

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 82, March 2024



Comments from the Chair

Good to see so many of you at last month's general meeting and it was great to see three potential new members coming to have a look at us and find out what we are about. So many people get the wrong idea about us and may well be put off by having 'university' in our name. It gives some people the wrong impression about us. One of the best ways of getting new members is by word of mouth and we can all play a part in doing this. I am always available to give talks to any local groups so if you know any who might like to find out more about our own u3a please let me know. I will be talking to one such group

in early March to help raise our profile and attract new members.

Apart from attending quarterly meetings of South Durham chairs I am also in contact with other chairs from all over Britain. We meet on Zoom on a regular basis for an informal discussion about u3a matters. It is good to know that we are all following a similar path in retaining members as well as attracting new members. Word of mouth, local promotions, the number of groups available and speakers for general meetings were at the forefront of this effort. With 116 members at present and 20+ interest groups we are doing pretty well for one of the smaller u3as.

Our speaker for March is going to be Kirsty Flynn from the Alzheimer's Society who will be telling us about the differences between memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's. There will also be an informal question-and-answer session. I look forward to seeing you there. Next month will see the return of the ever-popular Olly Burton. More about that in my next 'Comment'

Take care.

Roger

Membership Renewal 2024

Cliff Cordiner

It's that time of the year again, and preparations for Membership renewal are well underway as we look forward to some of the exciting things we have planned for the coming year.

An email will be sent shortly inviting you to rejoin for those of you who have chosen this form of communication.

Membership renewal via online banking has proved popular and we hope more members will embrace this form of payment. It is the easiest and most secure way to pay. However you can still pay by cheque or cash for those who favour that method of payment.

The good news is that the subscription for 2024 will remain at the current level of £20 (or £16 for Associate Members). Those who wish to pay by cash or cheque can do so at the general meeting on 5th April 2024.

Anyone who wishes to renew by online bank transfer can do so any time after 5th April 2024, please do not make payment by this method before then. If you wish to pay by BACS and do not already do so, let us know and we will email you the relevant bank details.

As you renew your membership please can I remind you to take a few moments to check your contact details and emergency contact and let us know if anything has changed.

Can I also remind you that if you do not already take the u3a magazine "Third Age Matters", now would be a good time to let us know if you would like to subscribe. It is issued quarterly so just let us know your preference as you renew your membership. It is full of useful and informative articles, puzzles, recipes, and exclusive offers for u3a members, and it is FREE.

Interest groups continue to go from strength to strength with several new ones springing up, and our membership numbers are continuing to increase steadily. If you have any suggestions for other new groups you would like to see please let us know.

As well as the exciting things planned here in Hartlepool, don't forget to check out the u3a website to find out about the national and regional events taking place in the coming months. Especially the event at the Royal Navy Museum, and the visit to the Laing Art Gallery later in the year to see the Fighting Temeraire. Whatever your interests there is something for everyone.

Notice Board

Editorial

During recent months there has been a sharp decline in contributions to the Newsletter from both Group Leaders and the wider membership.

The Newsletter was created to inform and entertain and it can only do that with your co-operation and participation.

The deadline for contributions is always the 20th of each month and the editor will happily engage with anyone who has an idea or material for the Newsletter.

Your u3a Needs You!

The days and the weeks will begin to fly by and before we know Hartlepool & District u3a will be holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2024.

The guidelines for running a u3a are that committee members may only serve for a limited time with some provision for extension in unusual circumstances, e.g. Covid. The committee is responsible for how our u3a is managed and run. I am not going to say very much more other than in June this year at our AGM we will be saying 'Goodbye' to some of our committee and if our u3a is to continue we need to replace those who are standing down.

Come and talk to us at one of our monthly General Meetings. Come to one of our Committee Meetings as a guest – we promise to be on our best behaviour.

Wendy Borthwick

My Latin Word of the Month.

At school my French was so bad, learning Latin was completely out of the question, much to my relief at the time. However, in later life I began to take a practical interest in Latin because of my love of gardening. As many of you will know, plants have a common name (which differs from country to country and often between regions within a country) so to facilitate standardisation, research and classification, Latin was adopted as the common language. So my word of the month is **Galanthus**, the Latin name for Snowdrop. These little plants are everywhere now and are one of the first signs of Spring. The plants have a single small white drooping bell shaped flower and the best local places to see them are Greatham and Hawthorn Dene – but hurry, because they soon die back as we enter March.

Barry Liddle

Gardening Group

The Gardening Group's February visit was to the Greatham Hall Snowdrop Afternoon on the 18th of February. The weather was good and twelve of us enjoyed walking around the lovely woodland admiring all the snowdrops, followed by refreshments in the church hall. The following photograph shows some of the members who attended the event.



Programme of Future Events

- The March meeting on Monday 25th will be a return visit to Wynyard Hall gardens which should by then be full of the daffodils and the other spring bulbs that Wynyard are renowned for. We will finish with refreshments in the cafe.
- On Saturday April 27th we are planning a trip to the Harrogate spring flower show with Lees of Durham coaches, 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.

Liz Milbourn

My Word of the Month

I was flicking through the TV channels the other day when I came across an episode of Thunderbirds. This took me back to my younger self in the 1960s. The series featured the Tracy family who formed International Rescue – a secret organisation to save human life. I was fascinated by the 5 different Thunderbird machines:

- Thunderbird 1, a rocket plane
- Thunderbird 2, a green transporter
- Thunderbird 3, a spacecraft
- Thunderbird 4, a yellow submersible
- Thunderbird 5, a space station (definitely ahead of its time)

Combinations of all 5 machines, operated by the 5 Tracey brothers, were deployed in each exciting episode alongside the eccentric supporting cast of Brains, Lady Penelope and her cockney chauffer- Parker.

I didn't realise it at the time but this futuristic programme was made using very old technology – essentially a modified form of marionettes (puppets controlled from above using wires or strings) which the series producers Gerry and Sylvia Anderson called 'Supermarionation'. So my word of the month, for Thunderbird lovers everywhere, is '**Supermarionation**'.

Barry Liddle

3 Unusual Facts About Strawberries.

1. Strawberries are the only fruit to wear their seeds on the outside.
2. Some people can be afraid of strawberries, a phobia called fragariaphobia. This word is derived from the genus strawberries belong to, *Fragaria*, along with phobia, the word for fear.
3. Shaped like hearts, wild strawberries were seen as a symbol of Venus, the goddess of love in ancient Rome.

Various sources including Wikipedia.

Barry Liddle

Who am I?

I was a former teacher, local councillor and Member of Parliament for Hartlepool.

Answer on page 9

Barry Liddle

You Couldn't Make It Up. Roger Say (Creative Writing Group)

Many years ago, I was working in a place called Yanbu which is on the western coast of Saudi Arabia. Two of my colleagues and myself shared a car which we used to get to work and back. This would have been in 1997 when the driving in that part of the country was hair - raising to say the least. One day we were driving along with cars flying by on either side of us as normal when we astounded to see one driver who was driving along reading his newspaper. He was obviously engrossed and not even looking at the road! You really couldn't make it up.

On a lighter note, we used to drive the short distance to the Red Sea to go snorkelling. There are coral reefs quite close to the shore in Yanbu and the first time we went there we were very excited as we did not know what to expect. We swam out about fifty yards till we reached the first coral reef. Looking down we saw an amazing number of brightly coloured fish. If I hadn't seen them with my own eyes, I would have not believed that stunning sight. It was as magical as if an artist with a vivid imagination had painted them and could not exist in real life. You have to see them to believe it! You couldn't make it up!

Back home I feed the birds who visit our small garden on the headland. Living right on the coast you would not expect to see too many different varieties of garden birds, but I have seen blue tits, dunnocks, blackbirds and goldfinches on my feeders as well as the local sparrows and feral pigeons. One male blackbird became a regular visitor and was particularly fond of sultanas. He was very cheeky and almost demanded to be fed, although he was not tame. One day we were sitting in our living room when we heard a scratching noise in the hall. We were about to investigate when lo and behold there appeared around the door the blackbird. He did not make any noise and did not make any mess, but the message was clear: Where are my sultanas?

Honestly, you couldn't make it up!

Returning home recently I was about to climb out of my car when I group of goldfinches landed in the garden. I have seen many gold finches but never at close range. The colours are extraordinary with a bright red, white and black face, gold wing patch, pinky brown legs and black tail with white markings. Stunning. You really couldn't make it up!

Dancing for Fun Quiz

Compiled by Barry Liddle

- Q1 Craig Revel Horwood is best known as a judge on which TV dance show?
- Q2 Who was Fred Astaire's most memorable dance partner?
- Q3 Set in County Durham during the 1984-75 miner's strike, this film is about a working-class boy who discovers a passion for ballet. What is the name of the film?
- Q4 Who was the leading male dancer in the films Grease and Saturday Night Fever?
- Q5 Which group wrote the song Dancing Queen?
- Q6 Which traditional Irish dance group became well known for their performance as an 'interval act' during the Eurovision Song Contest 1994?
- Q7 The comedian Max Wall was known for a certain type of dancing. What is it called?
- Q8 There was a famous song and dance called the Locomotion. Who was the first artist to record it in 1962?
- Q9 He became famous as an innovative choreographer for Broadway musicals including the legendary West Side Story. Who was he?
- Q10 Which American swing dance band formed in 1938 had 'Moonlight Serenade' as their signature tune?
- Q11 Who was the star, director and choreographer of the 1952 film, Singin' in the Rain?
- Q12 What do we call English folk dancers dressed in white who wield sticks, swords and handkerchiefs as part of their rhythmic stepping.
- Q13 Which country is most commonly associated with the Tango?
- Q14 What would you call a female ballet dancers costume consisting of a bodice and an attached skirt incorporating numerous layers of fabric?
- Q15 Who was the male star of the film 'Dirty Dancing'?
- Q16 Can you name the 19th Century dance made famous within the walls of the Moulin Rouge in Paris?
- Q17 Which Spanish dance is known for its emotional intensity, proud carriage, expressive use of arms and rhythmic stamping of the feet?
- Q18 One of these three is the name of a famous ballet. Which is the right answer, is it; a) The Nut Roast, b) The Nut Reel or c) The Nutcracker?
- Q19 Which famous male ballet star spent his early life in Hartlepool and attended Baltic Street Junior School?
- Q20 In 1978, the American disco group Village People created a dance which spells out the four letters of their hit song. What was the song called?

Answers on Page 9

Memories of Playing Cricket

Barry Liddle

I've been recording the India v England cricket test matches on TV recently because the programme starts at 3.30am our time. I then watch the match 'as live' when I get up. It has been hugely enjoyable and has reminded me how much I enjoyed playing the game myself. I was next to useless as a player, but that did not stop me from having an enjoyable time playing 'social' cricket as a short-sighted batsman and an unspinning spin bowler.

Cricket in the Backstreet

From the age of 5 until 11 our gang played in the backstreet after school and at weekends using one set of stumps made by my grandad, my cousin's old bat and a tennis ball. The brick paved floor ensured uneven bounce so the ball was difficult to hit and because there was no umpire and everyone wanted to bat, innings were very short. If you stood your ground when called out lbw, you had to reverse the bat, hit the next ball with the handle and score a run – failure to do so and you were out. If my cousin was given out – he frequently took his bat home.

Cricket at School.

At the Brinkburn Grammar School I was the sort of batsman who rarely troubled the scorers. My one and only stand out moment was against Henry Smith's Grammar School, incidentally the one and only time we ever played at Park Drive, when I hit several consecutive high scoring shots in one memorable over. I think I might even have run a four because the boundary was so far away I couldn't see it!

Cricket at Leicester Polytechnic.

In 1978, with a few friends, we formed a staff cricket team to play friendly 20 over matches against staff teams from local schools and companies. The emphasis was on fun and inclusion, with everyone having opportunities to both bat and bowl. The batting side would also provide the umpires from within their team, and despite not knowing all the rules, it did not stop me giving the occasional batsman out with all the authority of a Dicky Bird! Three things stand out in my memory; (1) We only had one box which all eleven players used – surely a health hazard! (2) One of our best batsman – a high Anglian, could never bring himself to swear if incorrectly given out – but occasionally we heard him mutter 'Blood and Sand! as he returned to the boundary' and (3) We all enjoyed a beer or two after the game in the student bar and our skipper, a keen cyclist, was often seen wobbling away down the drive after matches. On one particular occasion, he got on his bike, sat motionless for some considerable time, then in slow motion fell to his left until parallel with the floor – his feet still clipped to the pedals.

Cricket at Exeter University.

I was asked to open the batting for a staff v students match at Exeter and hit a classic cover drive for two runs off the first ball. There was applause from my team mates and expectations of a good start. However, I didn't hit another run but worse than that, I stuck around for

several overs without ever scoring another run, whilst all the time reducing our chances of winning.

Cricket for Devon Certified Accountants.

A colleague of mine who was a Lecturer in Accountancy at Exeter University invited me down to Taunton to play for Devon Certified Accountants. Not being an accountant, I was technically a 'Ringer'. 'Ringers' are usually brought in from outside the group because they are very good, in my case it was because they were struggling to field a side. However, nobody seemed to mind, we all had a great time and our opponents the Taunton Cider Company generously provided our dressing room with a couple of crates of cider. I must admit I had a couple of glasses or more before going out to bat, that is probably why I still can't remember my score or who won the match.

Dancing for Fun Quiz Answers from Page 7

Q1 Craig Revel Horwood is best known as a judge on which TV dance show? A. Strictly Come Dancing

Q2 Who was Fred Astaire's most memorable dance partner? A. Ginger Rogers

Q3 Set in County Durham during the 1984-75 miner's strike, this film is about a working-class boy who discovers a passion for ballet. What is the name of the film? A. Billy Elliot.

Q4 Who was the leading male dancer in the films Grease and Saturday Night Fever? A John Travolta

Q5 Which group wrote the song Dancing Queen? A. ABBA

Q6 Which traditional Irish dance group became well known for their performance as an 'interval act' during the Eurovision Song Contest 1994? A. Riverdance

Q7 The comedian Max Wall was known for a certain type of dancing. What is it called? A. Eccentric Dance

Q8 There was a famous song and dance called the Locomotion. Who was the first artist to record it in 1962? A Little Eva

Q9 He became famous as an innovative choreographer for Broadway musicals including the legendary West Side Story. Who was he? A. Jerome Robbins

Q10 Which American swing dance band formed in 1938 had 'Moonlight Serenade' as their signature tune? A. Glenn Miller and His Orchestra Moonlight

Q11 Who was the star, director and choreographer of the 1952 film, Singin' in the Rain? A. Gene Kelly

Q12 What do we call English folk dancers dressed in white who wield sticks, swords and handkerchiefs as part of their rhythmic stepping. A. Morris Dancers

Q13 Which country is most commonly associated with the Tango? A. Argentina

Q14 What would you call a female ballet dancers costume consisting of a bodice and an attached skirt incorporating numerous layers of fabric? A. Tutu

Q15 Who was the male star of the film 'Dirty Dancing'? A. Patrick Swayze

Q16 Can you name the 19th Century dance made famous within the walls of the Moulin Rouge in Paris? A. Cancan

Q17 Which Spanish dance is known for its emotional intensity, proud carriage, expressive use of arms and rhythmic stamping of the feet? A. Flamenco

Q18 One of these three is the name of a famous ballet. Which is the right answer is it; a) The Nut Roast, b) The Nut Reel or c) The Nutcracker? A. c) The Nutcracker

Q19 Which famous male ballet star spent his early life in Hartlepool and attended Baltic Street Junior School? A. Wayne Sleep.

Q20 In 1978, the American disco group Village People created a dance which spells out the four letters of their hit song. What was the song called? A. YMCA

*The answer to 'Who am I' from page 5,
is Ted Leadbitter.*

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

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 March 2024.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor