Newsletter

Hartlepool & District u3a

Issue 113, October 2026



Town Wall at the Headland. *Photograph* © Barry Liddle

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Comments from the Chair



It was great to see so many of you at last month's general meeting when Clive Fennessy regally entertained us with his description of the building of the Panama Canal. I have to confess that I was initially unsure if this subject would be of interest to many of our members but I need not have worried. This talk was enthusiastically received and, as a result, I have invited him back for part 2 of this subject next year which will feature photographs of the canal. Definitely something to look forward to next March.

Our next speaker will be on Friday October 2nd which will feature Margaret Bozic telling us all about the 'Lit and Phil' Newcastle. I was lucky enough to hear Margaret talk about the Literature and Philosophy Society in Newcastle, which has been there since 1825, and I can thoroughly recommend it. This is followed in November with a visit from Philip (not Michael) Caine. More about that in my next 'Comment.'

Our Christmas general meeting will fall on Friday the 4th of December when we do not have a guest speaker who will be unlocking some of the undoubted talent amongst our members. Watch this space for more information, but I can already promise mince pies amongst other refreshments.

I hope to see you all at our next general meeting

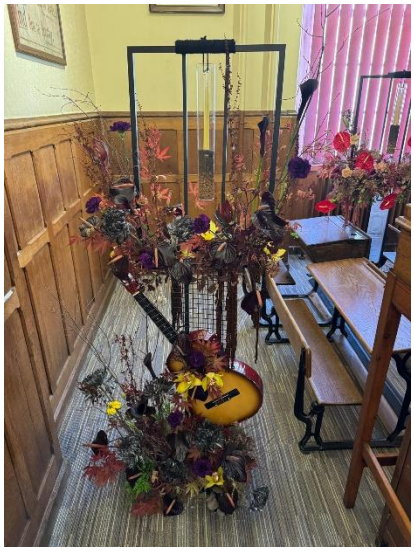
Meanwhile

Take care

Roger

Ushaw Flower Festival

Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace



This month's Garden Group visit was to the Ushaw Flower Festival, held biennially at Ushaw House and Chapels, near Durham.



This year's festival invited visitors to experience the music of the North East, reimagined through flowers. The many breathtaking installations filled the historic halls and chapels with colour, creativity and imagination, with each display celebrating a different chapter in the North East's musical story.

From *The Blaydon Races* to Prefab Sprout, Sam Fender to the Pet Shop Boys, and many more, the displays showcased the award-winning talents of the numerous florists and flower arrangers involved.



There was also a specialist plant sale in the beautiful grounds, giving visitors the opportunity to take home something special for their own gardens.



We had a wonderful day out, enjoying the beautiful surroundings and the spectacular floral displays. And, last but not least, the restaurant provided a good selection of refreshments to round off an enjoyable visit.

Photographs ©Paul Eustace and Margaret Boddy

National u3a Week is the 19th to the 27th of September 2026. This year's theme is 'expanding horizons' by doing something new just for fun.

I would love to hear from any of you who are willing to take part and try something completely different no matter how big or small.

Some examples are

- Learning to count to ten in a different language
- Join a new u3a group
- Try a new cuisine
- Get involved with litter picking

We have already had a good response to a previous e-mail and some examples include a member planning to learn 1 to 10 in Spanish, one planning to start meditation, and another is going to learn Backgammon and is joining our u3a group.

A few have suggested more extreme sports, and one would like to jet ski and another white-water rafting. If any of you would like to join them then please let me know. Both can be done locally.

Whatever you choose please let me know and take photos if you can. We will then do an article for the next newsletter.

There will be a prize for the most random idea!

Helen Eustace

Techy Group

Jan Jenner

We're made some changes to the Techy Group. Last season, it gradually became a problem-solving group. Once members' issues had been resolved, many stopped attending, and the group eventually became too small to continue in that format.

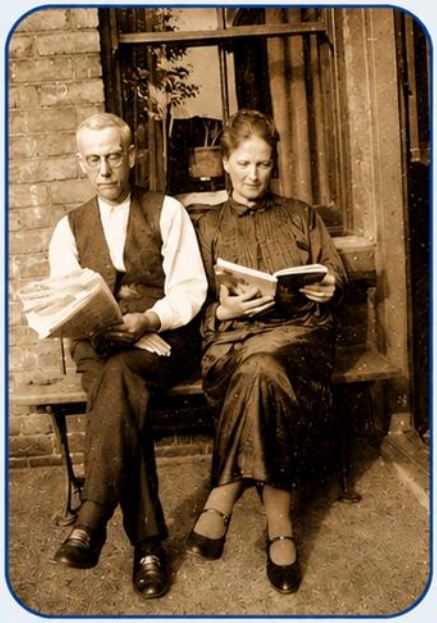
It was suggested we set up a simple computer-tuition group, suitable for complete beginners as well as for anyone who would like to refresh or develop their computer skills. So that's what we've done. Start at the beginning and see where it leads!

We will also be happy to try and solve any Techy problems you have! To help people retain what they learn, the group will now meet fortnightly. Our next session will be on Monday 28 September, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Utilita. After that, sessions will take place on the second and fourth Monday of each month, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, at Utilita. If anyone has any questions or suggestions email me!

Photograph of the Month

Ray Elliston





u3a Hartlepool

Do you wonder where you actually come from?

Want to trace back your family, but unsure of how to start?

We're thinking about starting a new active group in Family History with a touch of Geneology

It's an opportunity to see the latest software and internet tools for plotting your background

Whether you are a seasoned researcher or new to the online research world, this could be the group for you.



Why Join?

- Friendly and welcoming home atmosphere
- Interesting content
- Worked examples
- Good open conversation
- Opportunities to make new friends
- No pressure

Sign up and see if it is for you!





Meeting details

This new group is led by **Peter Stoker** and meetings will be held at his home. Numbers are restricted to 8, but if the group proves popular then an alternative larger venue would be sought. Please contact Peter if you are interested. A full version of this poster containing Peter's telephone number and e-mail address will be on display at u3a General Meetings.

This new group complements the long running and successful 'Family History Group' run by Jacky Armstrong, which provides a more 'one on one' service for those needing help in tracing their family tree.

New Members

" In September we welcomed two new members to our u3a community. We wish Kath and Gloria all the best and hope they have a long and fulfilling journey in our u3a." **Pauline Williamson, Membership Secretary**

Dates for Your Diary

Helen Eustace

September 30th
Strollers (Stroll and Chat)
Change of date for this month to the 5th Wednesday rather than the 4th
We will meet at 11am at the Borough Hall car park at the Headland. Refreshments at Mary Rowntrees. Dogs welcome.

October 1st
Natural History
Wynyard Woodland Park, Thorpe Thewles. At 1.30pm. Subject fungi

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 12th
'Techy Group'
Utilita, York Road between 2pm and 4pm. Computers, mobiles, tablets etc. For more information contact Jan Jenner.

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 Samual Taylor Coleridge. For more information contact Margaret Chappell.

October 14th
Art Appreciation
We will be discussing poster art used in advertising. This could be events, advertising, railway posters, products.

October 19th
Play Reading
People's Centre, Raby Road between 1pm and 3pm. For further information contact Carol Currie.

October 21st
Quiz Group
People's Centre at 2pm. For further details contact John Campbell. New members always welcome

October 27th
Tuesday Book Club
Newcastle Building Society, York Road. For further information contact Mary Waldmeyer.

October 28th
Strollers (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 5th
Natural History
Peoples Centre 1.30pm. A talk by Carole Lloyd regarding animals and plants which have come to the UK which are a nuisance.

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 10th
Poetry Group
Peoples Centre between 2 and 4pm.For more information contact Margaret Chappell.

November 11th
Art Appreciation
Our meeting will be held at Christ Church to see the annual Hartlepool Art Club exhibition.

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 16th
Play Reading
People's Centre, Raby Road between 1pm and 3pm. For further information contact Carol Currie.

November 18th
Quiz Group
People's Centre at 2pm. For further details contact John Campbell. New members always welcome

November 24th
Tuesday Book Club
Newcastle Building Society, York Road
For further information contact Mary Waldmeyer

November 25th
Strollers (Stroll and Chat.) Details to follow

December 3rd
General History No Meeting
There will not be a General History meeting in December

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 8th
U3a Christmas Meal
£18.95 for the carvery. 12 noon at Hardwicke Manor Hotel, £5 deposit required. For more information contact Jacky Armstrong

December 9th
Art Appreciation No Meeting
There will not be an Art Appreciation meeting in December

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 £33 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.

January 29th, 2027
Natural History
Burn Valley at 10.00am for the Big Garden Bird Watch.

February 2027
Natural History
Group lunch. Date, venue and time to be decided.

Hartlepool u3a Monthly General Meeting

2nd October at 2pm.

Talk on 'The Lit and Phil, Newcastle'.

The Lit & Phil (short for the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle Upon Tyne is the largest independent library outside London.)

Our Guest Speaker is Margaret Bozic MBE a retired Chartered Surveyor who lives in Washington. She is a former Board member for the Lit and Phil and is now a volunteer coordinator. She gives regular talks and leads tours and walks for u3a@s, the Rotary Club and WI Groups.

All members and prospective members are welcome

Miscellaneous

Barry Liddle

My Word of the Month: Christmas

Let me be the first to mention the C-word. Commercial Christmas is now a three-month 'season' starting slowly in early October then building to a crescendo on the last Saturday before Christmas Day.

Who am I?

I am a committed Christian
I dedicated most of my life to prison reform
I became a controversial figure following a long campaign to get parole for Myra Hindley
I led a private inquiry into Pornography in Britain
I served as a government minister under two Labour Prime Ministers

Answer on Page 14

Bizarre Items Left Behind on Trains

Actual examples include:

Animals: a hamster, kittens and dogs.
Novelties: A Dalek costume, a giant inflatable shark and a taxidermied fox.
Medical: Glass eyes, false teeth and a surprising number of prosthetic legs.
Groceries: a 22lb box of chicken breasts and a whole Gouda cheese.
Household Goods: ironing boards, leather lounge chairs and a kitchen sink.
Sources Google, Northern Trains, Scotrail, South Western Railway, Hull Trains and Sky News

During 20 years of commuting between Northfield and Birmingham New Street I must have left behind at least half a dozen umbrellas on Central Trains. I did occasionally think about going to the lost property facility at New St- but I realised if the attendant asked what the umbrella looked like – all I could have said was that it was black!

Did You Know?

The small dot over the letters i and j is called a ***tittle.***

Q1 What does the idiom 'fit as a fiddle' mean?

a) Being able to walk and talk at the same time
b) Being fit enough to play the violin quickly
c) Being in good health, active and free of sickness

Q2 Obesity is often measured by BMI. What does BMI stand for?

a) Body Mass Index
b) Body Measuring Index
c) Body Metrics Index

Q3 What is the minimum number of portions of fruit and veg that the NHS recommends you eat each day?

a) Five portions per day
b) Five portions of fruit and five veg
c) Ten portions per day

Q4 The average normal body temperature is:

a) 27°C
b) 30°C
c) 37°C

Q5 The examiner in a standard DVLA Driving Licence Test will ask you to read a number plate from:

a) 15 metres
b) 20 metres
c) 25 metres

Q6 Which of the following has the highest level of vitamin C?

a) Broccoli
b) Kiwifruit
c) Oranges

Q7 Adults lose 3-5% of their muscle mass each decade after the age of 30. What is this process called?

a) Muscular Dystrophy
b) Rhabdomyolysis
c) Sarcopenia

Q8 Which of these foods has the highest protein content?

a) Cottage Cheese

b) Eggs

c) Greek Yogurt

Q9 What is a Pescatarian?

a) A person eating a vegetarian diet that includes fish and other seafood

b) A person who only eats edible seaweed, kelp, fish and shellfish.

c) A person who often substitutes fish for meat

Q10 The NHS recommends that everyone should take a daily vitamin supplement during the autumn and winter months. Which vitamin is it?

a) Vitamin A

b) Vitamin B12

c) Vitamin D

Q11 On average how long would a healthy adult survive without water and food?

a) 2-3 days

b) 3-7 days

c) 7- 10 days

Q12 Which Hollywood actress revolutionised home fitness in the 1980s with her exercise videos?

a) Goldie Hawn

b) Jane Fonda

c) Michelle Pfeiffer

Q13 Which celebrity chef led a campaign to remove Turkey Twizzlers (high fat low meat content) from school dinners?

a) Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

b) Jamie Oliver

c) Tom Kerridge

Q14 Omega-3 is a family of polyunsaturated fats that your body needs for normal function but cannot make on its own. What is the best source of Omega-3?

a) Fruit and Vegetables

b) Oily Fish

c) Red Meat

Q15 NHS guidance states that men and women should limit alcohol consumption to:

a) 7 units a week

b) 14 units a week

c) 21 units a week

Q16 Endorphins are natural chemicals your body releases to relieve pain, reduce stress, and improve your overall mood. The bodies release of endorphins is triggered by all the following except one. Which is the odd one out?

a) Laughing with friends

b) Prolonged sitting

c) Sexual activity and falling in love

d) Strenuous exercise

Q17 Kefir, Kimchi and Sauerkraut produce healthy probiotics that improve gut heath. They are best known as:

a) Fermented foods

b) Pickled foods

b) Preserved foods

Q18 Walking 10,000 steps a day has become popular following:

a) The introduction of NHS guidance for healthy adults.

b) A Marketing slogan originating from Japan to market a pedometer called 'Manpokei'.

c) A fitness target introduced in the 1980s by the World Health Organisation.

Q19 Which one of the following exercise groups provide the best Aerobic exercise:

a) Dynamic stretching, Yoga and Pilates

b) Running, cycling and swimming

c) Weightlifting, bodyweight squats and push-ups

Q20 Which University is widely recognised as the top institution in the UK and possibly the world, for fitness, sport, and exercise related courses?

a) Bath

b) Exeter

c) Loughborough

Quiz Answers on Page 15

Answer to Who AM I? is Lord Longford

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
Paul Eustace
Committee –
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 (Currently inactive)
Gardens and Gardening: Co-Leaders: Liz Milbourn and Helen Eustace
Genealogy: Peter Stoker (New)
Lawn Bowls: Ray Elliston.
Natural History Group: Co- Leaders: Irene Archer, Margaret Andrews and Beryl Turnbull.
Photography Group: Jan Jenner (Currently inactive)
Play Reading: Carol Currie
Poetry: Margaret Chappell
Quiz Team: John Campbell.
Reading Group: Andrea Reid
Shibashi Exercise Group: Marjorie Reynolds.
Strollers (Formerly Stroll and Chat): Helen Eustace
Techy Group: Jan Jenner (Formerly IT Group)
Think and Drink: Maggie Hendry (New)
Tuesday Book Club: Mary Waldmeyer
Walking Group: Keith Alder

Quiz Answers

Q1 c) Being in good health, active and free of sickness; **Q2** a) Body Mass Index;**Q3** a) Five portions per day; **Q4** c) 37°C; **Q5** b) 20 metres;**Q6** b) Kiwifruit; **Q7** c) Sarcopenia; **Q8** a) Cottage Cheese; **Q9** a) A person eating a vegetarian diet that includes fish and other seafood; **Q10** c) Vitamin D; **Q11** b) 3-7 days; **Q12** b) Jane Fonda;**Q13** b) Jamie Oliver; **Q14** b) Oily Fish; **Q15** b) 14 units a week; **Q16** b) Prolonged sitting; **Q17** Fermented foods;**Q18** b) A Marketing slogan originating from Japan to market a pedometer called 'Manpokei'.**Q19** b) Running, cycling and swimming; **Q20** c) Loughborough.

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 October2026.
Barry Liddle, Newsletter Editor