

Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 111, August 2026

u3a learn,
laugh,
live



Yesterbus Classic Rally @ Locomotion, Shildon. © Martin Green

Articles:

- ❖ Comments from the Chair 2
- ❖ Vintage Buses 3
- ❖ Haymarket Wander 5
- ❖ Nature Watch 6
- ❖ Creative Writing 8

Regular Features:

- ❖ Member's Notice Board 9
- ❖ Miscellaneous 12
- ❖ Quiz 13
- ❖ Directory & Quiz Answers 16

Comments from the Chair



Early in July I attended a meeting of South Durham Chairs and I was surprised to discover that the other u3as attending were disappointed about the small number of members who attended their general meetings. Our own u3a certainly bucks the trend with well over 50 in attendance for our last few meetings - including the AGM! Our last meeting was no exception when our own in-house speaker entertained us with a fascinating talk about 'houses' which took us all by surprise when we discovered the content. We are also very lucky to have well over 20 interest groups to choose from and a big 'Thank You!' to our

Groups' Coordinator and Group Leaders for making this possible.

As you know, there is no general meeting in August although some of the interest groups will still be running so check with group leaders if you haven't already done so. Our guest speaker for September will be Clive Fennessy from Sedgefield u3a who will be entertaining us with 'The Panama Canal story'. The content goes from the first idea of an isthmus canal to its eventual opening in 1914. In October we will welcome Margaret Bozic who will be telling us all about the 'Lit and Phil' Newcastle. I have actually heard her give this talk and I can assure you we will be in for a treat. In November we have Philip Caine as our guest speaker. More about that nearer the date.

I hope you all have a great summer and enjoy reading our great Newsletter as much as I do. I look forward to seeing you all on September 4th.

Take care.

Roger

Vintage Buses

Martin Green

Father's Day 2026 saw a gathering of around twenty vintage buses at the Locomotion railway museum at Shildon, the majority of them with north east connections. Here are pictures of just four of them which I found of most interest, largely because of their age, and, more telling, that I could remember them!



PFN 858

Lockeys was sold to OK motors who repainted it in their red and cream livery. In preservation it has been restored to Lockeys dark blue and white. I was able to take a half hour trip round the back roads of Co Durham on this bus and surprised the driver with the picture of one of its sisters in Margate which I took when new back in 1960.

1) PFN 858 is an AEC Regent V new in 1959 to the East Kent bus company. It was fairly revolutionary at the time with a full fronted cab and a front entrance instead of the usual rear platform. In 1972 it was sold to Lockey's of St Helen Auckland who used it on services around Bishop Auckland, in particular to Evenwood. In the early 1980s



HHN 202

factory and the Eastern Coach Works body plant in Lowestoft.

2) HHN 202 is a Bristol L5G single decker new to Durham District Services, a company which came into existence in 1950 when three local operators sold out to the BTC. These buses were painted green and ran on services with 'D' route numbers. DDS was a separate company managed by United and later absorbed in 1967, United having been nationalised when the Tilling Group sold out in 1948. They ran very standardised fleets built by the also nationalised Bristol bus chassis



EUP 45B

3) EUP 45B. In 1964, Northern General made history by becoming the only operator outside London to buy AEC Routemasters.

Fifty were purchased for their trunk routes across County Durham and Tyneside including Newcastle to Hartlepool via Chester-le-Street. Unlike the standard, open-platform buses used in London, these featured front entrances with electrically operated folding doors. London Transport had tried just one of this layout but latter sold it to Northern.

4) FUN 319 is a rare 1949 Crossley coach originally new to a small Welsh operator but passed to Wright Bros of Alston a decade later. They used it on their Newcastle - Hexham - Alston - Penrith - Keswick service, a challenging but popular route



FUN 319

which it still operates today. In superb condition this coach remains owned by them and is used for private hire for wedding parties etc. It too was giving rides from Shildon and performed splendidly.

(All Photographs © Martin Green)

Over the years Archaeology & History have visited Newcastle and Tyneside, we've been both drenched and nithered but this year we were baked nicely on one of the hottest heat wave days of the summer!

Fortunately, our guide carefully mapped our visit to the Haymarket area of the city (reached via the Metro to Monument Station), to include shaded areas and buildings to explore yet another segment of the City's rich history.

As the name suggests, Haymarket was the area of the city away from the town walls that featured the market for Hay, in its day the product that provided the fuel for the four-legged economy and it stood on the Town Moor border – suitably marked with a signpost. The area generally was known as Maudlin Meadows and features several well know Memorials which will be well known to visitors; the striking winged Nike (marking the losses from the Boer War) although largely bronze we were surprised to find the wings are now of fibre glass to reduce weight following the building of the Metro system beneath. Nearby stands the City War memorial with an outstanding sculpture entitled "The Response" highlighting the reaction by the citizens to the call to War and its consequences.

Another hidden gem is the Church of St Thomas the Martyr nearby which has a very young congregation being next to Newcastle University (it was Graduation Day when we visited), built to replace another St Thomas when the old City was redeveloped, the modern church boasts a drumkit on the altar and a pool for full immersion baptisms and were very welcoming to our Group. Nearby stands the former Grand Hotel, which is rather appropriate to its title, it is now converted to expensive Student accommodation.

Another cooling detour took us into the Civic Centre with its scale model of the City, and we were able to explore the Civic Centre design, recall the days of "The Brasilia of the North" and the life and times of T Dan Smith, and Our Friends in the North.

We rounded off our exploration at the nearby City Baths now both a modern Gym plus the traditional pool which stands by the City Hall, bringing out more memories from "not that long ago" of the first visits by the Beatles and The Rolling Stones.



(c) Ray Elliston



(c) Ray Elliston



(c) Barry Liddle

"God made most sheep beautiful, but he gave the rest of us a great personality."

I'm either too tall or this 'seed dispenser' is too low



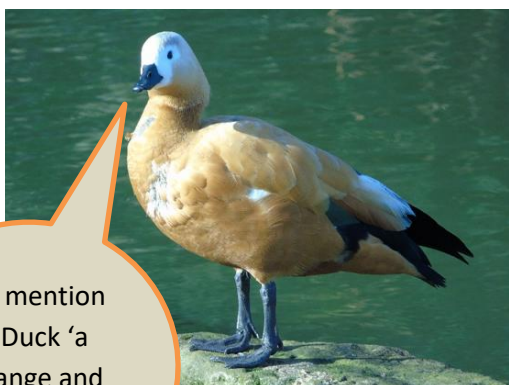
(c) Barry Liddle



(c) Barry Liddle

I was looking for the exit, but somehow, I stumbled into a conversation instead.

Any mention of Duck 'a l'orange and I'm offski!



(c) Barry Liddle

Non, je ne egret rien



© Barry Liddle



© Barry Liddle

"I'm cheaper than a lawnmower".

A Change of Luck

It was the last day of the snooker championship at my local snooker and billiards club. Despite the fact that I was a complete beginner I had stumbled through match after match, and more by luck than judgement, had reached the final. Admittedly, there were not many contestants: all right, four if you want to be pedantic. The match was nearing its conclusion and I had one more ball to pot and I would have won the tournament. I had to overstretch to reach the white ball and decided I would need to use the rest. I had never used one before and it did not feel right to me. Then I remembered watching the great Ronnie O'Sullivan playing a similar shot using his other hand (left-handed instead of right-handed). I decided to emulate the master and changed hands. I was feeling nervous and took several deep breaths to calm myself down. Lo and behold I played the shot and the ball ran around the edge of the hole before dropping into the pocket. I had won!

It just goes to show that a change is as good as a rest.

Creative writing group topic: 'Change'

A Live Encounter

Hot summer's evening
Sitting in restaurant
About to sample
Tankard of ale
Look down
Tiny insect
Floating on top
Seemingly lifeless
Carefully
Extricate
See movement
Goodness me
It's still alive!
Cautiously
Moving along finger
On to next digit
What to do?
Windows locked
No easy exit
Decision reached
Made my excuses
Left the table
With insect
Still aboard
Just stay there
Just stay there
Please
Moved out
Hand held steady
Into fresh air
Reached a haven
Placed hand
Next to a leaf
Blew gently
Farewell little friend
Maybe one day
Some day
Positions might be
Changed
Who knows?

Interest Groups: Programme of Events

Helen Eustace

July 23rd, Natural History, Change of date for this month only

We will meet in the car park at Summerhill at 1.30pm and then do a butterfly count in the surrounding area. We will then go for refreshments in the Summerhill café. For more information contact Irene Archer, Margaret Andrews or Beryl Turnbull.

July 27th, IT Computers, 2pm until 4pm at Utilita York Road

Come along with your computers and any issues you have and I will try and solve them for you. For more information contact Jan Jenner.

July 28th, Tuesday Book Club

We will be reading 'Beyond Black' by Hilary Mantel. New members welcome. For further information contact Mary Waldmeyer.

AUGUST - PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING HAVE GROUPS ARE NOT MEETING IN AUGUST

- ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY
- FRIDAY GENERAL MEETING
- PLAY READING
- POETRY
- QUIZ
- TUESDAY BOOK CLUB

August 3rd, Coffee and Chat 10.30am

The Golden Lion, Dunston Road, All welcome. For further information contact Jacky Armstrong

August 6th, Natural History. Spion Kop Cemetery, Headland.

Park outside of the Cemetery and meet at the main entrance at 1.30pm to see what wildflowers and birds there are.

August 7th N.B. There is no General Meeting in August.**

August 7th, Stroll and chat at 11am

We will be having stroll and chat on this day which is a change to the normal date due to holidays. Destination to be circulated nearer the time.

August 11th, Poetry Group. There will not be a poetry group meeting in August

August 12th, Joint visit between the Garden Group and Art Appreciation

A trip to Kiplin Hall and Gardens in North Yorkshire. The cost of the minibus will be £17.50. We are hoping to get a reduced entry fee to the hall and gardens of £8. There are still places on the coach. If you would like to attend please speak to Helen Eustace, Liz Milbourn, Irene Archer or Andrea Reid.

August 14th, Creative Writing Group. 2pm in the Arts Centre Café.

For more information contact Roger Say

August 17th, Play Reading

Please note that there will not be a play reading group this month

August 19th, Quiz Group

Please note there will not be a quiz group in August

August 25th . Tuesday Book Club

There will not be a Tuesday Book Club in August

September 4th ,General Meeting 2pm

Our speaker this month will be Clive Fennesey who will talk about the building of the Panama Canal.

September 7th. Coffee and Chat 10.30am

The Golden Lion, Dunston Road, All welcome. For further information contact Jacky Armstrong

September 8th. Poetry Group, People's Centre between 2pm and 4pm.

Over the next couple of months, we will be looking at the friendship and poetry between William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, starting with Wordsworth in September. For more information contact Margaret Chappell.

September 10th· Archaeology and History

'A tour around the Lonsdales' A talk by John Heckles on the work of sculptor Roy Lonsdale.

September 11th , Creative Writing Group. 2pm in the Arts Centre Café.

For more information contact Roger Say

September 13th·Sunday, Art Appreciation

Bus Trip to Staithes Art Festival. For further information contact Irene Archer or Andrea Reid.

September 14th , Backgammon , Citizens Advice Bureau at 2pm.

Come along to play a game of backgammon. New members welcome. For more information contact Anne Gardiner

September 16th , Quiz Group , People's Centre at 2pm.

For further details contact John Campbell. New members always welcome.

September 21st, Play Reading. People's Centre, Raby Road between 1pm and 3pm

New members always welcome. For further information contact Carol Currie.

September 22nd , Tuesday Book Club

New members welcome. For further information contact Mary Waldmeyer.

September 23rd, Garden Group.

A minibus is booked but we will see which garden still looks good in September and details will be circulated soon. For more information contact Liz Milbourn or Helen Eustace.

September 30th Stroll and Chat.

Change of date for this month to the 5th Wednesday rather than the 4th .Meet 11am

October 2nd , General Meeting 2pm

Our speaker this month will be Margaret Bozic on the 'lit and Phil' Newcastle.

October 5th, Coffee and Chat 10.30am, The Golden Lion, Dunston Road.

All welcome. For further information contact Jacky Armstrong

October 8th Archaeology and History

A talk is being arranged with Bernard Hope. Details to follow.

October 9th, Creative Writing Group. 2pm in the Arts Centre Café.

For more information contact Roger Say

October 12th, Backgammon, Citizens Advice Bureau at 2pm.

Come along to play a game of backgammon. New members welcome. For more information contact Anne Gardiner

October 13th , Poetry Group, People's Centre between 2pm and 4pm.

In October we shall continue looking at the friendship and poetry between William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. For more information contact Margaret Chappell.

October 21st , Quiz Group , People's Centre at 2pm.

For further details contact John Campbell. New members always welcome

October 28th , Stroll and Chat

Details to follow

November 2nd , Coffee and Chat 10.30am. The Golden Lion, Dunston Road,

All welcome. For further information contact Jacky Armstrong

November 6th , General Meeting 2pm

Our speaker this month will be Philip Caine on 'Barrow to Baghdad and back again'.

November 9th , Backgammon , Citizens Advice Bureau at 2pm.

Come along to play a game of backgammon. New members welcome. For more information contact Anne Gardiner

November 12th , Archaeology and History

Margaret Bozic returns to give a talk on the crossing from Newcastle to Carlisle via trains, road, canal (?) Details nearer the time.

November 13th , Creative Writing Group. 2pm in the Arts Centre Café.

For more information contact Roger Say

November 18th , Quiz Group , People's Centre at 2pm.

For further details contact John Campbell. New members always welcome

November 25th , Stroll and Chat

Details to follow

December 4th , General Meeting 2pm

This will be our Christmas social meeting.

December 7th , Coffee and Chat 10.30am , The Golden Lion, Dunston Road.

All welcome. For further information contact Jacky Armstrong.

December 11th , Creative Writing Group.

2pm in the Arts Centre Café. For more information contact Roger Say

December 12th , Garden Group and open to all.

The garden group are going on the Lees Coach trip to the Alnwick Garden Winter Light Trail. A late afternoon excursion to the Alnwick Gardens. Not only can you see the lights in the Alnwick Garden but also see the lights in Lilidorei. It will cost approximately £35 and this will include both attractions. Pick up will be at Hartlepool Transport Interchange (next door to the railway station). For further information contact Helen Eustace or Liz Milbourn.

December 14th , Backgammon, Citizens Advice Bureau at 2pm.

Come along to play a game of backgammon. New members welcome. For more information contact Anne Gardiner

December 16th , Quiz Group , People's Centre at 2pm.

For further details contact John Campbell. New members always welcome

December 24th , Reading Group (Andrea's)

There will not be a Reading Group in December.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Barry.

In discussing your Word of the Month – 'Flibbertigibbet' in July's Newsletter, you didn't mention it's most famous appearance in popular culture, in the song "How do you solve a problem like Maria?" from The Sound of Music.

Regards Phil Jefferies

My Word of the Month

Faff.

- 'Faff' is a word used to describe a tedious, complicated, or unnecessary task that requires a lot of effort.
- As a verb, 'to faff about or around,' means to waste time, dither, fuss, or busy yourself with unimportant things without accomplishing anything.
- Examples include,
 1. "Stop faffing about with your hair darling, we are going to be late!"
 2. "Stop faffing around in the shed Tom and get the lawn cut!"
 3. "Stop faffing around in the dark and put the lights on" (said the actress to the bishop!)
- My late dad could 'faff around' for England. Typically, the family would be all changed and ready to go on an outing, before dad would finally go upstairs to shave, wash and get ready. After about 40 minutes of waiting, I would typically go upstairs to check on his progress. As usual, he hadn't even reached the bathroom at this stage and I would find him in the bedroom re-arranging his Sox draw or fiddling with the mechanism of an alarm clock! Consequently, he was never knowingly on time for anything. He sadly died 26 years ago this month and I still miss his faffing about.

Sources Google.

Anniversaries in August

British Grand Prix

- The 7th of August 2026 marks 100 years since Britains first motor Grand Prix took place at Brooklands oval racetrack.
- The race was held over 110 laps and covered 287 miles. On this gruelling concrete circuit only 3 of the 9 starters crossed the finishing line.

Television

- On 13 August 2026 it will be exactly 100 years since the television pioneer John Logie Baird demonstrated his first mechanical television system in London.

Astronomical Events

- Keep a look out in the night sky in August for 'The Perseid Meteor Shower,' which reaches a peak overnight on 12-13 August (visible between midnight and 5.30 am) when there are up to 100 or more shooting stars per hour.

Sources Google.

Who am I? (Answer on Page 16)

1. I am a fictional character.
2. My surname is the same as a type of medium sized game bird.
3. I reside and work in Norfolk.
4. I am a personality/presenter in local TV & radio.
5. I've been called a national treasure, alongside Basil Fawlty and Mr Bean.

Q1 Founded in West Hartlepool in 1934, and with its main depot in Oxford Road, this coach company operated holiday tours, excursions, and day trips. What was its name?

- a) Bee Line
- b) Fox Line
- c) Zebra Line

Q2 Which Manchester railway station is the main gateway for long-distance intercity routes?

- a) Manchester Oxford Road
- b) Manchester Piccadilly
- c) Manchester Victoria

Q3 The Titanic was owned and operated by which British shipping company?

- a) Cunard Line
- b) P&O
- c) White Star Line

Q4 What is the memory and navigational test that all aspiring London black cab drivers must pass?

- a) The Guidance
- b) The Knowledge
- c) The Pledge

Q5 What was the lowest and cheapest category of passenger accommodation on 19th and 20th century ocean liners?

- a) Standard Class
- b) Steerage Class
- c) Storage Class

Q6 What is the name of the overnight sleeper rail service from London to (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness)?

- a) Celtic Sleeper
- b) Caledonian Sleeper
- c) Chitterie Sleeper

Q7 The steam train service between Goathland and Whitby is operated by:

- a) North Yorkshire Moors Railway
- b) Stephenson Steam Railway
- c) Weardale Railway

Q8 Cabin pressure and dry air in planes reduces your ability to taste sweet and salty foods by about 30%

- a) True
- b) False
- c) Only true for long- haul flights.

Q9 What is a Charabanc

- a) A French word for a shared bunk compartment on a sleeper train.
- b) An old fashioned large, open-side coach or motor bus fitted with bench seats.
- c) A train carriage designated for outsize luggage and bicycles.

Q10 In terms of passenger numbers, the most popular domestic flight in the UK is between:

- a) London Heathrow and Edinburgh
- b) London Heathrow and Glasgow
- c) London Heathrow and Manchester

Q11 Swindon is home to a legendary ring road junction. What is it affectionately called?

- a) Spaghetti Junction
- b) The Magic Roundabout
- c) The Swindon Maze

Q12 After Heathrow, what is the UK's second largest cargo airport?

- a) Belfast
- b) East Midlands
- c) Glasgow

Q13 The following are International Ferry Ports except one. Which is the odd one out?

- a) Portsmouth
- b) Plymouth
- c) Southampton

Q14 What is the average direct flight time between London and Paris?

- a) 40 minutes
- b) 1 hour 05 minutes
- c) 1 hour and 20 minutes

Q15 Studies show that UK motorway service stations are more expensive than high street shops or supermarkets, and have an average mark-up of:

- a) 15-30%
- b) 25-50%
- c) 50 -100%

Q16 No location in the UK is more than X miles from the sea. How far is X?

- a) 37 miles
- b) 77 miles
- c) 117 miles

Q17 'Network Rail' was created as a direct replacement for:

- a) British Rail
- b) Railtrack
- c) RMT

Q18 The only remaining commercial scheduled hovercraft service in the UK runs between:

- a) Fishguard (Wales) and Rosslare (Ireland)
- b) Southsea (Portsmouth) and Ryde (Isle of Wight)
- c) Heysham (Lancashire) to Douglas (Isle of Man)

Q19 The 'Fifteen Guinea Special' ran on August 11th, 1968. What was it?

- a) The final main-line passenger train to be hauled by a steam locomotive on British Railways.
- b) The first diesel powered passenger service on British Railways
- c) The last scheduled journey of the 'Flying Scotsman' on British Railways.

Q20 The poem 'Night Mail' was written in 1936 for a classic rail documentary, filmed by the British General Post Office Film Unit. Who was the poet?

- a) T.S. Eliot
- b) W.H. Auden
- c) W.B. Yates

Answers on Page 16

Directory

Committee Members for 2026/27

Chair, Speaker Finder & Web Admin.

Roger Say

Vice Chair & Business Secretary

Paul Eustace

Treasurer –

Cliff Cordiner

Membership Secretary –

Pauline Williamson

Beacon Administrator.

Jan Jenner

Groups' Co-ordinator

Helen Eustace.

Minutes Secretary

To be arranged

Committee –

Wendy Borthwick, Andrea Reid

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.

Backgammon Group Ann Gardiner

Bridge: Phil Jefferies.

Chess Group: Roger Say.

Coffee & Chat Jacky Armstrong

Creative Writing Group: Roger Say.

Events: see notice board

Family History: Co- Leaders: Jacky Armstrong, Pat Rutter.

Fun with Fabrics: Ann Say

Gardens and Gardening: Co-Leaders: Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace

I.T. Group: Jan Jenner

Lawn Bowls: Ray Elliston.

Music: Vacant

Natural History Group: Co- Leaders: Irene Archer, Margaret Andrews and Beryl Turnbull.

Photography Group: Jan Jenner

Play Reading: Carol Currie

Poetry: Margaret Chappell

Quiz Team: John Campbell.

Reading Group: Andrea Reid

Shibashi Exercise Group: Marjorie Reynolds.

Stroll and Chat: Helen Eustace

Tuesday Book Club: Mary Waldmeyer

Walking Group: Keith Alder

Quiz Who am I? – Alan Partridge

Quiz Answers

Q1 a) Bee Line; **Q2** b) Manchester Piccadilly; **Q3** c) White Star Line; **Q4** b) The Knowledge; **Q5** b) Steerage Class; **Q6** b) Caledonian Sleeper; **Q7** a) North Yorkshire Moors Railway; **Q8** a) True; **Q9** b) An old fashioned large, open-side coach or motor bus fitted with bench seats; **Q10** a) London Heathrow and Edinburgh; **Q11** b) The Magic Roundabout; **Q12** b) East Midlands; **Q13** c) Southampton; **Q14** c) 1 hour and 20 minutes; **Q15** c) 50 -100%; **Q16** b) 77 miles; **Q17** b) Railtrack; **Q18** b) Southsea (Portsmouth) and Ryde (Isle of Wight); **Q19** a) The final main-line passenger train to be hauled by a steam locomotive on British Railways; **Q20** b) W.H. Auden.

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 2026.

Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor