Library).

It is a fun quiz, played in teams, so why not form your own team and give it a go. Or join one of the teams already playing. They will welcome you with open arms!

There is a different quiz master each time. The October Quiz Master is Jacky. It is a joint quiz with Stockton, so come and prove that Hartlepool knowledge is superior!

Jacky Armstrong.

The Loch Ness Monster

There has been a spate of news stories about the Loch Ness Monster in recent weeks, which reminds me of an exchange that took place many years ago between the mother of a Scottish friend of mine and a tourist visiting Loch Ness.

Tourist - *"I won't believe in the monster, until I see it".*

Friend's Mother – *"Well you won't see it, until you believe in it".*

Barry Liddle

As told to me by my late friend and neighbour Mrs Kirby



The Photography for Fun group spotted these knitted sea creatures at a recent visit to Seaham Harbour



Anything Seaham can do Hartlepool can do better. Two photographs from the covid period at the Headland. *All photographs © Barry Liddle*

Answers to
Bill's Picture
Competition



1 Grand Hotel



2 Town Hall



3 Morrisons

Fading days of summer

Blue skies
Cool breeze
Early morning.
Sound of footsteps
Walking westwards
Following the shadow
House martin flies by
Gathering sustenance
Ready to journey
To southern hemisphere
Lone black-backed gull
Stands imperiously
On small rock
Near the shoreline
Emits a surprisingly raucous
Screech
Herring gull in mid-air
Dramatically sees off
Squawking offspring
Demanding a free meal
Docked ship from
Dogger Bank Wind Farm
In harbour
Reminding one
Of the dulcet tones
Of the Shipping forecast

Continue.....

Move past Fish Quay
Swap places with shadow
Tired of being
The path finder
Approaching The Fish
Strangely quiet
Due to departure
Of Kittiwakes
Leaving undeniable evidence
Of their vacated occupancy
Away out to the North Sea
Where they spend winter
Silence replaced
By the rustle of leaves
Of a row of Lime trees
Stop
Close eyes
Listen to the sounds
Communications of nature
While delusional humanoids
Pass by
Ignoring that which
They cannot see
They cannot hear
Though readily accessible
To all who care
To be aware
And look
And listen

Roger Say

Directory

List of Committee Members for 2023 -2024

Chair & Speaker Finder –

Roger Say

Vice Chair–

Vacant

President & Minutes Secretary –

Linda Sargent

Business Secretary –

Wendy Borthwick

Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

Membership Secretary –

Andrea Reid

Group Co-ordinator –

Pauline Williamson

Committee – Keith Alder; Irene Archer

Interest Group Leaders

- **Archaeology/History Group:** Chris McLoughlin
- **Art Appreciation:** Group Leader role shared.
- **Board Games:** Irene Williams.
- **Bridge:** Phil Jefferies.
- **Chess Group:** Roger Say.
- **Creative Writing Group:** Roger Say.
- **Film Group:** Contact Phil Jefferies.
- **Fun with Fabrics:** Ann Say
- **Gardens and Gardening:** Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace
- **Lawn Bowls:** Ray Elliston.
- **Music:** Steve Cole
- **Natural History Group:** Group Leader role shared.
- **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

Watch out for other interest groups starting in September!

Roles of Non- Committee Members

I.T. Support (Website and Beacon) –
for a temporary period.

Phil Jefferies

Newsletter Editor-

Barry Liddle

Copy Wanted for This Newsletter

Articles, Short Stories, Interesting Photographs (with captions), Limericks & Poems.
Items for the Newsletter's 'Notice Board' are also welcomed.

All contributions to the next Newsletter are most welcome.
Copy deadline for the next issue is 20 October 2023.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor