

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a
Issue 90, November 2024



Comments from the Chair

Do you ever go online to look at our webpage? It is quite easy to find, just type in 'Hartlepool and District u3a'. If you already use this particularly useful site but haven't done so recently you will be surprised that it has a new up-to-date look. The old U3A SiteBuilder has been replaced by SiteWorks: a new web-authoring software based on WordPress. If you are like me, the terminology may not mean a great deal to you but you will definitely notice the difference and the improvement when you next click on our site. This change did not of course come about on its own but has been years in the making thanks to

volunteers from u3as including our own from members who have got far greater expertise than I have. We owe them all a big Thank You!

Amongst other things, I attended the national u3a AGM on the 16th October via Zoom. AGMs might not be everyone's cup of tea but they are necessary for the successful running of our organisation. The main vote was for the introduction of a new Council. This council is intended to provide more effective voice for member u3as and to be the primary body for engaging with them, representing their views, and making decisions about those issues which are of primary concern to the u3as. This will not affect the day to day running of our own u3a.

Speaking of our own u3a I am delighted to let you know that our next speaker is drawn from our own ranks. Martin Green will be entertaining us with a talk about a visit he made to South Africa. His talk will take place on Friday November 1st at the usual time of 2 pm. I hope you stay behind for a chat afterwards and refreshments at the incredibly cheap price of 50p for a hot drink and a biscuit. I aim to be first in the queue!

Meanwhile,

Stay safe

Roger

Art Appreciation Group

Irene Archer

On a very wet Wednesday morning on 9th October at the People's Centre, we met to watch Anita Ivison's flower arranging demonstration. We were joined by a few members from the Gardening Group who were most welcome. Anita produced 2 displays using mostly material from the garden, some of which had gone to seed but looked most attractive. She also showed us how to do an unusual arrangement using cabbage leaves on the outside and oasis in the middle. Plant material could be then placed in the centre.



The displays were raffled to the members and Anita was given a well-deserved round of applause. Thank you so much Anita for showing us how to do the arrangements. I certainly think I will have a go.

Photographs: Irene Archer

Rude Aeolus Blew – Arch. & History Group at Tynemouth

Chris McLoughlin



In October we rounded off our history walks programme for 2024 with a train & metro trip to one of our favourite places – Tynemouth. For once we didn't quite get the weather right – our old friend the North wind ensured a weathered tinge to our cheeks but non the less it takes more that cold to spoil a day at this little gem of a place.

The walk started at the spectacular Railway station, originally boasting 9 tracks as it was hugely popular in Victorian times and retains many of that era's best buildings.

The Priory of course has an even longer history and we in Hartlepool are linked historically as one of the early tithes disputes involved us and the Priory at the time of Robert the Bruce.



Left-Decorative wrought ironwork in Tynemouth Station which had initially 9 railway tracks
Centre - World War one and two memorial - quite simple - or Art Deco in design - public subscription for this one was only £300 as not a lot of money was available at that time.
Right - Tynemouth Priory.

Photographs: Wendy Borthwick

Food is subject to changes in taste and fashion just like clothes, music and furniture. In this article I have drawn on my own experiences, rather than rigorous research, to highlight how certain foods have declined in post War Britain. I would be interested to know if you agree or disagree with my selections.

Seafood

Fish 'n' Chips wasn't rationed during the Second World War and remains extremely popular, but some seafood has become less fashionable in recent years. For example, when my teenage brother came back from a trip into town on a Saturday afternoon in the 1970s he always returned with a bag of Winkles or Whelks. Winkles were OK, eaten with a pin but Welks were an acquired taste, always very chewy almost like gristle, definitely not a favourite of many today.

One of my grandfathers had a liking for Rollmops, which as you know are pickled herrings rolled into a cylindrical shape. Whilst they remain highly popular in Scandinavia and parts of mainland Europe, I suspect consumption in the UK has been in the decline for some time.

Whitebait are very small fish cooked and eaten whole including head, fins, bones and innards. They tend to be a restaurant/pub dish rather than a home cooked meal. My introduction to Whitebait came in the 1970s, just after I had started my first job. It was coming to the end of an accounting period and there was still an unused sum in our research budget. So the leaders of the research project decided a small group of us would go out for a slap—up lunch which would be paid for by the research budget and classified as 'photocopying' in the accounts! And the leader of the group ordered Whitebait all round as a starter. At the time I had no idea what it was – I enjoyed it but several glasses of crisp white wine may have improved the flavour. I have never had Whitebait since and have only rarely seen it on menus. On that unscientific basis, I'm classifying Whitebait as also becoming less popular.

To conclude this section, I'm adding Cods' Roe and Brisling (like sardines) and small jars of cockles in brine to my list of unfashionable seafood.

Nose to Tail Eating

During the first half of the post war period the concept of eating 'nose to tail' was a real one. I can remember coming home from school to find my mam butchering half a pig on the kitchen table. She would cut off the ear to cover the pig's eye to stop it looking at her and then she would produce a series of joints, steaks, chops and mince. The liver and kidney were also kept and what little was left was given to a neighbour for their dog. I'm not suggesting it was common to do your own butchery, but it was common to eat most parts of all domestic animals.

Today, whilst some high-end restaurants in the bigger cities have re-discovered 'nose to tail eating,' most people eat a much narrow range of animal products. A good example of

unfashionable animal parts would be Offal, which is basically the organ meats including - heart, liver, kidney and sweetbreads. Despite being nutritious, relatively inexpensive and most of all delicious – they have all declined in popularity in recent years.

A second, group includes tripe, cow heel, and pigs' trotters. Tripe in particular was once very popular and I remember well the popular tripe stall in the old indoor market in Lynn Street. In the 60s and 70s we would have this trio of products for Saturday tea along with bread & butter and plenty of salt and vinegar. We would often follow the tripe etc with a slice of fresh cream cake and I always remember how I used to cringe when my gran would mop-up any surplus vinegar with her cake! Tripe was also eaten in sandwiches; I used to have a rugby coach whose favourite Saturday lunch was tripe and onions in a bread bun washed down with a pint of bitter.

Outside of rural areas, Rabbit is no longer a popular meat, yet rabbit stew and roast rabbit were a popular meal in the first half of the post war era. Consumption fell off a cliff when the rabbit population -both wild and domestic – was almost wiped out by a highly infectious disease. The last rabbit I bought would have been in the late 80s from my local Sainsbury's in Birmingham and I found it at the bottom of a freezer cabinet having been imported from China.

After the War traditional mutton was replaced by lamb, it is only recently that mutton has made something of a comeback.

Lastly we come to a list of processed products which combine unfashionable meats – namely Brawn, 'Ducks', Saveloys and Haslet. Brawn is a pigs or calf's head that is cooked and pressed in a pot with added jelly. It is then eaten in thin slices. A former colleague of mine, who grew up in a poor part of Liverpool used to eat brawn regularly and his family's favourite way of eating it was to place slices over steaming hot chips and as the jelly melted, the chips would be flecked with meat.

Pease Pudding and Duck was a popular meal and in the 1960s I remember being given a basin to go to the local butcher to bring back some freshly made Pease Pudding and Duck so we could eat it while it was still warm. 'Ducks' I believe was the local name for Faggots.

Saveloys are a type of seasoned sausage available from butchers and fish and chip shops. They contained a lot of bread/rusk and some kind of highly minced meats – I was never quite sure what meats were used – probably best not to ask. Very tasty, but in my view in decline as a popular food.

Haslet is a sort of stuffing made from offal and herbs, slices of which were generally bought to make sandwiches. It is still around but like tongue, it has been superseded by sliced beef, chicken, ham and continental meats.

Fruit & Veg

Most fruit and veg do not go in and out of fashion, but there are a few exceptions. In my view Grapefruit had its heyday around 50 years ago and has since declined somewhat in popularity. Half a grapefruit sprinkled with sugar, was once a popular start to the day and

consumption of grapefruit was given an additional boost in the 1970s by the popularity of the so-called 'Grapefruit Diet.' But in recent years grapefruit consumption has declined and this has accelerated by medical advice that grapefruits can have a negative impact when combined with some common medications.

Bilberries and Gooseberries were popular ingredients for homemade pies but the decline in home baking has lowered demand and for some reason these fruits are not popular with commercial bakeries. A little research confirms these trends, in 1990 there were a 100 UK farms producing Gooseberries, now there is just a handful.

Quinces- once popular for making jellies, jams and preserves have long since fallen out of favour, largely replaced by their more popular cousins -Apples and Pears.

Kiwi Fruit and Sun-Dried Tomatoes are excellent examples of products introduced to the UK relatively recently- which became very fashionable, very quickly, for a short period of time before consumption fell to a steady but lower level.

Of the few vegetables that have declined in popularity, two come to mind – Marrows and 'Stewed' Sprouts. My uncle grew marrows on his allotment and so we had a steady supply, which were stuffed with savoury mince and baked in the oven. But there is not much else you could do with Marrows and they have largely been replaced by courgettes. I first came across courgettes in the 1970s at a youth hostel in France when I was given a plate of deep-fried courgettes in a light crispy batter, I've never tasted better. Sprouts are still popular and feature prominently on Christmas dinner plates, but I'm happy to see the back of overcooked 'Stewed Sprouts' which some of our mothers and grandmothers cooked, which had a strange grey colour and smelled of sulphur. The modern trend of cooking them 'al dente' has been helped by generations of plant growers producing smaller, sweeter tasting varieties. Just as an aside, if you ever get hold of sprout tops, they are a delicious alternative to cabbage.

Sweets & Desserts

As a youngster, a Toffee Apple was an occasional treat. But I've never seen a Toffee Apple in a supermarket where the vast majority of food shopping today takes place, so Toffee Apples are the first to go on my list of unfashionable sweets & desserts.

Next on the list is a quadruple of milky puddings which were the cornerstone of school dinners – Macaroni, Sago, Semolina and Tapioca. These four have declined whilst rice pudding has fared much better over time.

Junket is a jelly like milk dessert made in a mould that has gone out of fashion along with Blancmange (which my dad jokingly called Blank Mange). Today, these products have been largely replaced by yogurts and the Italian dessert – Panna Cotta.

The children's birthday party favourite – home-made fruit jelly in a mould has largely been replaced by shop bought alternatives.

Tinned Peaches with Carnation Milk was a very common dessert but is now seen as old fashioned.

Lastly, I rest my case with home-made Stuffed Apples. I don't think many people today would go to the trouble of taking the cores out of apples and replacing them with mincemeat or sultanas and then baking them in the oven. Not that difficult, but most people would buy a ready-made apple dessert.

Miscellaneous

In no particular order, this is a select list of miscellaneous foods that have declined in popularity. What would you add to the list?

- Party/Finger Food such as Cheese & Pineapple junks on cocktail sticks.
- Home-made deep fried chips (replaced by oven chips).
- Veal and Ham Pie (when was the last time you bought Veal?)
- Animal fats – e.g. Beef/Pork Dripping and Lard.
- Marmalade (for anyone under 50)
- Restaurant dishes such as Steak Diane and Stroganoff (Mushroom or Beef).
- Spam Fritters
- Fried Bread

Who Am I?

Quiz Compiled by Barry Liddle.

1. I was born in 1936 and I grew up in Carlisle and later became a well-known author, journalist and broadcaster.
2. After Durham University I worked as a journalist and in 1965 I wrote a novel *called Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*, which was made into a film in 1967.
3. In 1968 my authorised biography of *The Beatles* was published.
4. In 1972 I wrote a book about football called *The Glory Game* – a behind the scenes portrait of Tottenham Hotspur.
5. I have had regular columns in several magazines and newspapers over many years including the Sunday Times. I am still writing today.
6. I was married to the writer Margaet Foster from 1960 until her death in 2016
7. I have lived in London most of my life but we also had until recently, a second home in the Lake District.

Who am I? Answer on page 14

The Creative Writing Group

On the Spur of the Moment by Roger Say

As a rule of thumb, it is sensible to think before you act. Otherwise, you might find yourself in a spot of bother. This happened a lot to my erstwhile acquaintance, Fred who was always doing things on the spur of the moment and living to regret it. The last one of these led him to do a stretch in prison.

Fred was in his local one Friday night as he was a member of the darts team. Things were going well for the team and it was time for Fred to play the last match. The other team were a man short and were about to concede when a stranger stepped forward and offered to play for the opposition. Fred's captain was a bit suspicious that this stranger might be a 'ringer.' As the match was already won the captain asked Fred if he wanted to play. Fred, on the spur of the moment, agreed and was soundly beaten. The stranger was actually a demon darts player so this was no surprise. To add salt to the wound Fred had to buy the winner a drink as was this was the tradition. It was a double whisky.

On another occasion Fred offered to give a lift to two strangers who he had met in his local café. They had seemed very friendly and they told him they were going to the bank in the next town to open a business account but their chauffer had been taken sick and they would have to get a taxi. By the way, I should mention at this point that not only was Fred liable to do things at the spur of the moment but he was also gullible and no the brightest of buttons.

Fred said that he would drive them to the bank and take them back to their hotel. Fred waited outside the bank patiently when, to his surprise, the two men rushed out carrying a large bag. They jumped into the car and told Fred to drive away. Fred was shaken as he slowly realised that he had been duped and the men were actually bank robbers. It was then that sirens were heard. It was a police car. The men told Fred to stop the car which he did. The

men leapt out and ran down an alleyway. Fred was left to face the music.

Fred found himself up before the judge. His defence was laughable and even his defence lawyer couldn't really believe it. The two men were never caught and Fred got 5 years for being an accomplice. He lost his job and his wife divorced him. I expect he is happy enough, as he is now a proud member of the prison darts team. I really must go to visit him although I need to give it some thought. I don't like to act on the spur of the moment!

Discovering Military History in Hartlepool's North Cemetery

Lest we Forget...

Wendy Borthwick

Following a period of neglect and vandalism work was undertaken to clean, improve, maintain and protect this historic cemetery and one of the most significant accomplishments was the building of a new War Memorial situated on the south side of the cemetery and the reinstatement of the 81 Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWG) Headstones. These iconic headstones made (in the main) from Portland Stone with simplicity of design created by the architect Edwin Lutyens never fail to catch the eye. In this and other municipal cemeteries unless an area has been set aside these memorial headstones they will be dotted around snuggling between the larger more ornate private headstones but still commanding that iconic dignity; they are known as isolated or scattered graves.

In January 1918 Macdonald Gill, graphic artist and cartographer was chosen to design the type face / lettering used on these memorials and is now known to be the largest single cumulative artwork of the 20th century.

Although limited by space the standard inscription placed above a cross (usually a Latin cross) speaks volumes and certainly pulls at the heartstrings with the layout as follows:

Regimental Badge or National Emblem
Regimental number with Rank
Name
Regiment
Date of death and age.

Towards the lower part of the headstone space is allowed for a personal message usually short but meaningful and generally provided by family; sadly, not always taken up possibly due to cost. A maximum of 66 characters including spaces was allowed with each letter used costing 3½d (in old money £.s.d). Using the maximum spaces, the cost would be quite significant, in the region of 19s 3d; in 1918 this could be a sizeable amount of money to find from a weekly wage. It was one of these personal messages as follows, 'Served with 20th Hussars in the Boer War' that caught my eye.

He was Private William R Davidson – enlisted in the 20th Hussars 1899 (aged 19 / 20). June 1902 he was invalided back to England. Listed / recipient of the Queen's South Africa Medal (QSA). It is uncertain as to whether our soldier volunteered when war broke out in 1914 (aged 34) or if he was conscripted when conscription started in 1916. Pte William R Davidson died 29th May 1920 aged 40 less than two years after the end of WW1. His service is honoured and remembered with a CWG headstone.



NB - the official cut-off date for WW1 casualties is 31 August 1921.

'We will Remember Them'

Book at Bedtime Quiz

Barry Liddle

Answers on Page 14

Q1 Bertie Wooster and his gentleman's gentleman, Jeeves were the comic creation of which novelist?

- a David Lodge
- b DC Thomson
- c P. G. Woodhouse

Q2 Which famous poet combined his writing career with being the head librarian at Hull University?

- a Kingsley Amis
- b Philip Larkin
- c Andrew Motion

Q3 The Famous Five is a series of children's adventure novels and short stories written by which British Author?

- a Enid Blyton
- b A.S. Byatt
- c Doris Lessing

Q4 Sherlock Holmes has a proud place in the annals of fictional detectives. But who was his creator?

- a Sir Arthus Conan Doyle
- b Sir Walter Scott
- c Dame Muriel Spark

Q5 Shakespear's character Malvolio is tricked into believing that Olivia is in love with him and in a forged letter he is asked to wear yellow stockings and cross-gartering as proof of his love. In which play would you find this scene?

- a All's Well That Ends Well
- b The Comedy of Errors
- c Twelfth Night

Q6 Which former British army officer wrote 'The Seven Pillars of Wisdom'?

- a John French
- b Douglas Haig
- c T. E Lawrence

Q7 The Harry Potter books are a series of fantasy novels written by J. K. Rowling. She wrote all the following except one. Which is the imposter, the odd one out?

- a Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

- b Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
- c Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
- d Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix
- e Harry Potter and the Sect of Azzizi

Q8 Jane Eyre is often cited as the most popular novel in Britain. Who was the author?

- a Charlotte Bronte
- b Emily Bronte
- c Virginia Woolf

Q9 What was the name of the aging British Intelligence agent and leading character in John Le Carre's seminal novel: 'The Spy Who Came in from the Cold'?

- a Alec Leamas
- b Harry Palmer
- c George Smiley

Q10 'Cider with Rosie' is an autobiographic novel of the author's blissful childhood in an isolated village. Who wrote the book?

- a Thomas Hardy
- b Laurie Lee
- c Dennis Potter

Q11 In which William Shakespear play did the leading character say, "A horse, a horse, my Kingdom for a horse!"

- a Hamlet
- b Henry IV, Part I
- c Richard III

Q12 The American poet Sylvia Plath was married to which British poet?

- a Kingsley Amis
- b Thom Gunn
- c Ted Hughes

Q13 Which British novelist wrote 'Lucky Jim' and 'The Old Devils'?

- a Kingsley Amis
- b Martin Amis
- c Tom Sharpe

Q14 Which Scottish author wrote the following famous works; Ivanhoe; Rob Roy and Waverley?

- a John Buchan
- b Neil Munro
- c Sir Walter Scott

Q15 All the following statements about George Orwell are true except one, which is the odd one out?

- a He wrote Nineteen Eighty- Four, Animal Farm and Burmese Days.
- b He joined the Colonial Police in Australian in the 1930s
- c He was a member of the Home Guard during WWII

Q16 Who wrote 'The Lord of the Rings'.

- a E.M. Forster
- b C. S. Lewis
- c J.R. Tolkien

Q17 I created all these fictional characters – Oliver Twist, Miss Havisham, Nicholas Nickleby and David Copperfield. Who am I?

- a Joseph Conrad
- b Charles Dickens
- c Thomas Hardy

Q18 The poet William Wordsworth had a sister who was an author, poet and diarist in her own right. They lived together at Dove Cottage and were close all their adult life. What was her Name.

- a Dorothy Wordsworth
- b Emily Wordsworth
- c Jane Wordsworth.

Q19 Who was the Leicester author of the comic Adrian Mole Books?

- a David Lodge
- b Tom Sharpe
- c Sue Townsend

Q20 'The Day of the Jackal' is a famous 1970s political thriller which was also turned into a popular and critically acclaimed film. Who was the author?

- a Len Deighton
- b Frederick Forsyth
- c John Le Carre

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 c P. G. Woodhouse. Q2 b Philip Larkin. Q3 a Enid Blyton. Q4 a Sir Arthus Conan Doyle. Q5 c Twelfth Night. Q6 c T. E Lawrence. Q7 e Harry Potter and the Sect of Azzizi. Q8 a Charlotte Bronte.

Q9 a Alec Leamas. Q10 b Laurie Lee. Q11 c Richard III. Q12 c Ted Hughes. Q13 a Kingsley Amis. Q14 c Sir Walter Scott. Q15 b He joined the Colonial Police in Australian in the 1930s. Q16 c J.R. Tolkien.

Q17 b Charles Dickens. Q18 a Dorothy Wordsworth. Q19 c Sue Townsend. Q20 b Frederick Forsyth.

Who Am I Quiz - **Hunter Davies**

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 November 2024.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor

