

Happy  
New Year!

# Newsletter

Hartlepool & District U3A  
Issue 68, January 2023



## Comments from the Chair



Season's greeting from myself and the committee and we wish you all a Happy New Year. We have made great strides during 2022 with more groups reopening and new ones starting. The membership continues to grow, and we are making efforts to raise the profile of our u3a. I recently gave a talk followed by a question-and-answer session to Hartlepool NHS with Hartlepool Carers to explain what we are about and there was quite a lot of interest shown by both groups. I will be giving another talk to the local Macular Society in early January so we will see if we gain some more members as a result. The people I talk

to are usually too young and in full-time employment to join themselves, but they can spread the word about us to older family members. We are also looking to start a Facebook page so if any of you have any expertise in this area, we would be glad to hear from you.

Our next general meeting will be on Friday January 5th when we will be holding our New Year Fuddle where we all bring along finger food to be shared by everyone. There will also be a quiz organized by our Quiz Group to keep us entertained. Tea and coffee will be available. Our first fuddle was a great success and I hope you all can come along.

Don't get into a muddle

Come to the fuddle!

Happy New Year!

Roger



## A Winter's Tale

Chris McLoughlin.



Now the winter has arrived the Arch. & History Group will be not on their travels again until the spring, so they are now into their winter-time lectures at the People Centre, with the theme being largely around 'Social History'.

Roger Codner opened the programme in November, when he took us on a lantern-side tour of the "village" of Stranton, this period of the 2020s marks the 900th Anniversary of the gifting of Stranton and Hart by Robert the Bruce, so we "walked" the area from the Central Stores to Vicarage Gardens examining the buildings that still stand. However, thanks to Roger's collection of pictures we were also treated to photos of the many buildings that have been swept away in our lifetimes, sadly their replacements and road widening has not added to the area.

Our latest event saw Frances Wilson gave us another illuminating talk in her trio of Talks on "The History of Weddings, this time covering the period from the 1920's through to the modern era, which featured some very stylish pictures of local weddings in both peace and wartime and showed how dress styles for all involved in the Bridal party, have changed over the years (and the bouquets).

The talk reflected on how fashions change and highlighted how weddings are influenced by both the cinema and well-known personalities. The venues were equally varied and many in the room recalled receptions at everything from the Grand Hotel to the Co-Op Café or the Mecca Café. Frances rounded off a thoroughly entertaining morning by bringing us up to date on weddings of today and their enormous costs (£30,000!). She concluded by saying we are now approaching the era of "wow" weddings, with events spread over three days!

January will see the welcome return of author and genealogist Margaret Hedley who will talk on the role of women in the Durham Coalfield. Her latest book 'Hannah's Story', is the story of the Victorian wives who through heroic efforts, did their best to provide attractive, healthy, happy home for their husbands, often in appalling social conditions. To provide a welcoming atmosphere at home demanded tremendous resources and commitment from these miners' wives. The book shows that despite their many hardships these women selflessly put everyone in the family before themselves. They operated on less rest, less food at times of necessity and under the huge physical burden of work and the emotional burden of worry concerning the safety of their family.

We have another returning speaker in February when Margaret Bozic will speak on the early years of Gertrude Bell, many of us will be aware of her later prominent life. Gertrude Bell was an amazing woman. Born in 1868, in Washington County Durham, she was the first woman to gain the equivalent of a first-class degree at Oxford University, she was a diplomat, an

adventurer and it was she who drew up some of the boundaries in the Middle East after the First World War.

This talk will explore her beginnings. How a woman born in County Durham, and who spent the first thirty years of her life in Coatham, near Redcar, became such a colossus. Margaret will also be telling us about her family and upbringing in the nineteenth century and about Gertrude's education in London and at Oxford, including the prejudice against women students at that time. The talk ends as Gertrude Bell is about to set out to Persia on her adventures.

We will be on a trip out in March, but lectures return in April when Lara Moon from Teesside Archives will talk on the Hartlepool Workhouse –which was originally part of the General Hospital – and administered from Raby Road as the People Centre was originally built as the administrative building for the Workhouse and the fledgling Social Services of those days.

## A Day in the Country

### Roger Say

Many of you will be familiar with the works of Jerome K Jerome particularly 'Three men in a boat' but he was also well known for his observations on such subjects as work. One of my favourite quotes is "It is impossible to enjoy idling thoroughly unless one has plenty of work to do", a sentiment which has my full approval.

Being the sort of cove who does not believe in being busy for the sake of being busy, there is little I like better than a day out in the country. Away from the bustle of life in the town, the countryside is the place to be to relax and enjoy the simple pleasures provided by the natural world. This is the place for peace and quiet, away from the stress of avoiding work whilst residing in the metropolis and being on the end of a telephone.

Picture a midsummer's day in the heart of the countryside. There you are sitting on the bank of a gently flowing river, amidst the rich pasture abutting either side, birdsong busting from tree and hedgerow, dragonflies flitting back and forth across the water as a kingfisher flashes by. You have a picnic basket by your side, and you are now replete with cucumber sandwiches and elderberry wine.

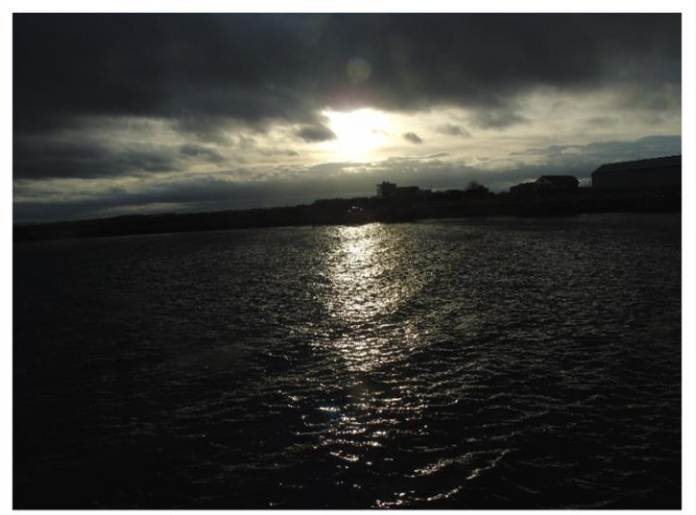
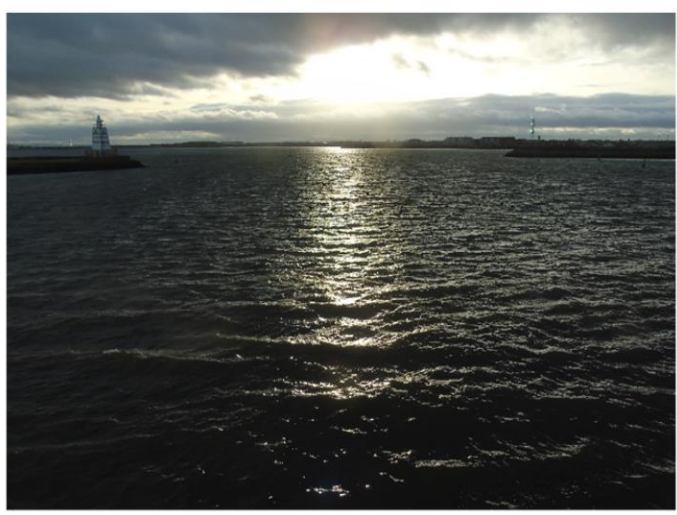
All is well. All is fine. Time to close your eyes and slowly drift into the land of nod as the warm sun gives you that feeling of well-being. Life is good. Sometimes, being a sloth is not at all bad as you absorb the surrounding beauty of a glorious summer's day, wishing no harm to anyone and feeling at peace with yourself.

I could wax lyrical about this subject, but to tell you the truth: I just can't be asked! Time for my nap.

*NB This was written for our U3A Creative Writing Group combining two separate topics of 'a day in the country' and 'playing devil's advocate'.*

# Sunsets at the Headland

Barry Liddle



## Memories of Lockerbie and North America

Jacky Armstrong

It has just been announced on the radio that the person responsible for the Lockerbie bombing in Scotland in 1988 has been arrested in America. I remember the date of the plane crash very well because it coincided with a flight we took that year to North America.

Peter (my first husband) and I had been invited to stay with his sister and husband in upstate New York for Christmas and New Year and during the visit we also celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary.



Our flight took us to Toronto in Canada and from there we made our way to Niagara where we stayed overnight. It was cold in Hartlepool when we left, but that was nothing compared to what we found in Niagara; it was so cold that many of the tree branches were propped up

with wooden stakes to prevent the weight of icicles on them snapping off the branches. And we found to our amazement, that even parts of the famous Niagara Falls were frozen. However, we found the shopping malls and hotels to be well heated and as it was the festive season they were beautifully decorated with hundreds of pink, lime green and red poinsettias.

The next day we made our way down to Rochester by car on extremely icy roads. Fortunately our hosts were well used to them and had special tyres. I remember one road was unusually rocky and my brother-in-law called it the 'bra road' as you certainly needed one going over the bumps!

After several hours we reached their home which was covered in deep snow from the Arctic winds which blew over the Lakes. They had a snow blower to clear their drive. We got inside which was cosy and warm. The answer machine on their phone was flashing. Judith answered the myriad messages from family and friends asking if we were safe after our trip over. It was then that we heard of the Lockerbie bombing. Most of the passengers on the plane were from upstate New York, not far from where we were. Judith was able to reassure them all that we were safe. The TV news was very sombre.



On Christmas Eve we were taken (in the car, you couldn't walk in all the snow) to a part of town not too far away. They had a Nativity Scene in their garden with real animals. As we walked up to it, the donkey went over to the manger and looked in the crib. It was wonderful, as if the animals knew.

On New Year's Day we went to Buffalo to watch the 'Ball Game' in minus temperatures. My brother-in-law put antifreeze in the toilet of their recreational vehicle or RV, so that we could use the loo without it freezing. The temperature was always minus something!



I had layers of clothes on, some I had to borrow. I was like the Michelin Man. I could hardly move my limbs I had so much padding on! We watched the game Buffalo Bills v Cincinnati I think. I had no idea what was happening on the pitch but the hot chocolate and brandy went down well! Afterwards we had a picnic in the 'lot' with thousands of other supporters. Crazy but fun.

Happy memories that I will never forget but memories so sad for many others.



Here's wishing you a Happy and Peaceful New Year.....and keep warm.

**Crow rewrites history  
and rights a wrong**

There's a tale to be related  
Regarding Napoleonic wars  
When a poor shipwrecked monkey  
Landed by chance on these shores  
Instead of the warm welcome  
He'd hoped to have found  
He was cruelly mistreated  
Arms and legs tightly bound  
Unable to account for himself  
On being arrested on the beach  
Couldn't answer for his movements  
Simply didn't have the speech  
Though he was an honest chap  
Never known to tell a lie  
The good folk of Hartlepool  
Mistook him for a spy  
Accused of being sent by Boney  
To find out the lie of the land  
They thought they'd caught him bang to rights  
When they nabbed him on the sand  
He was dragged off to the local clink  
Ready to be put on trial  
They would surely find him guilty  
They'd brook no denial  
Monkey unable to defend himself  
Didn't have the lingo  
The kangaroo court found him guilty  
Sentenced to death By Jingo!  
No- one spoke up for him  
Just left him to his fate  
Would there be a rescuer  
Or would it be too late?



Monkey was in a sorry state  
In sore need of a redeemer  
Had never done any harm  
Not even a misdemeanour  
As they made the scaffold ready  
Monkey saw the noose up high  
He gave a terrified shriek  
Though innocent, doomed to die.  
It looked to be all over  
For the woebegone little chap  
He was ashakin' and aquakin'  
In quite a bit of a flap.  
The noose was put around his neck  
Surely the end was near  
The eager crowd drew closer  
They even began to jeer  
But then a long shadow appeared  
Coming from way up high  
Twas Crow to the rescue  
The mob he would defy.  
Crow flew down to monkey  
Sliced the rope placed him on his back  
Away they went together  
Of derring-do Crow had no lack.  
The mob roared their displeasure  
As their prey was borne clean away  
No monkey to be hung  
Not then nor any other day  
So Crow he was the saviour  
Took Monkey back to Belle France  
Feted by all as a hero  
For leading the English a merry dance.  
To Crow Monkey said 'Merci, merci boucoup'  
Crow responded 'Caw'  
They formed a bond of unity  
Blood brothers forevermore

**Roger Say**

**New Year Quiz** *(answers on page 9)*  
Supplied by Jacky Armstrong

1 What is New Year's Eve known as in Scotland

2 To what did the newspaper The Daily Universal Register change its name to on 1st January 1788

3 Which song by Stevie Wonder opens with the line 'No New Year's Day to celebrate'

4 The song 'Auld Lang Syne' is forever associated with the New Year, who wrote the words to this classic

5 Which 'Queen of Disco' was born on New Year's Eve 1948

6 The first entry in whose diary took place on 1st January 1660

7 Which country joined the EEC on 1st January 1981 becoming the tenth member state

8 The author J D Salinger was born on New Year's Day in 1929. What is the title of his most famous novel

9 Which comedian made the UK's first mobile telephone call on 1st January 1985

10 The song 'New Year's Day' gave which group their first UK top ten single in 1983

11 On 1st January 1925 the name of Norway's capital was changed to Oslo. By what name had it previously been known.

12 Which statue was brought to life on New Years Eve in the 1989 movie Ghostbusters 2



# Directory

## List of Committee Members for 2023

### Chair –

Roger Say

### Vice Chair–

Wendy Borthwick

### Secretary –

Phil Jefferies

### Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

### Membership Secretary –

Wendy Borthwick

### Group Co-ordinator –

Pauline Williamson

### 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

## Roles of Non- Committee Members

### Newsletter Editor-

Barry Liddle

### Speaker Organiser –

Jessica Scott

## 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 January 2023.

**Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor**

**Quiz Answers** 1 Hogmanay; 2 The (London) Times; 3 I Just Called to Say I Love You; 4 Robert Burns; 5 Donna Summer; 6 Samuel Pepys; 7 Greece; 8 Catcher in the Rye; 9 Ernie Wise; 10 U2; 11 Kristania (or Christiania); 12 The Statue of Liberty