

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 88, September 2024



Comments from the Chair

We are all aware of the saying 'How time flies' but it seems particularly true this year. After a miserable spring, summer finally appeared only for September (and autumn) already on the horizon. The only time when time does not appear to fly is during those long dreary days of winter, when time seems to grind to a halt.

Despite August being a month where we have no general meeting many of our interest groups have been meeting as normal and the committee have been as busy as ever, dealing with regional and national matters. We have

restarted having a presence at the Central Hub in town to help raise our profile and yours truly will be giving an interview for Radio Hartlepool in September. It is bewildering that an organisation with over 1000 branches in the UK with around 450,000 members is unknown to the vast majority of the population! We all need to do our bit to spread the word. You could help to publicise our u3a by picking up a poster or two at the next meeting and put them in local shops and surgeries. Charity shops are usually a good bet.

Speaking of general meetings our next speaker will be Fran Lawson who will be telling us all about Mary's Meals. This is a charity which has school feeding programmes in some of the most challenging regions in the world where poverty and hunger prevent children from attending school. We hope to see you for this talk on Friday 6th September at the usual starting time of 2 p.m.

Meanwhile

Take care

Roger

One of the benefits of being retired is being eligible to join the u3a with its many and varied interest groups and activities. Another benefit is having the time to pursue those interests that there wasn't time for previously.

As well as being a member of the u3a I am a volunteer with Tees Archaeology. I first became involved with them as a result of my interest in the wreck on Seaton Carew beach. As you may be aware it is protected under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. There are 57 protected wreck sites off the coast of England administered by Historic England, who are responsible for monitoring access to prevent uncontrolled interference. Tees Archaeology hold the licence for access to the wreck, and I am fortunate to be named on that licence.

As part of their work Tees Archaeology aim to raise awareness of our historic environment and ensure its protection for future generations. Earlier this year they carried out a geophysical survey of The Green in Seaton Carew, as well as recording historic buildings, and I was involved with both of those activities. More recently they organised a dig on the Headland to investigate the site of the original lighthouse and the former Lighthouse Battery.



Original Lighthouse and Battery

In the 17th century, during the English civil war, defences were developed around the Headland and there are references to several batteries. However the only remaining evidence of this defensive position today is in the Heugh battery.

In 1860 it was considered that the fast-growing port of Hartlepool needed more robust protection, so three gun batteries were installed. The Heugh and Lighthouse battery were placed close to the lighthouse, and the third, Fairy Cove, was further to the north at the end of the Town Moor. The lighthouse battery was demolished and infilled in 1956 when the coastal defences closed.

As well as the gun batteries, there have also been three lighthouses on the cliff top at Hartlepool, the first dating from 1846 to 1915. It is believed that it was the first gas-lit lighthouse in the world. It was taken down during WWI as it was in the way of the arc of the

gun battery, and a temporary light was built on the Town Moor. This remained in use until 1927 when the current lighthouse was built.

In 2014 a geophysical survey of the site was undertaken. This identified a number of different features including those thought to belong to the lighthouse battery and original lighthouse. This information was used to decide where to dig. So on Monday, 15th July, I went along to take part in the week-long community excavation.

An excavation is exciting. As the layers are peeled back each tells a story of how a site has developed over time. The aim of any excavation is to identify, define, uncover, date, and interpret each archaeological context on a site. Contexts are the basic units that make up the site: the layers, holes, fills, and structures. Each represents a discrete event in the development of the site whether that is a major alteration such as the digging of a post hole for a new house, or a tiny and trivial exchange like the dumping of a bucket of rubbish in the waste pit. Each context needs careful recording as together a group of contexts can make up a feature. For example a sequence of events might be a pit is dug, it is filled with rubbish, then a layer of clay is put down over the top for a floor.

We began by digging out two trenches. One was to try and locate the lighthouse, and the other to try and find the gun battery mount. We began by digging away the top layer of grass, all done by hand. Once that had been done it was on our hands and knees to scrape away layers of top soil and record any finds. Everything was meticulously recorded and we learnt how to identify the different layers as we dug deeper.



Lighthouse Trench, Day 1



Gun Emplacement Trench, Day 1

Lots of finds showing evidence of everyday life were uncovered such as creamware pottery from plates and cups. Clay pipes which were in use until cigarettes were introduced in the 20th century. Fragments of brown beer bottles, the lighthouse keeper and the soldiers would have had the taste for beer. Several pieces of stoneware, including one which may have been an ink bottle. Remnants of rubber from the inner tube of a bicycle tyre. A rare gaming piece which would have been a “Kib” from the game Bobber and Kibs, more commonly known by the more modern name of Jacks. We also found a shoe with all the stitching in-tact.



In the gun battery trench there was a large piece of concrete in one corner which extended under the grass and needed further investigation. So out came the pick axes to dig away more soil, then on to hands and knees again to scrape away layers. This would have been part of the barbette apron which would have formed part of the lighthouse battery. Further Digging revealed where the gun would have been mounted, and what appeared to be iron anchor points which the camouflage net would have been attached to. We also found a large iron chain and parts of the blast wall. There would have been the same sort of structures underground that you find at the Heugh battery, but time limitations meant we could not go down that far.

Meanwhile in the other trench in the search for the original lighthouse, excavations revealed the curved base made from sandstone blocks, and all wonderfully preserved. We all thought it a shame that it could not be uncovered in full and a permanent feature made of it.



Gun Emplacement Trench Day 6



Lighthouse Trench Day 4

As we dug deeper in order to see how big the sandstone blocks were, there was another surprise as we found two further blocks beneath. Unfortunately due to safety requirements and the lack of time we were unable to go any further.



There was inevitably a lot of interest in the project. It presented the perfect opportunity to engage with local people. Many of them shared their memories of the gun battery, and stories of family members who were directly involved in the bombardment in 1914. It would be nice if any of our u3a members could share their memories with us in a future newsletter. The BBC came along to interview some of us which some of you may have seen. This allowed us to showcase the work of Tees Archaeology and promote the benefits of volunteering.

Sadly all good things must come to an end, and at the end of the excavation the site had to be returned to its original state. However I feel privileged to have been part of this project, and one of a small number of people to get to see the original lighthouse base and gun emplacement in over 100 years. It was a wonderful week and through a combination of getting our hands dirty (literally), working through our fieldwork manuals, and expert advice and instruction from the Archaeologists, we learnt a lot of new skills which is in keeping with the philosophy of the u3a. Learn, laugh, live. It wasn't all hard physical work as there was paperwork to complete. The various finds needed to be cleaned up, identified, and recorded, so there were things for all ages and abilities to help with. So next time an opportunity like this comes up you might like to have a go. I know I will certainly be doing this again, and while you are reading this I will already be on my next dig at Seaton Carew.

All Photographs in this article are © Cliff Cordiner.

Notice Board

Concert Group/All Members

Pauline Williamson

I would just like to inform you of a couple of performances which are coming up and which may be of interest to you.

- Firstly, at St George's Venue the French folk singer Flossie Malavialle will be performing on Monday 2nd September at 7:30. Tickets cost £10 available from Citizen's Advice Bureau (next door to the Church in Park Road.)
- Thursday 3rd October a production company will be bringing their latest musical, Facing the Waves, to Blackhall Colliery Community Centre at 7.30. Ticket price is £8 with £7 for RNLI members. If we go as a group of 10 it could cost us £7.20 (10 for the price 9.) What's it about? It's a musical, helping to celebrate the RNLI's 200th anniversary with a story based in Whitby, featuring the stories of those who risk everything to help others. First and foremost, there is Henry Freeman: an iconic Victorian hero, who is the sole survivor of the 1861 Whitby lifeboat disaster. Henry strives to prove himself to his community as he takes on the mantle of coxswain of the Whitby lifeboat. Now we have Faith an RLNI crew member. She is following in the footsteps of those who came before her. Faith takes on every challenge presented to her whether it is work, family or being a member of the crew. But life by the sea isn't all chips and ice cream, and not everyone can be saved. This is a tale about
 - our relationship with the sea,
 - the reality of living in coastal towns and the pressures facing those who crew the lifeboats.
 - Ordinary people doing extraordinary things.
 - A timeless responsibility that stretches across the centuries

Facing The Waves is a new musical from an award-winning composer, with a cast from London's West End. An inspiring new production with a story and songs that will stay with you. Please let me know if you are interested in this event.

I will remind you of Facing the Waves at the next meeting but this will be your only reminder for the Flossie Malavialle concert.

Hope one or both of these sparks your interest.

Music Group

Steve Cole has not renewed his subscription due to ill health but it would be lovely if the group could be re-established. Anyone interested, please contact Pauline Williamson

Natural History Group

Meetings 2024

- **September**, Thursday 5th at 1.30 Hardwick Hall Country Park. Meet near the cafe. Please note that there is a car parking fee.
- **October**, Thursday 3rd at 1.30 Wynyard Woodland Park. Meet outside of the cafe.
- **November**, Thursday 7th at 1.30 the North Gare. Meet in the car park.
- **December**, no meeting

Irene Archer

FAMILY HISTORY

If you are dreading the end of the warm, sunny, bright, long days of gardening and fun and are thinking of how you can spend your time, how about thinking of doing your family history. We can't promise you coverage and travel of Who Do You Think You Are but we can promise you the start of a fascinating journey. Be aware though, the answer to one question usually gives you another six to find out.

Jacky Armstrong and Pat Rutter might be able to help you. Just ask.

Gardening Group: Programme of Events

- September's visit is to the RHS autumn show , on Sunday 15th September, which is at Newby Hall, we are going by Lee's coaches again and the price for the coach and admission is £40 .The tickets have been bought for the people who have said they want to go, but if there is anyone else who would like to go, let us know asap and we can book extra tickets, as long as Lee's still have any available .
- By October, there won't be much in the way of gardens to visit so we are looking at getting someone to give us a talk, last year a member of the group gave us an interesting talk on weeds, is there anyone else with an interest in particular aspect of gardening, or in a particular range of plants, who could come along and give us a talk or a demonstration? Or do you know someone who could?

Please contact Liz Milbourn or Helen Eustace if you wish to get in touch.

VICTORIOUS QUIZ TEAM

Congratulations to our quiz team, ably captained by John Campbell, who were victorious in winning the South Durham u3a Regional Quiz on 26th June. It was a hard-fought competition with our team winning by one point in the last round. The team were the proud winners of a trophy and some toffees. Will we need a trophy cabinet?

If you want to take part in our local quiz with Stockton u3a, they are held each month at the Hub (Central Library) on the third Tuesday of the month.

The next quiz is on Tuesday 17th September at 2 pm. Entry is £1 for which you get refreshments and a good afternoon. The September quizmaster is Jacky. There will be no knitting and crochet questions this time, but something equally as taxing to get the brain going. And don't forget, there is the trophy of the u3a Shopping Trolley Disc for the victorious team (only to be held for a month, due to the expense).

You are very welcome to come. Either bring your own team or join one of the regulars. They will welcome some new knowledge.

Jacky Armstrong

Who am I

1 I was christened James Armstrong Briggs, but later changed my name.

2 I was born in 1936 in the county of Northumberland.

3 I started work at 15 at the Northern Guild of Commerce and Chamber of Trade.

4 In 1955 I did 2 years National Service in Cyprus, as a Corporal in the Wiltshire Regiment.

5 In 1957 I left the army and joined the repertory company of Newcastle Playhouse and changed my name.

6 In 1959 I made my television debut as a policeman in Tyne Tees' children's programme *Happy Go Lucky*

7 In 1962 I joined Tyne Tees Television as a full-time continuity announcer, newsreader and reporter.

8 In 1964 I was promoted to anchorman on Tyne Tees nightly news magazine *'North East Newsview*.

9 I was then approached by BBC North East to replace Frank Bough as anchor on the BBCs regional news programme and stayed for 32 years.

10 In 1996 I returned to Tyne Tees to anchor regional news, front a chat show and make occasional special programmes before retiring in 2005.

Who am I? [Answer on page 15](#)

Compiled by Barry Liddle

Quiz - Quotes from British Politics

Compiled by Barry Liddle

*Answers on page 15

Q1 The phrase being “Tough on crime and the causes of crime” is attributed to which British Prime Minister?

- a Tony Blair
- b Gordon Brown
- c Margaret Thatcher

Q2 The phrase ‘A week is a long time in politics’ is attributed to which politician?

- a Tony Blair
- b Edward Heath
- c Harold Wilson

Q3 Which British Queen rallied her troops at Tilbury with the words “I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king...”

- a Queen Elizabeth I
- b Queen Victoria
- c Queen Elizabeth II

Q4 When a former British Prime Minister was asked what the greatest challenge for a statesman was, he replied ‘Events, dear boy, events’. Who was the Prime Minister?

- a Stanley Baldwin
- b Benjamin Disraeli
- c Harold Macmillan

Q5 The Profumo Affair was a major scandal in British Politics. Under cross-examination it was put to this young lady that Lord Astor denied having an affair with her or even having met her. To which she replied with pert humour “Well he would, wouldn’t he! Who was the young lady?”

- a Diana Dors
- b Christine Keeler
- c Mandy Rice-Davies

Q6 Who said “A Diplomat is a man who thinks twice before he says nothing”

- a James Callaghan
- b Edward Heath
- c John Major

Q7 The phrase “You turn if you want to, but this lady’s not for turning.” is attributed to which Prime Minister?

- a Theresa May
- b Margaret Thatcher
- c Liz Truss

Q8 Which British politician delivered 'The Rivers of Blood' speech'?

- a Oswald Mosley
- b Enoch Powell
- c Ian Paisley

Q9 Who memorably ended his maiden speech in the House of Commons with these words, "I will sit down now, but the time will come when you will hear me".

- a Benjamin Disraeli
- b William Gladstone
- c William Pitt the Younger

Q10 "I believe it is peace for our time...peace with honour". These words were broadcast after the Munich Agreement in 1936. Who was the speaker?

- a Joseph Chamberlain
- b Nevill Chamberlain
- c Lord Halifax

Q 11 Who said: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"?

- a Winston Churchill
- b King George V
- c David Lloyd George

Q12 Which Hartlepool MP on election night said: "I'm a fighter, not a quitter"?

- a Peter Mandelson
- b Jill Mortimer
- c Iain Wright

Q13 Which Prime Minister quoted St Francis of Assisi "Where there is despair, may we bring hope" after a famous General Election victory?

- a Tony Blair
- b Edward Heath
- c Margaret Thatcher

Q14 Nancy Astor said: “Sir if you were my husband, I’d poison your tea.” To which a famous MP replied “Madame, if you were my wife I’d drink it” Who was the MP?

- a William Haig
- b Randolph Churchill
- c Winson Churchill

Q15 In the House of Commons, who is most likely to say “Order, Order!”

- a Black Rod
- b Leader of the House
- c Speaker of the House

Q16 Denis Healy famously said that being attacked by X was like being savaged by a dead sheep. Who was X?

- a Francis Pym
- b Geoffrey Howe
- c Willie Whitelaw

Q17 Which British minority Party leader is remembered for saying: “go back to your constituencies and prepare for government.”

- a Roy Jenkins
- b David Owen
- c David Steel

Q18 Which politician delivered the ‘White Heat of Technology’ speech in 1963?

- a Tony Benn
- b Ted Heath
- c Harold Wilson

Q19 Which politician tried to reassure the British public that devaluation would not effect ‘the pound in your pocket’?

- a Jim Callaghan
- b Denis Healey
- c Harold Wilson

Q20 1992 was a terrible year for the Queen. There was the Windsor fire, the Princess Royal got divorced, the Duke of York separated from his wife and the Prince of Wales had well documented marriage problems. What memorable phrase did she use to describe that year?

- a Ad Nauseam
- b Annus Horribilis
- c Carpe Diem

A New Kid on the Block

Roger Say

We have quite a small garden on the Headland but it provides a great deal of entertainment for those of us who live there. Being on the front there is always something happening: on sea and on land. It is an ever-changing scene. Sitting in the sunshine (admittedly a rare occurrence this year!) and watching life goes by can be really relaxing.

Although the garden is small it attracts a variety of visitors. Most of the plants in it are there to attract bees and butterflies, and we have grass rather than a lawn to attract a variety of wildlife. Sparrows, goldfinches and starlings are regular visitors to the bird feeder and bird bath, along with pigeons who Hoover up any seeds which have found their way onto the ground. I have to confess a dislike for feral pigeons, until it was pointed out to me that they are the descendants of wild doves which we domesticated centuries ago for food and their amazing navigational skills.

We now have a new visitor which seems to have taken up residence: Harry the field mouse. He first appeared a fortnight or two ago when I noticed him under the bird feeder scoffing the seeds which had fallen. I suspected his career was going to be short-lived as he did not seem to be of a particularly cautious disposition. He now appears on a fairly regular basis and yesterday morning I opened the front door to find him sipping water from a nearby bowl. He was there for at least half a minute and seems blissfully unconcerned about any possible danger to his well-being although he did shoot off rapidly when he had drunk his fill. I think that although his luck must run out sooner rather than later, he will at least depart with a full belly: well fed and watered. Good luck to him, anyway.

Directory of Interest Groups

Pauline Williamson

- I'd like to share with you a list of Interest Groups that are active.
- All these groups would welcome you with open arms.
- I do recommend that you give them a try to get a flavour of what's on offer.
- Please contact me for further details on joining any of the groups or email the Group Leaders directly through the u3a website:

Archaeology & History Leader: Chris McLoughlin, People's Centre, Raby Road, 2nd Thursday each month @ 10:30 Some weeks, talks are held in the Peoples Centre; other weeks, outings are arranged to visit places of interest.

Art Appreciation Andrea Reid & Irene Archer, People's Centre, Raby Road, 2nd Wednesday @ 10:15 Learn about various artists, past and present and various materials which they used.

Backgammon Ann Gardiner, People's Centre, Raby Road 2nd Tuesday @ 2pm A dice-based game that is challenging and stimulating, with an element of luck: simple to learn but a lifetime to master!

Board Games Irene Williams, Irene's house, 3rd Thursday @ 2pm Come and enjoy some board games in a small, friendly environment. Bring your own favourite game along if you want.

Bridge Phil Jeffries, Masonic Hall, every Friday @ 10:30 The card game of Bridge, aimed at beginners and improvers. Experienced players also welcome, though you would probably teach more than you learn.

Chess Roger Say, Roger's house, Ad Hoc Friday @ 2pm Roger is available should you be interested in a game of chess.

Coffee and Chat Jacky Armstrong, Golden Lion, Dunston Road, 1st Monday 10:30 Come along and have a natter with friends over a cup of coffee.

Concert Group Pauline Williamson, whenever events are happening. Listen to all genres of music from classical to easy listening pieces in various venues in Hartlepool and the surrounding area.

Creative Writing Roger Say, Art Gallery Café, Church Square 2nd Friday @2pm There is a set topic and you are welcome to share your creativity with the group by writing short stories, poems or anything else that hits your imagination.

Family History Jacky Armstrong and Pat Rutter If you want to find out about your past these two ladies are waiting and willing to help you. Just contact them.

Film group Phil Jeffries, Newtown Community Resource Centre on Durham Road Stockton at 10.00 on Tuesday mornings. See website for details.

Fun with Fabrics Ann Say, Peoples Centre, Raby Road, 4th Thursday @10am In these 'make and take' sessions, you will be making small projects using a variety of techniques e.g., hand sewing, needle felting and applique. No experience necessary.

Garden Group Liz Milbourn, Helen Eustace 4th Monday afternoon at pre-arranged locations. Days may occasionally change depending on group activity Visits Other events will include demonstrations, talks and plant swaps and sales.

Lawn Bowls Ray Elliston, Eldon Grove Bowls Club, Wednesday, weeks 1,2,3 @2pm Summer months only. Please contact Ray in advance of you want to join this group via website or meeting.

Natural History Irene Archer, Margaret Andrews, Beryl Turnbull, pre-arranged locations, 1st Thursday @13:30 A chance to walk and look at the wild life in local areas. We walk between 1 to 2 miles on easy terrain noting flora and fauna in different habitats at different times of the year.

Photography for Fun. Ray Elliston, pre-arranged locations, 1st & 3rd Tuesday afternoons: See Hartlepool and surrounding areas through the eyes of a camera.

Quiz John Campbell, The Central Hub, York Road, 3rd Tuesday @ 2pm Test your general knowledge against other members in a friendly environment.

Reading Andrea Reid, The Central Hub, York Road, 4th Thursday @2pm Members discuss the set reader over a cup of tea or coffee and choose the next book to be read from a list provided by Hartlepool library. There is a wide choice of genres on the list so the group can cater for all tastes.

Shibashi Marjorie Reynolds, Marjorie's house, every Tuesday @ 10 am These are exercises which benefits the body, mind and emotions. It helps with balance, flexibility and strength even for people in their nineties or noughties. Give it a try and be surprised.

Tuesday Book Club Mary Waldmeyer, Central Hub, York Road, 4th Tuesday @2pm Reread some of the children's classics which you read when you were younger.

View at Vue Check Notice Board, whenever Live Links/ Met Opera. We meet to watch live performances of plays, operas and ballet at the Vue cinema.

Walking Keith Alder, pre-arranged locations, 3rd Thursday @ 10:30 Walks in the Hartlepool area, about 2 1/2 to 3 hours duration and about 3 to 4 miles in length. Perfect for getting some exercise while meeting friends.

Hope there is something to interest you...if not, perhaps you can suggest a group and together we may be able to make it happen.

Directory

List of Committee Members for 2024/25

Chair, Speaker Finder & Web Admin.

Roger Say

Vice Chair–

Vacant

Business Secretary –

Wendy Borthwick

Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

Membership Secretary –

Andrea Reid

Group Co-ordinator & Beacon Admin.

Pauline Williamson

Minutes Secretary

Vacant

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.

Backgammon Group Ann Gardiner

Bridge: Phil Jefferies.

Chess Group: Roger Say.

Coffee & Chat Jacky Armstrong

Concert Group: Pauline Williamson

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: Vacant

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

Quiz Answers

Q1 a Tony Blair; Q2 c Harold Wilson; Q3 a Queen Elizabeth I; Q4 c Harold Macmillan; Q5 c Mandy Rice-Davies; Q6 b Edward Heath; Q7b Margaret Thatcher; Q8 b Enoch Powell; Q9 a Benjamin Disraeli; Q10b Nevill Chamberlain; Q 11 a Winston Churchill; Q12 a Peter Mandelson; Q13 c Margaret Thatcher; Q14 c Winson Churchill; Q15 c Speaker of the House; Q16 b Geoffrey Howe; Q17 c David Steel; Q18 c Harold Wilson; Q19 Harold Wilson; Q20 b Annus Horribilis.

Who am I Answer: Mike Neville

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 September 2024.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor