

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 81, February 2024



Comments from the Chair

I was delighted with such a good turnout for our last meeting where we had Steve Thompson entertaining us with his life as a songwriter. He proved to be very interesting and humorous and the time flew by. Like many of our speakers he came highly recommended by other u3sa. I attend regular meetings with chairs from our region and it proves to be a good forum to exchange ideas and pass on the details of speakers who can be relied upon to inform and entertain us. Recommendations by word of mouth are often the best way to find good speakers.

Our next speaker will be Frances Wilson who has always proved to be a great success and I have no doubt her next talk will be as interesting as ever. This time her talk is entitled 'Victorian Entertainment in the Lynn Street Area'. As a relative newcomer to Hartlepool I am always fascinated to hear more about local history so I am really looking forward to this talk which will take place on February 2nd.

For those of you with online access please don't forget to check out the online events provided each month by national u3a. You can reach their site simply by googling U3a.org and click on Events. This month's Zoom offerings include Mosaic Arts, Mindfulness and Meditation, and the role of housing options in later life. You may also remember Dr Bob Pullen who gave us a talk about secrets of the human brain and he will be disclosing more secrets in a series of talks starting on the 24th of January. I will definitely be attending the laughter workshop on the 30th of the month. After all, our motto is Live, Learn, Laugh.

Take care everybody,

Roger.

Holidays of a Lifetime

Cliff Cordiner

Our editor Barry Liddle recently asked if members would contribute to a new column in the Newsletter entitled 'Holidays of a Lifetime.' Not as easy as it sounds. My wife and I were fortunate enough to visit many places. Our aim was always to learn more about the country and its culture, and to see the world as they see it, and to find out what they think of us and the rest of the world. Seeing the real people and places makes you see them in a different light and certainly opens your eyes. We have visited such places as India, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, China, Japan, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Russia, as well as the usual destinations throughout Europe. All memorable for different reasons. Anyway, here is my contribution.

First Holiday

As a child we didn't really go away on holiday other than to visit family in other parts of the country. I suppose the first proper holiday I had was our honeymoon. We went to Stratford for a week, quite modest by today's standards, and visited all of the Shakespeare attractions. This was also when I went to my first professional production of a Shakespeare play - Midsummer Night's Dream. Appropriate really as it was mid-summer. The following year we went to Yugoslavia and were fascinated by the so called "human fish" in the caves at Postojna and saw a dazzling display of the famous Lippzanner horses. Did you know that they are actually born black? This was our first ever trip abroad and the start of our thirst for travel.

Best holiday

This is really difficult as travel was something we loved, and we were fortunate enough to visit many places. Our aim was always to learn more about the country, its culture, and see the world from their point of view which was often different to ours. We visited such places as India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, China, Japan, and Russia, as well as the usual destinations throughout Europe. All memorable for different reasons.

If I had to pick one out as the best, it would be none of those. We had tried a number of times to see the Northern Lights. In fact in my wife's case you could say it was a bit of an obsession. In 2019 we learnt that it was possible to visit the Aurora Observatory up in the Arctic circle, so off we went. Our days were spent waiting for the night! Although we spent some time travelling around Senja Island marvelling at the spectacular Arctic scenery, and I did a crash course in Astro Photography. When night came we were not disappointed and had the most wonderfully moving experience that no words can describe.



Worst Holiday

No contest here. Without doubt the worst holiday we ever had was at Butlin's in Skegness. Our children were very young at the time so it seemed like a good idea. Certainly there was plenty for them to do and they were well entertained. Unfortunately the accommodation was the worst we had ever experienced. Needless to say we never went to Butlin's again and couldn't get out fast enough!

Last Holiday

The last holiday we had was a trip to Japan in 2019 to celebrate my retirement. Everything about the trip was perfect. The hotels we stayed in, some of which were traditional Japanese hotels, and the food were fabulous. We experienced the contrasts of the horrors of Hiroshima to modern Japan and the bullet train, as well as many of the old traditions, taking part in a tea ceremony. The people we travelled with were great company throughout, and we celebrated my retirement by treating them all to a night in a Japanese Karaoke club, much to the amusement of our guide Mimi who declared that she had never experienced a group like us in her many years as a tour guide. I think she meant it in a good way! We did draw the line at Sumo wrestling though.



Fantasy Holiday

This is really difficult as we have been very fortunate to be able to visit and experience many places, but a few years ago a friend of mine visited the Large Hadron Collider at Meyrin in Switzerland, otherwise known as CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire). I have had a long fascination with physics and would love to go there. It is amazing to think that the first particle accelerator was installed in 1957, before the days of computers and digital cameras.

A Journey Through the Backroads of Our Shared Cuisine

Barry Liddle

We have all benefited from a revolution in the quality of food since the Second World War. But over the years some traditional foods and meals have gone out of fashion, some are best left in the past, but others might be due for a revival. This is my personal journey (in no particular order) through the backroads of our shared cuisine - both good and bad.

Dripping on Toast. Pork or beef dripping on toast was a taste that I never really acquired. However, it was much appreciated by many people. We had a family friend who timed his visits to appreciate this particular delicacy. My mam liked marmalade on fried bread, but that is another story.

Pease Pudding and Duck. I remember as a youngster taking a bowl and a plate lid to the local butchers to buy freshly made pease pudding and duck to take home while it was still warm. The ducks were made from offal, but it is best not to investigate too closely for the list of ingredients.

Mixed Grill. If you were eating out in the 1950s, a rare event for most people, then a nice 'mixed grill' might have been at the top of your list. Ingredients varied but centred around a cutlet of steak, lamb or pig's kidney, mushrooms, rasher of bacon, sausage, piece of lamb or calves liver and halved tomatoes. The thought of all that meat on one plate would be off-putting to many today, but back in the fifties and early sixties after years of rationing and austerity it was just the ticket.

Things on Sticks. There was a time when party food meant having 'things on cocktail sticks' such as cubes of cheddar cheese & tinned pineapple or little sausages. I was never really a fan myself, but I am guilty of having eaten quit a few over the years.

Spam Fritters. As a schoolboy I was lucky enough to be selected to play rugby for Durham County and after most games we used to have a nice meal. However, after one particular game, we ended up in a cold and empty school canteen with deep-fried Spam Fritters and Chips. I can't say I've ever eaten or seen a spam fritter since.

Rabbit. This was a popular alternative to chicken in the 1950/60s. I remember there was less meat and more bones than chicken, but it made a tasty meal when roasted or added to a stew. The last rabbit I saw in a supermarket was in Sainsburys in the late 1980s and that was a frozen import from China.

Beef Tea. When I was a boy, Beef tea was a common homemade food given to anyone with digestive problems or convalescing from illness. It was made from simmering beef and water until it became a thin broth or tea.

Tripe. This was something we had for tea on Saturdays in the 1960s, bought from the old indoor market in Lynn Street. It was eaten with lashings of malt vinegar and slices of bread

and butter. I once had a rugby coach who favoured tripe and onion sandwiches on the return journeys from away matches.

Whitebait. The first time I came across whitebait was in 1974. I was a young researcher at the time and those running the research project had some left-over funds, so we headed to a country pub for a slap-up lunch. For those unfamiliar with whitebait, like me in 1974, they are tiny fish dusted in seasoned flour and deep-fried whole - heads and everything.

Stuffed Marrow. We used to have them cut in half, de-seeded and then stuffed with savoury minced beef and baked in the oven. It was something about the texture of the marrow that I was not very keen on and the same can be said about aubergines – but thankfully they don't grow in Hartlepool.

Brawn I don't think I've ever eaten brawn, if I have then I must have cast the memory to the deepest recesses of my memory. There are I believe various recipes but most include a pig's head or several trotters to give the brawn its gelatinous quality and possibly some beef stewing meat. A former colleague who grew up in one of the most deprived parts of Liverpool said that they only had decent meat on better days than Sundays. But they did have brawn regularly, which they grew to love. It was thinly sliced and then placed over a plate of steaming hot chips so that the jelly melted and the chips were left speckled with tiny bits of meat.

Carnation Milk and Tinned Peaches. Whenever we had a meal at my grandparents, the dessert on offer was always Carnation Milk and tinned peaches. A can of peaches had to stretch between 4 adults and 2 children so it was eaten with bread and butter to make it go further.

Roast Chestnuts. In the 1950s/60s we used to roast chestnuts on top of the fire hearth in the winter months. Something that is difficult to do nowadays with gas central heating!

Sago, Semolina and Tapioca. Known to everyone who stayed for school dinners.

Soup and Dumplings. In the winter months a staple meal in our household was a thick soup made with lap of mutton with diced and grated vegetables with dumplings on the top.

Panacalty. Is a type of economical stew originating from this part of the world. There is no definitive recipe, but we made it with sliced potatoes, onions, corned beef and assorted vegetables.

Ragtime. Is a homemade dessert popular in our household when I was growing up – it consisted of a scoop of ice-cream between two digestive biscuits.

Lemonade and Ice-Cream. I remember a popular treat for children was a scoop of ice-cream in a glass of lemonade. I can't remember the name of the café we visited for this, could it have been a Wimpy Bar?

Notice Board

QUIZ GROUP

If you wait long enough, it will happen. We have been patient and it has happened. A team from Hartlepool won the quiz on Tuesday 16th January. Well done that team, who were the worth winners of the new trophy.

It was good to see some new faces to the quiz, especially as the weather was 'not good'. I wonder if their extra brain cells had anything to do with the win!

The next quiz is on Tuesday 20th February at 2 pm in the Community Room at the Hub. Please come along and prove that the win was not a fluke. Your Hartlepool u3a quiz group NEEDS YOU!

Jacky Armstrong

New Years Honours List

This year I was expecting at least an OBE for services to whisky consumption and 'World Peace,' but yet again I've missed out. Oh well, there is always next year. Cheers! Barry Liddle

Word of the Month

My word of the month for February is FAUX PAS, which everyone knows means making a social blunder.

Early in my career I was invited to a dinner party by a senior colleague. I turned up in formal attire only to find all the guests casually dressed. A few weeks later there was a cheese and wine reception for all departmental staff and I turned up casually dressed and you guessed it, everyone was in formal attire!

Barry Liddle

Letter to the Editor

'Sending someone to Coventry' means punishing a person by refusing to speak to them. In last month's Newsletter, members were asked if they know the origins of this phrase.

Jennifer Kerridge responds:

This expression may have originated in the old story of soldiers stationed in Coventry who were so unwelcome that the Citizens carried on as if they didn't exist.

Alternatively, that if women talked to the soldiers they were ostracized. Another version comes from the Civil War in England in the 17th century. When captured Roundheads were sent to Coventry, a strongly parliamentary town, they were bound to be ignored.

This would appear to be supported by a passage in Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion' : 'Birmingham, a town so wicked that it had risen upon small parties of the King's men, and killed them or taken them prisoner and sent them to Coventry.'

Photography Group at Hardwick Park. Photographs by Martin Green



A rare photograph of Sheilah Walsh, one of the Photography Groups longest standing members.



A couple of Swans looking for a free lunch followed us as we walked around the lake.



One of the many well-crafted sculptures to be found throughout the park.



Ray Elliston and Barry Liddle visited one of the Parks 'hides' in the hope of photographing a rare bird. Unfortunately, not only were there no rare birds, there were no birds at all!

Hardwick Park, Sedgefield, is a **Visit England accredited country park**, and a great place to visit at any time of the year.

Music for Fun Quiz

Compiled by Barry Liddle

The following are a list of well-known musical groups from the 1950s to the present day, but with one word missing. Your task, should you choose to accept it, is to identify the missing words. Good luck and you will find the answers on page 9.

- 1 Bill Haley & his
- 2 The Dave Clark
- 3 TheBlue Jeans
- 4and the Pacemakers
- 5 TheStones
- 6 Freddy and the
- 7 The Spencer Group
- 8 Emerson, & Palmer
- 9 Pet Boys
- 10 Duran

- 11 Crosby, Stills, and Young
- 12 Dave Dee,, Beaky, Mick & Tich
- 13 Peter, Paul and
- 14 Bonzo Doo-Da Band
- 15 Electric Orchestra
- 16 Manic Preachers
- 17 Spice
- 18 S Club
- 19 The Human
- 20 Bucks

Down Memory Lane

Members of the Original Gardening Group at Blackhall, July 2019



A Slip of the Tongue

Brenda Regan

There are many examples of slips of the tongue which we hear over the years. If you are decorating you may use duck tape, or more correctly duct tape. Grasp the metal has been used instead of grasp the nettle. A teacher I knew who was going to visit relatives told me she was going to Birningham. In a small space someone said there was no room to skin a cat, instead of swing a cat, though either isn't very ethical.

My grandson while 5 years old told me to come and see his daddy's new car, which he said was a Biscovery, instead of Discovery. Children in assembly at school said in the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from eagles." And in the Christmas hymn sang "While Shepards washed their frocks by night."

If someone is not up to the standard it was said, "It doesn't pass the mustard" instead of pass muster. Or if life gets hard you curl up in a feeble position, instead of in a foetal position. Spoonerisms and Malapropisms could be slips of the tongue. William Spooner, a Professor at Oxford University often made slips of the tongue, reversing initial letters of two words. Examples of this are bunny phone, instead of funny bone, a lack of pies instead of a pack of lies, mean as custard instead of keen as mustard, and close the darn door instead of barn door.

Malapropisms are named after a character in the play 'The Rivals' by Richard Sheridan. She referred to monotony as being married to one person, instead of monogamy. Other examples are A rolling stone gathers no moths, instead of moss, an inferior decorator, instead of an interior decorator, and the Sixteenth Chapel instead of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. In Shakespeare's Henry IV part two, there is the phrase indited to dinner, instead of invited to dinner.

Some sweets have been referred to as belly jeans, instead of jelly beans. There's a lamb of leg, and you might shake a tower, instead of take a shower! And slips of the tongue are not the death nail (knell) of English.

So there are numerous examples of slips of the tongue, used in words, phrases and sentences. I hope you have learnt the meaning of more after hearing many!

Answers to the Quiz on Page 8

1 Bill Haley & his Comets; 2 The Dave Clark Five; 3 The Swinging Blue Jeans; 4 Gerry and the Pacemakers; 5 The Rolling Stones; 6 Freddy and the Dreamers; 7 The Spencer Davis Group; 8 Emerson, Lake & Palmer; 9 Pet Shop Boys; 10 Duran Duran; 11 Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; 12 Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Tich; 13 Peter, Paul and Mary; 14 Bonzo Dog Doo-Da Band; 15 Electric Light Orchestra; 16 Manic Street Preachers; 17 Spice Girls; 18 S Club 7; 19 The Human League; 20 Bucks Fizz.

Directory

List of Committee Members for 2023 -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

Copy Wanted for This Newsletter

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

All contributions to the next Newsletter are most welcome.
Copy deadline for the next issue is 20 February 2024.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor