

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District U3A
Issue 66, November 2022

Comments from the Chair



Earlier this month I attended the AGM of the Third Age Trust (TAT) which is the national body of the u3a. This was a hybrid meeting which I attended via zoom.

The main business was to vote on a resolution to increase the fees paid by individual u3as to TAT in line with the percentage increase in state pensions on a year-by-year basis. This increase was to start in 2023 or 2024. These resolutions and various amendments all failed so we are back to square one with no increase agreed for the coming years. This was a missed opportunity which might have been avoided if there had been better communications between the national office and local u3as.

Good communicators are vitally important for any organisation to avoid a 'them and us' situation, and the same is true for our u3a. Members of our u3a hopefully know that they can approach committee members with positive suggestions.

While on the subject of the national u3a I can thoroughly recommend having a look at their website. In particular, it advertises events and course that are available online to all members. Course available include Laughter Yoga, Tai Chi, Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners and Mindfulness and Meditation – all free! There are lots more courses and workshops available so check them out!

Our membership has begun to grow again after dropping back from around 140 to under 100. This has been helped by our own website which has attracted a number of enquiries and we have recently had a stall in The Hub (the main library as it used to be known) to raise our profile. We will also be having meetings with the local NHS trust to let them know what we can offer.

The speaker at our next general meeting will be Gordon Henderson who will be telling us all about excavations at the Roman Fort at Binchester. I look forward to seeing you there.

Take care

Roger

Progress Report on the Shibashi Group

Marjorie Reynolds



Shibashi in China. A photograph taken by Cliff, one of our members.

(meaning 18 in Mandarin) is a series of 18 energy-enhancing exercises that co-ordinate movement with breathing and concentration. It is a gentle, flowing Tai Chi exercise routine that is enjoyable to do and is deeply relaxing for people of any age – including The Third Age. So if you would like to come along and see what it is all about our next meeting is on 4th November 2022.

The 18 moves can be traced back some 4000 years and were developed to promote health at a time when self-help was the only help available.

Shibashi is gentle and the moves are dance-like and can be done standing, sitting or using a bit of both. It forms a total yet easy workout which is good for improving and maintaining balance, flexibility, stamina, bone and muscle density and is good for your immune system. Practitioners of Shibashi also believe it engenders a feeling of calm contentment.

The two local photographs were taken on the beach near Steetley Pier by Beryl, a member of our group.



If you are interested in joining the Shibashi group, Marjorie can be contact at U3A General meetings or you can leave a message for her on our website. Go to u3asites.org.uk/hartlepool, click on Groups, then scroll down and click on T'ai Chi Qigong Shibashi to open the group's page. You can send a message to Marjorie by clicking on the carrier pigeon icon at the top right of the page.

Newport Bridge

Martin Green and Barry Liddle

Newport Bridge is a local landmark spanning the river Tees and most of us will have driven over it many times. The bridge was inaugurated by Prince Albert, Duke of York (later King George VI) and opened to traffic on 28 February 1934. It was originally designed as a vertical-lift bridge and during the 1940s and 50s the bridge was lifted twice a day with an average of 800 vessels passing under it every year.

Originally, 12 men would have been employed to man the bridge around the clock, usually requiring four to drive it at any one time. This was accomplished from the oak-panelled winding house situated midway along the bridge span. This can be seen in the first two photographs which Martin took in the 1980s.

However, as the number of ships needing to sail up to Stockton-on-Tees declined, so the legal requirement to lift the bridge for shipping traffic was removed in 1989 and the final lift took place on the 18 November 1990.

The Tees Newport Bridge still serves as a road bridge, carrying considerable traffic as a section of the A1032, despite the presence of the A19 Tees Viaduct a short distance upriver. In 1988 the bridge was given Grade II Listed Building status.

Martin's third photograph of the bridge was taken more recently.

Sources: Wikipedia.



Autumn Now, Winter's Next

Ken Williams



RSPB Saltholme.

Photograph: Barry Liddle

Now that we're comfortably into Autumn, Winter, with its fogs, frosts and snow can't be far away! And yet, difficult as it can be, all creatures have to overwinter somehow. Some just "dog it out" where they've spent the rest of the year managing to find enough food and shelter to survive.

Quite a number of our bird species, e.g. insect eaters, are not able to do this. So, sometimes flying great distances, they have to migrate south to warmer climes, and

then return to our shores to breed once more the following spring.

Some of our mammals simply take on a thicker coat and then manage to survive living much the same as during the rest of the year. Others, however, have quite different ways of surviving each winter.

Bats hibernate for the entire winter – many months. That is to say their metabolism closes down to a huge degree, and they fall into, and remain in a semi-comatose state. Some others, e.g. red squirrel, hedgehog, also hibernate, but do regain consciousness from time to time during any mild spells, to feed a little and then resume their hibernation.

We don't have a lot of species of reptiles and amphibians in Britain, but as cold-blooded creatures they all hibernate as adults, to emerge and spawn and thus produce the next generation the following Spring.

There are four stages in an insect's life cycle – the egg, the larva (caterpillar or grub), the pupa (chrysalis) and the fully developed insect, the imago; and species over winter in various stages.

Let us for a moment just consider butterflies, of which we have probably just over fifty breeding species here in Britain. Some of them overwinter as eggs, laid in Autumn before the parent adult then dies, but not to hatch until the following Spring. Other species, a few only, survive as larvae, tucked away in light soil, dead leaves or compost. Many pass the winter as pupae, hiding in a safe, dry, sheltered spot; and four species actually get through the winter hibernating as the fully developed flying insect. Of these, the small tortoiseshell and the peacock are not too uncommon and can be seen from time to time here in Hartlepool. Sometimes they're found in a garden shed or a greenhouse; sometimes actually inside the house – maybe under a window sill or clinging high up inside a curtain. They're completely harmless, so should you come across one at home, just be grateful that you've been chosen, and please leave it in peace without disturbing it!

Another Trip Down Memory Lane

Jacky Armstrong

Which events can you remember where you were vividly, apart from family events? The shooting of President Kennedy? The death of Princess Diana? Some of us can remember even further back.

More recently, where were you when the passing of Queen Elizabeth II was announced. Some of us can remember the beginning of her reign.

Here is another trip down Memory Lane.

I was 9 when the Queen had her Coronation in June 1953. I was at Elwick Road Junior School. The staff, under the leadership of Miss Kindred, organised a Coronation Pageant. As it was an all-girls school, we were restricted to females of note through the ages. I remember Pat Lee as Queen Elizabeth I. She was magnificent in her fabulous costume and strings of pearls.



As she was a natural red head with tight curls, she was certainly the part. I was an understudy for Gertrude Bell, Queen of the Desert. I dressed in jodhpurs, a khaki shirt, a hard hat and was carrying a riding whip. I must admit, at the time, I had no idea who she was. I do now.

Gertrude was a famous archaeologist and traveller. She helped to establish modern Iraq. She was a friend of T E Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia.

Gertrude was born in Washington, Co Durham (now Tyne and Wear) in 1868 to an affluent family. She was an intelligent young lady who was keen on climbing and exploring. She was the first woman to graduate from Oxford University. The family had houses in North



Yorkshire, one of which was at Mount Grace Priory. Another property was over the A19. It is now the home of Dark Star Plants who are in the walled garden of the house. Apparently the house was offered to the National Trust who refused it and so it was demolished. All that remains is the walled garden. Dark Star Plants are worth a visit in summertime. They don't open in Winter as they don't have electricity!

Gertrude was a pioneer of so many things. It is worth reading more about her. Two films Queen of the Desert (2015) and Letters from Baghdad (2016) tell of her life. Gertrude died in 1926 and is buried in Baghdad. She was probably one of the first feminists, proving that women can do things in a male world. A bit like our late Queen really. I digress, I was going to tell you about what I did on 6th June 1953, but maybe next time. Perhaps you could recount your memories of that day too.

Obituary – Marjorie Hardy



Marjorie Hardy 1934-2022

At our monthly general meeting in October, Roger Say announced the recent death of Marjorie Hardy after a short illness. A minute's silence in her memory was impeccably observed.

Marjorie was born in Hartlepool in October 1934 and married in 1953. She had a variety of office jobs before becoming a full-time home-maker. She had four children with her husband Arthur and had a variety of interests, including cooking, baking, making decoupage pictures, family history and crosswords. After the children left home she and her husband enjoyed visiting various countries including Canada, Italy and Greece.

Marjorie has been a U3A member since 2017 and regularly attended our general monthly meeting. Without access to the internet Marjorie received a paper copy of our Newsletter and she and Roger would discuss its contents each month.

Our U3A was represented at the funeral on 20 October by Chair Roger Say and Vice Chair Wendy Borthwick.

Tall Ships in Hartlepool 2023.

Barry Liddle

The 'Tall Ships Races' is the largest annual event organised by Sail Training International. It's a summer series of races held in European waters where ports along the route host festivals for 3 or 4 days, which can attract between 200,000 and 1 million visitors.

The four host ports chosen for the 2023 races are Hartlepool (which also successfully hosted the event in 2010), along with Den Helder in the Netherlands, Fredrikstad in Norway and Lerwick in Shetland.



The Tall Ships at Hartlepool in 2010. Photograph Barry Liddle

Hartlepool will host the fleet between races, from Thursday 6 July to Sunday 9 July. During that time it will be possible to see up close all the ships taking part in the races including the very biggest Class A ships which are roughly up to 100 metres in length with many sails. So far



6 Class A ships have been entered including the oldest *Statsraad Lehmkuhl*, which was launched in 1914. In addition there are 3 ships in Class B, 9 in class C and 1 in Class D. More ships are expected to be announced in the coming months. In 1968 – the “Rule of Rating” was introduced to give every competing vessel in the races an equal chance. So it doesn't mean the largest ship always wins.



Large crowds gathered in Hartlepool in 2010. On the left of the photograph are several stalls selling goods and refreshments. *Photograph: Barry Liddle*

During the 3-day festival in Hartlepool, residents and the many visitors to the town will be able to view the ships and enjoy a wide range of supporting activities including exhibitions, stalls selling sailing and other gifts & memorabilia as well as enjoy food from a wide range of catering concessions. The £12m refurbishment of Hartlepool's Railway Station, including a new

platform, is underway and is expected to be open in time to welcome visitors to the 3- day event.



The Grand Parade in Hartlepool in 2010. *Photograph Barry Liddle*

Hartlepool Council's Event Director is currently encouraging local businesses and community organisations to participate in the event. A highlight of the festival will be a grand parade by the thousands of crew members drawn from countries across the world.

Visiting the event in July is not the only way to become involved. There are opportunities particularly for the young, to become a 'Sail Trainee' aboard a participating vessel. Volunteers of all ages are also needed for the event. You can go online at Hartlepool Borough Council for further information.

Sources www.hartlepoollife.co.uk , <https://tallshipsnetwork.com/events/the-tall-ships-races-2023>

Much ado about nothing

Mid October
azure skies
billowing breeze
croft gardens
hebe still in
resplendent bloom
two red admirals
taking succour
plus lone carder bee
busy foraging
a serendipitous discovery
pied wagtail
near pilot pier
on bulwark
wagging tail
vigorously
black headed gulls
floating serenely
bells of St Hilda's
chiming clearly
fellow travellers out
for constitutional
herring gulls
gossiping overhead
folk gossiping
underneath
sea sparkling, glistening
sun's rays
orchestrate free light show
as cormorant skims across
somnolent sea
redshank spotted
bobbing up and down
somewhat frenetically
no sign of any threat
something and nothing
herring gulls squabbling
over ownership
of inedible detritus
chattering gulls
chattering humans
Andy Capp
remains
unmoved
unconcerned
statuesque even
seen it all before.
Deja vu
Much ado about nothing

Roger Say

Photographs illustrating 'Much ado about Nothing'.



All Photographs: Barry Liddle

Directory

List of Committee Members for 2022/23

Chair –

Roger Say

Vice Chair–

Wendy Borthwick

Secretary –

Phil Jefferies

Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

Membership Secretary –

Wendy Borthwick

Group Co-ordinator –

Pauline Williamson

Speaker Organiser –

Jessica Scott

Minutes Secretary –

Linda Sargent

I.T. Support (Website and Beacon) –

Phil Jefferies

Committee –

Keith Alder

Irene Archer

Don Taylor.

Interest Group Leaders

- **Archaeology/History Group.** Chris McLoughlin.
- **Board Games.** Irene Williams.
- **Bowls:** Ray Elliston.
- **Bridge:** Phil Jefferies.
- **Chess Group.** Roger Say.
- **Creative Writing Group.** Roger Say.
- **Family History:** Ray Elliston.
- **Film Group.** Contact Phil Jefferies.
- **Fun with Fabrics.** Ann Say
- **Gardens and Gardening Group: Vacant** (Not meeting at the moment.)
- **Luncheon Group.** Jacky Armstrong (Not meeting at the moment.)
- **Music Appreciation Group.** Barry Liddle (Not meeting at the moment.)
- **Natural History Group.** Group Leader role shared.
- **Photography for Fun Group.** Ray Elliston.
- **Quiz Team** John Campbell.
- **Reading Group** Irene Williams
- **Shibashi Exercise Group.** Marjorie Reynolds.
- **'View to Vue'.** Roger Say.
- **Walking Group.** Keith Alder

Copy Wanted for This Newsletter

Articles, Short Stories, Interesting Photographs (with captions), Limericks & Poems.

All contributions to the next Newsletter are most welcome.

Copy deadline for the next issue is 20 November 2022.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor