

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 84, May 2024



Comments from the Chair

On a recent walk with the Natural History Group to RSPB Salthome it was suggested that everybody on that visit should think of a word or two to describe their visit. It could be the name of an animal or bird they had seen, the weather or refreshments in the café. I was then asked to write a poem made up of these suggestions. My initial response was one of trepidation. My second response was to decline. My final response was that I would give it a go, but I could make no promise that I could create one before the deadline for this Newsletter. If you leaf through this Newsletter you will see that a poem did indeed emerge. If you read the poem you will see that the author is 'The Natural History Group'

rather than myself. This is because it is a collaboration between the members of the group.

This is what our u3a is all about. We get together and pool our resources. We all have something to offer, whether it be joining the committee, starting a new group, becoming a group leader, helping with the refreshments or helping to tidy up after our general meetings. The strength of any organisation is the sum of all its parts.

Speaking of general meetings our next speakers will be Andy Hampson and Kelly Close from the North East Regional Organised Crime Unit. They came last year and gave us useful information about how to avoid scams and Fraud Prevention in general. They were a great success and will be giving us more advice and helpful tips this time around. Not to be missed!

Meanwhile

Take care everybody.

Roger

Natural History Group Visit to Saltholme

Introduction

We were lucky that it wasn't raining today, just overcast. Barry Hayton joined us to take some stunning photos of some of the things that we saw on the way from the car park, in the garden and hide. We finished our walk with the usual refreshments in the cafe for a good chat and a laugh.

All are welcome to join us on our next walk at Crimdon Dene on the 2nd of May at 1.30 outside of the cafe.

Irene Archer



Chiffchaff. © Barry Hayton



Reed Bunting © Barry Hayton

Poem - Afternoon at Saltholme

Nine intrepid walkers from
Natural History group
On sojourn to
RSPB Saltholme
Canada Geese flocking in field
Mallards idling on riverbank
Advance to hide
Rose coloured swan claimed
By short-sighted member
Doubtless seen
Through rose coloured glasses
Avocets with upward curving beaks
Contrasting with curlews
Whose beaks curve downwards
Lone egret retreating
Harassed by black - headed gulls
Newt pond bringing back
Childhood memories
Though no newts
Not even mute newts
To be seen today
Breathe in fresh air
Retreat to café
For refreshments
Tea, coffee, hot chocolate
Cheesecakes and teacakes
Another day of
Learning, Living, Laughing

The Natural History Group



Little Egret © Barry Hayton



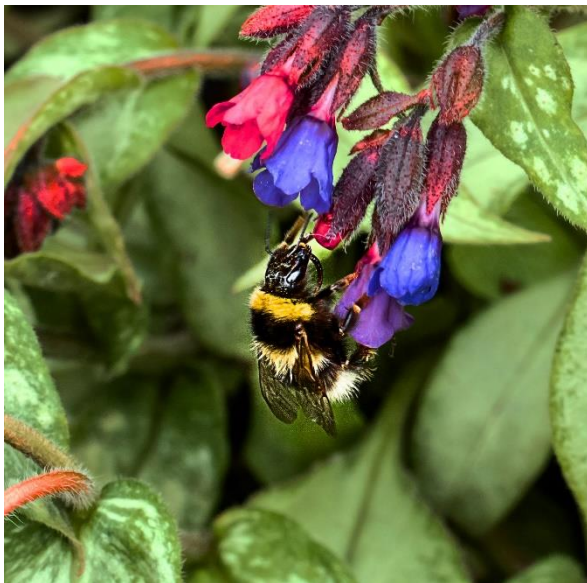
Black Headed Gull © Barry Hayton



Willow Arch near the car park. © Barry Hayton



Marsh Marigold © Barry Hayton



Bumble Bee on Pulmonaria © Barry Hayton



View of the Transporter bridge from a hide. © Barry Hayton

Notice Board

u3a Membership Reminder 2024

If you have not yet renewed your membership, don't forget that you can still pay your subs at the forthcoming monthly meeting on Friday, 3rd May, 2024.

Payment can be made at the meeting by cash or cheque. Please make cheques payable to "Hartlepool and District u3a". Alternatively you can still renew by online bank transfer. If you wish to pay by BACS and do not already do so, let us know and we will email you the bank details. Please remember to put your name in the reference field so we know who the money has come from. The subscription for 2024 is £20.

In any event, please can you renew your membership by no later than 17th May. After that your membership will lapse in accordance with our constitution. This means you will no longer be able to take part in any of our interest groups or attend any of our meetings. You will also lose any u3a benefits and discount schemes you may have signed up to.

I hope you will renew your membership and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Cliff Cordiner, Treasurer

Music Group

Please note that the Music Group has been suspended for the foreseeable future due to Steve's health problems.

Pauline Williams Group Co-ordinator

COFFEE AND CHAT GROUP

The next Coffee and Chat is on Monday 6th May at 1030 in the Golden Lion in Dunston Road. This is May Day, but it is difficult moving it to another day.

Jacky Armstrong

Backgammon Group

The **Backgammon** group will be starting shortly on a Tuesday afternoon after the venue has been sorted out.

Could the members interested in the backgammon group please bring their own backgammon sets along with them or perhaps if they haven't got one, they could possibly beg, steal or borrow a set and if all else fails there's eBay!

Pauline Williams Group Co-ordinator

New Photography Group

A new Photography Group is planned to start on 13th May and every 2nd Monday on the month at the People's Centre at 2pm. This will complement and not replace the existing Photography for Fun Group.

Pauline Williams Group Co-ordinator

HE QUIZ GROUP

On Tuesday 16th April the quiz group met in the Community Room at the Hub it was a quiz with a difference. The quizmaster (me) forgot to bring the answers for the round 'People Who Are Linked'. So urgent attention was needed. Everyone was given 20 points. (Yes, it should have been 21 points! Not my day!)

Once again a Hartlepool team were victorious but Stockton was snapping on their heels. So, the u3a shopping trolley token remains in the Hartlepool camp. The next quiz is Tuesday 21st May. I have been given the sack, so the quizmaster for May will be John.

Here is the round and the answers.

1 A&C 2 C&C 3 A&E 4 B&B 5 B&C 6 F&S 7 J&J 8 J&M 9 L&H 10 L&L 11 M&W 12 T&J 13 V&A 14 W&M 15 W&C 16 R&R 17 S&D 18 W&G 19 P&P 20 J&H 21 S&G

ANSWERS

1 Anthony and Cleopatra 2 Charles and Camilla 3 Adam and Eve 4 Bogart and Bacall 5 Bonnie and Clyde 6 Fiona and Shreck 7 Jack and Jill, Jackie and John Kennedy, June Carter and Jonnie Cash 8 Joseph and Mary 9 Lauren and Hardy 10 Little and Large 11 Morecambe and Wise 12 Tarzan and Jane 13 Victoria and Albert 14 William and Mary 15 William and Catherine 16 Romulus and Remus 17 Samson and Delilah 18 Wallace and Grommit 19 Pinky and Perky, Peter and Paul (two little Dickie birds) 20 Jeckyl and Hyde 21 Simon and Garfunkel

Jacky Armstrong

My Word of the Month

My word of the month is **Mangelwurzel**. I've chosen it for no other reason that it brings a smile to my face every time I say it out loud. Despite it being a fun word, you are unlikely to use in everyday conversation (unless you are friends with cattle farmers) because it describes a variety of beet used as cattle food! The humour of the word reminds me of a comedy pop group from rural Somerset called **The Wurzels**, who had several hits in the 1970s including, 'The Combined Harvester' and 'I am a Cider Drinker'. Having made this loose connection I wondered if there was a link between them and to my great delight I discovered there was - the founder of 'The Wurzels' Adge Cutler had derived their name from the word Mangelwurzel and their style of music was often called 'Scrumpy and Western' after the group's first EP of the same name, issued in 1967.

Barry Liddle.

Letter to the Editor

Phil Jefferies writes...On the subject of palindromes (Word of the Month in April's Newsletter) ...

The longest one I know that is fully palindromic is something Napoleon might have said in 1814 (had he spoken English rather than French) on arriving at the island of Elba for his exile:

Able was I ere I saw Elba.

Editor's note: A palindrome is a word, phrase or sentence that reads the same backwards as forwards.

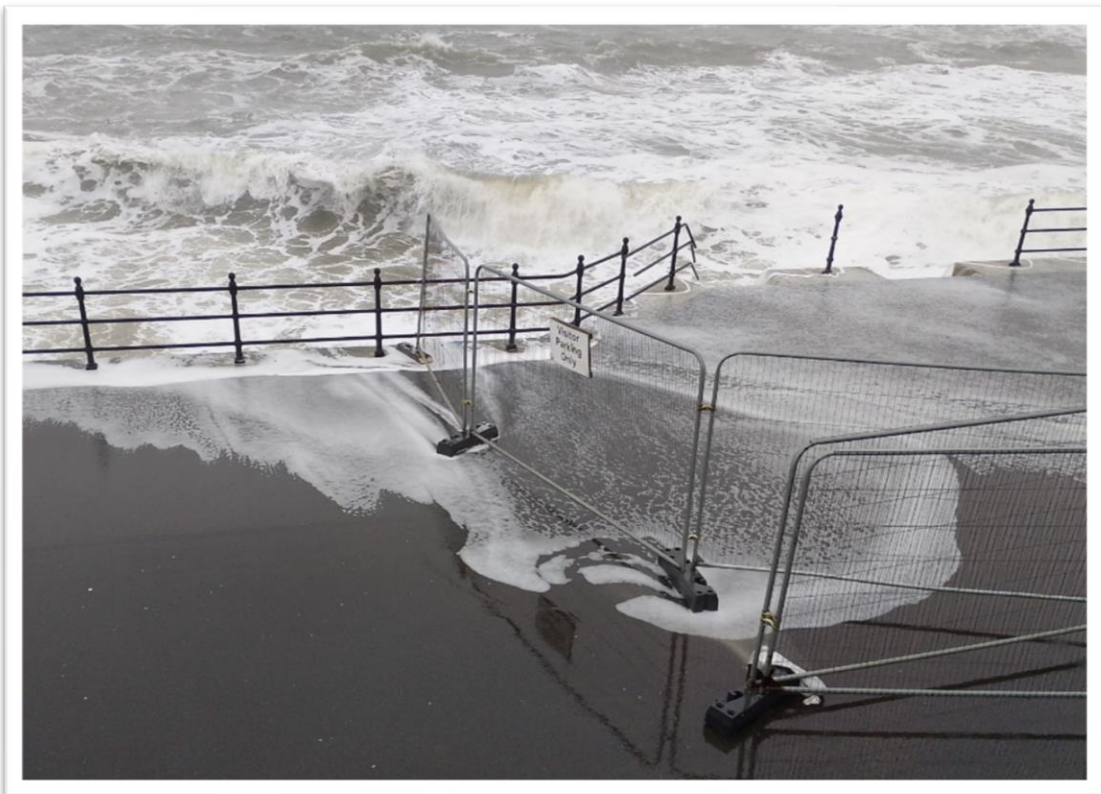
My Greek Word of the Month.

Not being a Greek speaker does not stop me from offering you an ancient Greek 'Word of the Month', which is Eureka (Heureka).

Have you ever searched the whole house looking for something and then just as despair sets in you find it. That is your Eureka (Heureka) moment, literally meaning 'I have found it'!

Barry Liddle

Ray Elliston's Photographs
of This Year's Destructive High Spring Tide.



© Ray Elliston

Weather Brenda Regan

Wherever and whenever people meet the iconic topic of conversation is often the weather. Over the last year storms have raged over the UK, with names from Agnes to the latest one, Kathleen. The poet Thomas Hardy, speaking of Spring wrote –

“This is the weather the cuckoo likes and so do I,

When showers betumble the chestnut spikes and nestlings fly”.

We can never be sure about the weather. I remember once seeing snow in June, and a sunny day in December, dry enough to mow the lawns.

There are daily forecasts on the T.V. and in the newspapers – that is how important the weather is to us. March this year was warm and wet, now April has brought floods to many parts of the country.

Talking about the weather has been ongoing for centuries. Shakespeare wrote’

“Fear no more the heat o’ the sun nor the furious winter’s rages”

The poem is from Cymbeline, and also speaks of thunder and lightning.

Extreme drought in Syria, Iraq and Iran since 2020 has led to food and water shortages, affecting millions of people, caused by climate change – which is caused by humans.

In Ancient Greece Zeus was the God of the weather, connected with lightning and thunder, rain and wind, while Jupiter was the Roman god of rain and thunder.

During the last two decades severe weather has sunk more than 200 supertankers and container ships over 200 metres in length.

One thing we know for certain – we can never be sure what next day’s weather will bring, whatever the season.

The storms have had a devastating effect on most farms and farmers. On crops and animal feed, which will impact on the price of food.

Whatever the weather may bring, remember the old adage-

“Cast not a clout ere May is out!”

Visiting The Isle of Man

Jacky Armstrong

When I tell people I have been over to the Isle of Man, they say TT and cats with no tails. Yes, true, but that's not all.

The Isle of Man, or Ellen Vannin in Manx, is 32 miles long and 14 miles wide with a population of 84 thousand. That's less than Hartlepool. Most people live in towns or villages around the coast as inland is very hilly and mountainous. The highest mountain is Snaefell at over 2,000 feet. You can access the peak on the mountain railway when, on a good day, they say you can see six kingdoms, Man, Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales and heaven.

The ancient capital was Castletown but it is now Douglas.



The Vikings set up Tynwald, the parliament on the Island, which is still sitting today. Originally, in the 8th century this was held at St John's on a mound which looks like a big grass tiered wedding cake. Tynwald meets once a year on this original site. Now the parliament building is in Douglas. On the National Day in July the Head of State, The Lord of Man, now King Charles, may be present. Tynwald is enveloped in a canopy where the Lord of Man, dignitaries and commissioners' parade from the Church to Tynwald to hear what is going to happen in the coming year. The members of Tynwald are known as commissioners. The Island is self-governing except for defence. The British Monarch (The Lord of Man) is represented by the Lieutenant Governor who lives on the Island.

On my last visit to family in March, Queen Camilla came to present Douglas with its title of City of Douglas, which was conferred by Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee. The document contains the signature of Queen Elizabeth and King Charles. As neither were able to visit Queen Camilla came. The Queen was very popular making a beeline for young children and even allowing selfies to be taken. The hospital in Douglas had to have a suite of rooms available for HM just in case something unforeseen happened. I did see the police lifting the heavy metal covers of sewers, water mains etc to make sure everything was safe.



Motorbike stickers.

The TT is at the end of May for 2 weeks when the Island is filled with motorbike enthusiasts. They are either watching the practise races, the real races, tinkering with motorbikes or looking at motorbikes of every make, cc, size and colour. The TT route goes from Douglas into the mountains on ordinary roads. Many walls, trees, lamp standards and corners are padded at race time in case of accidents. Another big race is the Southern Hundred later in the year which is equally as popular.



Flowers on the mountain



Wild fuchsia

The Island is very beautiful with masses of wild primroses, cowslips, bluebells, honeysuckle, wild fuchsia and hydrangeas of every colour in the hedgerows at various times of the year. The mountains are covered in gorse and heather.

The Island has many millionaires living there. The chap who devised the switch off kettle lives in a 15-million-pound round house, which is for sale if you are interested. An ordinary street house will cost you over Â£200,000. A luxury apartment with a sea view maybe more than Â£1 million. It is known as a tax haven. The main occupation is working in Insurance. There are huge offices of many insurance companies in Douglas and Castletown.

Tourism is very popular, usually starting in March. The coaches, cars and motorbikes come into Douglas by ferry from Heysham or on the 'FastCat' from Liverpool. The Irish Sea has a nasty habit of being rough so I usually fly from Manchester to Ronaldsway (near Castletown), which takes about 25 minutes in the air. Manchester is the nearest flight for us. There is nothing from the North East. The coaches usually visit Peel where the Vikings landed and Laxey with the Lady Isabella wheel that pumped the water out of the lead mine. Many take a ride on the little steam trains from Douglas to Port Erin, the horse drawn trams in Douglas or the electric tram up the mountain. The seafront at Douglas caters for the tourists with many good quality hotels and restaurants and two theatres. It is good to walk along the prom and see the Bee Gees statue of the boys who were born and lived in the Isle of Man before going to Australia, and Norman Wisdom who made the Island his home.

The Isle of Man is not the place to take young families as, other than the beaches and the little trains, there is very little for them. For us, more mature folk, it is a wonderful place to visit. It's a bit like a big village with friendly people, beauty and lots of relaxing things to do. And don't forget to say hello to the fairies at Fairy Bridge. Even Camilla did so.

I will be back soon!

The Travel Quiz

Compiled by Barry Liddle

Q1 If you travel to Barry Island, your country of destination would be:

a England; b Ireland; c Scotland; d Wales.

Q2 All the following are popular Spanish resorts except one. Which is the odd one out?

a Costa del Sol; b Costa Brava; c Costa Blanca; d Costa Dorado; e Costa Rica.

Q3 If you were to travel through the Benelux countries your journey would include:

a Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.
b Belgium, the Netherlands and France
c Belgium the Netherlands, France and Luxembourg.

Q4 Who is the patron saint of travellers?

a Saint Patrick; b Saint Christopher; c Saint Francis of Assisi

Q5 Which London Railway Station is best for travelling to destinations in Wales?

a Kings Cross; b Waterloo; c Victoria; d Paddington.

Q6 If you wanted to see the work of the famous Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi, which city would you visit?

a Barcelona; b Madrid; c Seville; d Toledo.

Q7 In which County would you find the English Riviera?

a Devon; b Kent; c Dorset; d Cornwall.

Q8 If you travel to France to visit the city that created the spicy fish soup known as Bouillabaisse, where would you go?

a Paris; b Bordeaux; c Marseille; d Nice.

Q9 Starting your journey in Hartlepool, which of these cities is furthest south?

a Bradford; b Leeds; c Hull; d Manchester; e York.

Q10 In which country would you find the popular tourist destination known as the Algarve?

a Italy; b Spain; c Portugal; d Greece.

Q11 The shortest route by car between Land's End and John O'Groats is a distance of:

- a) 637 miles; b 737 miles; c 837 miles.

Q11 Gibraltar has been a symbol of British naval strength for many years and it is commonly known in that context as:

- a Little England; b the Rock; the Gib.

Q12 Travelling to the Mediterranean, how would you describe the climate?

- a Hot dry summers and mild moist winters
b Hot dry summers and cold moist winters
c Warm dry summers and mild moist winters

Q13 If you were travelling to Cornwall to visit the home of TV chef and restaurateur Rick Stein, what would be your destination?

- a Padstow; b Penryn; c Penzance; d Porthleven.

Q14 The Oresund Bridge is a combined railway and motorway bridge between Denmark and Sweden, connecting which two locations?

- a Helsingor - Helsingborg
b Copenhagen – Malmö
c Copenhagen – Stockholm

Q15 The former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson was known for taking his holidays in:

- a Isle of Man; b The Channel Islands; c Isles of Scilly; d Isle of Wight.

Q16 If you were travelling from John Lennon Airport to Schiphol Airport, your journey would be between which two cities?

- a Liverpool and Amsterdam; b Liverpool and Budapest; c Liverpool and Vienna.

Q17 In which English county would you find the popular sea-side resort of Skegness?

- a Cheshire; b Kent; c Lincolnshire; d Norfolk; e Sussex.

Q18 Where does the famous American Route 66 start and end?

- a Chicago to Santa Monica, California
b New York to Santa Monica, California
c Washington to Santa Monica, California

Q19 If you travelled from Hartlepool to see the world famous prehistoric megalithic structure called Stonehenge. What would be your destination?

- a The Fens in East Anglia
- b Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire
- c The Somerset levels

Q20 There are over 280 mountains in Scotland over 3000 feet, people travel from far and wide to climb them, collectively they are known as:

- a The Glens; b the Argyles; c the Munros; c the Stuarts; d the Tartans.

Q21 There is a network of pilgrimage routes in Spain leading to the tomb of the Apostle James in Santiago de Compostela. What are the symbols used along the routes to guide walkers?

- a The Cross; the outline of a shoe or sandal; c Scallop shells.

Q22 Originally advertised as 'the only way to travel', the Blackpool Trams cover a line stretching 12 miles from Star Gate to:

- a Fleetwood Ferry; b Lytham St Annes; c Kirkham.

Q23 If you visit New York you will see the world-famous Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and the Flatiron Building. But in which 'borough' are they located?

- a Brooklyn; b Manhattan; c Queens; d Staten Island; e The Bronx

Q24 All the following are Pontins Holiday camps, except one, which is operated by rival company Butlins. So which is the Butlins camp?

- a Pakefield in Suffolk; b Sandy Bay in Weston-super- Mare; c Brean Sands in Somerset; d Minehead in Somerset.

Q25 Chile is a long narrow country in South America, well known for its Pacific Ocean coastline. But what is the capital city?

- a Bogota; b Buenos Aires; c Lima; d Sao Paulo; e Santiago.

Answers to The Travel Quiz at the Bottom of page 13

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

Next Newsletter

Contributions to the next Newsletter are most welcome.
Copy deadline for the next issue is 20 May 2024.

Answers to Travel Quiz

Q1 d Wales. **Q2** e Costa Rica. **Q3** a Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. **Q4** b Saint Christopher; **Q5** d Paddington; **Q6** a Barcelona; **Q7** a Devon; **Q8** c Marseille; **Q9** d Manchester; **Q10** c Portugal; **Q11** c 837 miles; **Q11** b the Rock; **Q12** a Hot dry summers and mild moist winters **Q13** a Padstow; **Q14** b Copenhagen – Malmo; **Q15** c Isles of Scilly; **Q16** a Liverpool and Amsterdam; **Q17** c Lincolnshire; **Q18** a Chicago to Santa Monica, California; **Q19** b Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire **Q20** c the Munros; **Q21** c Scallop shells. **Q22** a Fleetwood Ferry; **Q23** b Manhattan; **Q24** d Minehead in Somerset. **Q25** e Santiago.