

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 99, August 2025



Comments from the Chair

There was another good turnout for last month's talk which was all about cyber crime and how to avoid being scammed. It was great to see so many new members as well and I hope they enjoyed it. I wish to thank Kelly and Andy for giving up their time and keeping us up to date on this important issue. I know there was a teething problem with the new sound system which made it difficult for some of our members to hear everything but we are confident it will be up and running properly at our next meeting.

Don't forget that we do not meet in August and the date of our next meeting is September 5th. This will be another of our popular social events so please bring along some finger food to share with everybody. There were some delicious offerings last time. These events are a great way of chatting with old and new friends and having a look at our notice boards to see what there is on offer. Most group leaders have their photos on the board so you can have a chat with them if they are present if you are thinking of joining one of the groups. I have it on good authority that two new groups are in the pipeline so you will have an even bigger choice to choose from.

In October we will have Carrienne Wilford from Newcastle Building Society who will be giving us a down-to-earth talk about fraud awareness so her approach will be specifically aimed at our members. There has been a change of plan for November so watch this space. It may come as a surprise!

Can anyone tell me what happened to July? I have never known a month move so fast and the school holidays are now upon us. I only hope that the winter months move as rapidly! Meanwhile, enjoy what is left of the summer and I look forward to seeing you all in September.

Take care

Roger

What's in a Name

Chris McLoughlin

Archaeology was the centre point of the Arch & History Group field trip in July on one of the hottest days of the year when we had a run up to Coria (Corbridge is its modern name). We enjoyed an excellent guided tour of the remains of the Roman Town more usually known by its Roman name of Corstopitum, set in a beautiful part of the Tyne Valley.

The huge site is now part of the English Heritage brief and part of the excavated town with its granaries, casino, temples, homes and water systems were all taken in by Carole Soulsby (an English Heritage guide and Hexham U3A member) who gave an absorbing take on every aspect of life in Coria in Roman times. In addition, her expert knowledge also covers the adventures of the Town after the Romans had departed. Much of the stone was robbed out and can be seen in local buildings such as Hexham Abbey. Most fascinating was the story behind the crossroads on which Coria stood, North South being Dere Street with East West being Stanegate.



(c) Kevin Hardy

Corbridge is easily reached from Hartlepool by Rail and for those without an Archaeology or History interest, the lovely town of Corbridge itself with its shops and restaurants is well worth a visit.

Gardening Group News

Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace

Our June Garden group visit took us back to Thornton Hall near Darlington. We last visited in May last year, so it was a treat to return later in the season and enjoy the summer flowering plants at their peak. The gardens looked stunning as you can see from the photos.



Our July visit (about the time this Newsletter goes out) will be to the Breezy Knees Gardens near York. It's a well-supported trip, with a full minibus, and other members of the group will be joining the Lees' of Durham coach trip. After the wet day we had when we visited RHS Harlow Carr in early June, we're keeping our fingers crossed for better weather this time.

There will be no Garden Group meeting in August due to holidays and family visits. Looking ahead, the planned Lees' coach trip in September to Northallerton Market and Arcadia Garden Centre has not generated much interest up to now, so we may look into an alternative visit unless more people express an interest in going.

As always, we welcome suggestions for future visits- please let us know if there's a garden you would like the garden group to arrange to visit.

The Letters (Part 2) ...More News!

Jacky Armstrong



Sgt Major John Batley who wrote the letters



Olive Russell (Mrs John Batley) mother of Val

You may recall from last month's Newsletter that I was given a pile of letters to research from WW2 and I thought I might have found the rightful owner and written to her.

Well, I had got the right person. Two days later I received a telephone call from Val (the baby in the letters and now nearly 83) and her husband. They were living in Scholes in Leeds. Val was curious about the letters and questions were asked. Rather than bundle them up and send them in the post, I arranged to go and deliver them personally.

I went on a Lee's coach trip to Leeds two weeks' later. I had researched a suitable bus to Scholes deciding to use public transport to complete the adventure. From stop Cultural B, I was to get off 27 stops later! I asked the bus driver to alert me when I was near the Coronation Tree so I would be ready to get off about 30 minutes later. Scholes is on the eastern outskirts of Leeds, past the busy city and into the countryside. One terrace of houses on the left as I got off the bus and fields. I found 110, to be greeted by Steve, Val's husband.

I was introduced to Val and their two excited dogs and then introduced them to the letters. I had transcribed some of the letters and sent them to her before my trip. She had thanked me for them and said she had trouble reading the originals, so I transcribed 11 in all. They gave brief reference to Churchill deserting them (he was in East Asia and their war was still going on), Mountbatten who was a good chap and everyone liked him, Burma and the Japps. Comments were brief as each letter had to go through the censor. Of course, each letter was lovingly written to his wife and sweetheart.

I gave them all the letters. Val knew nothing about them. She did say she had spoken to her brother John, born after her father came home from his service time, and he knew nothing of

them. She had not heard about them or seen them before. Nor did she recognise any of the addresses I had given her in Leeds where they might have come from.

I asked about Jack's regiment. They knew nothing except he was a Regimental Sergeant Major (in fact he gained promotion and was a Warrant Officer). They had no momentos, no photos of him in uniform, no wedding photos. All they did have was these two photos of her parents taken at different times. I am wondering if all the photos and service records may have been dumped with the letters when Dave found them.

Apparently, Jack collapsed and died with a heart attack in the newspaper shop when he was 65. The shop was then sold and the family moved away.

I was able to give her some details of their family history, which I had obtained from 'Find My Past.' Sadly, this is the end of the story for me and possibly for Val.

Back to my own family history now and as my cousins said 'No. Not more about the gun!!'

Down Memory Lane Gardens and Gardening Group at Wynyard Hall Gardens



(c) Barry Liddle

Writer's block

You're looking somewhat out of sorts
Said George to his best mate Joe
Who thought he'd caught writer's block
From whence he did not know
Joe searched here; Joe searched there
Searched without and searched within
This writer's block was causing him angst
Though he took it on the chin
George scratched his head
Then he scratched his feet
The answer still eluded him
George groaned, admitted defeat
Joe was not so easily cowed
Stepped up with his research
This writer's block he'd surely find
He continued with his search
Joe turned over every stone
In search of the elusive block
He sent out feelers everywhere
The answer he could not unlock
At last Joe found the solution
The problem he could easily reverse
The answer came to home suddenly
It was simply to write this verse.
Now Joe was back to normal
Much to George's delight
They both breathed a sigh of relief
Now all would be all right.

Roger Say

Natural History Programme 2025

- August 7th Summerhill Meet in the car park to do the Butterfly count.
- September 4th Blackhall Rocks. Meet in the car park off the main road.
- October 2nd Burn Valley Gardens to look for fungi. Meet at the zebra crossing entrance on Baden Street.
- November 6th Peoples centre for an indoor meeting. Last year we enjoyed a talk on weeds by Carole, bird song identification by Irene and Margaret and Geoff gave us an interesting talk about Thorpe Thewles wood.
- December No meeting.

**Further details from Irene Archer,
Margaret Andrews and Beryl
Turnbull.**

My Word of the Month

Omnishambles

This word describes a situation that has been comprehensively mismanaged and characterized by a string of blunders and miscalculations.

A perfect description of my garden, overrun this year with weeds and failed attempts to make improvements.

Barry Liddle

The Trivia Quiz

Compiled by Barry Liddle

Q1 What was the name of Donald Trump's first wife?

- a) Melanija Knavs
- b) Marla Maples
- c) Ivana Trump

Q2 What is the name of the closest planet to the Sun?

- a) Mars
- b) Mercury
- c) Venus

Q3 What is the process by which plants make their own food?

- a) Digestion
- b) Metabolism
- c) Photosynthesis

Q4 What does SPAM stand for?

- a) Selected Pork and Meat
- b) Specially Processed American Meat
- c) Specially Processed Argentinian Meat

Q5 What is the sum of the interior angles of a triangle?

- a) 90 degrees
- b) 180 degrees
- c) 360 degrees

Q6 What is the name of the first book in the Bible?

- a) Exodus
- b) Genesis
- c) Matthew

Q7 What year did the Titanic sink?

- a) 1912
- b) 1921
- c) 1931

Q8 What is the capital of Australia?

- a) Canberra
- b) Melbourne
- c) Sydney

Q9 What is the name of the longest river in the world?

- a) Amazon
- b) Nile
- c) Yangtze

Q10 Approximately how long does it take for light from the sun to reach earth?

- a) 20 seconds
- b) 8 minutes
- c) 24 Hours

Q11 What was the original name in the UK for the chocolate Snicker bar?

- a) Jogger
- b) Marathon
- c) Sprinter

Q12 Which player has the most caps for the England men's football team?

- a) David Beckham
- b) Bobby Moore
- c) Peter Shilton

Q13 A tomato is botanically classed as a?

- a) Fruit
- b) Fungus
- c) Vegetable

Q14 What was the name of the first steam train to officially reach 100mph?

- a) Mallard
- b) Sir Nigel Gresley
- c) The Flying Scotsman

Q15 Who invented Penicillin?

- a) Louis Pasteur
- b) Marie Curie
- c) Sir Alexander Fleming

Q16 In the sport of Darts, what is the maximum score achievable in a single turn using three darts?

- a) 60
- b) 180
- c) 360

Q17 Liz Truss holds the record for the shortest term as UK Prime Minister. Was it?

- a) 29 days
- b) 49 days
- c) 64 days

Q18 Where is the Special Air Service (SAS) based?

- a) Hereford
- b) Somerset
- c) Wiltshire

Q19 Bob Dylan is a world-famous singer-songwriter. What is his real name?

- a) Robert Abelman
- b) Robert Goldberg
- c) Robert Zimmerman

Q20 Which country was the first to print a book?

- a) China
- b) Britain
- c) India

Answers on Page 10

Directory

Committee Members for 2025/26

Chair, Speaker Finder & Web Admin.

Roger Say

Vice Chair–

Paul Eustace

Business Secretary –

Wendy Borthwick

Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

Membership Secretary –

Andrea Reid

Group Co-ordinators & Beacon Admin.

Pauline Williamson and Helen Eustace

Beacon Admin.

Pauline Williamson

Minutes Secretary

Paul Eustace

Committee –

Keith Alder. Helen Eustace.

Roles of Non- Committee Members

Newsletter Editor-

Barry Liddle

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

Quiz Answers

Q1 c) Ivana Trump; Q2 b) Mercury; Q3 c) Photosynthesis; Q4 b) Specially Processed American Meat; Q5 b) 180 degrees; Q6 b) Genesis; Q7 a) 1912; Q8 a) Canberra; Q9 b) Nile; Q10 b) 8 minutes; Q11 b) Marathon; Q12 c) Peter Shilton; Q13 a) Fruit; Q14 c) The Flying Scotsman; Q15 c) Sir Alexander Fleming; Q16 b)180; Q17 b) 49 days; Q18 a) Hereford;Q19 c) Robert Zimmerman; Q20 a) China.

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 August 2025.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor