



Members Newsletter August 2026

Dear Alnwick u3a

As my season as your chair comes to an end, may I say what a privilege and what fun it has been. I'll be giving a full run down of the year at our AGM in October. Meanwhile, as most of you will not be present, may I tell you that your committee has worked hard and productively this year, it's been a goodun! I hope you all have a safe and cool summer. We look forward to September as we get active together in our groups again.

Carollyn, Chair

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June Monthly Meeting

A Royal Medieval Travelogue - Aidan Harrison

Margaret Tudor's journey from London to Edinburgh in 1503 was one of the most important royal progresses of the early Tudor period. At just thirteen years old, Margaret, the eldest daughter of King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, left England to marry King James IV of Scotland. The marriage formed part of the Treaty of Perpetual Peace of 1502, which aimed to end centuries of conflict between England and Scotland. Although the peace would prove temporary, Margaret's journey was a carefully orchestrated diplomatic event that symbolised hope for a new relationship between the two kingdoms.



Preparations for the journey were extensive. Margaret travelled with a large household that included ladies-in-waiting, noblemen, clergy, heralds, musicians, servants, physicians, and guards. Packhorses carried furniture, clothing, jewels, tapestries, books, and valuable household goods that would establish her new royal household in Scotland.

Margaret departed from London in late June 1503. Travel during the early sixteenth century was slow, with the royal party usually covering no more than fifteen or twenty miles a day. Roads were often rough and difficult, making horseback the most reliable means of transport. Accommodation had been carefully arranged at castles, monasteries, bishops' residences, and the homes of leading nobles along the route.

The journey north was intended to be far more than practical travel. Each stop became an opportunity to celebrate the alliance between England and Scotland. Towns decorated their streets with banners, flowers, and greenery, while church bells rang to welcome the princess.

June Monthly Meeting – contd

These public celebrations reinforced the political importance of her marriage and demonstrated the support of England's northern communities for the new peace.



One of the most significant stages of the journey was Margaret's visit to York. As the principal city of northern England, York held great political and religious importance. Margaret attended services at York Minster, where prayers

were offered for the success of her marriage and for peace between the two kingdoms.

The procession eventually reached Berwick-upon-Tweed. Here an important ceremonial handover took place. English officials formally entrusted Margaret to a delegation of Scottish nobles sent by King James IV. The event symbolised friendship and trust between the two kingdoms, marking the peaceful transfer of the English princess into her new country.

After crossing into Scotland, Margaret was warmly welcomed by Scottish nobles, who escorted her towards Edinburgh. Every effort was made to ensure the young princess felt honoured and secure during the final stages of her journey.

Margaret's last important stop before reaching Edinburgh was Dalkeith Palace. Here she rested while preparations were completed for her ceremonial entry into the Scottish capital. It was also here that she met King James IV for the first time. Although they had been married by proxy before her departure from England, this was their first personal meeting.

June Monthly Meeting – contd

Margaret's arrival in Edinburgh was marked by magnificent celebrations. The streets were decorated with banners, tapestries, and triumphal arches, while crowds gathered to greet their new queen. Church bells rang throughout the city, and musicians performed as the royal procession entered the capital.

The festivities continued for several days with banquets, tournaments, dancing, and religious ceremonies. Margaret soon established her household at the Scottish court and began adapting to life in her new kingdom. Although she had left England behind, she remained an important link between the Tudor and Stewart dynasties.

In later years, the political hopes surrounding Margaret's marriage were disappointed. War resumed between England and Scotland, and James IV was killed at the Battle of Flodden in 1513. However, the dynastic significance of the marriage proved far more enduring. Margaret's great-grandson, James VI of Scotland, inherited the English throne in 1603 as James I, uniting the crowns of England and Scotland under one monarch.

Margaret Tudor's journey from London to Edinburgh therefore occupies an important place in British history. It was not simply the journey of a young princess travelling to her wedding but a carefully planned diplomatic procession that reflected the ideals of Renaissance monarchy. Through ceremony, hospitality, and public celebration, the journey symbolised hopes for peace between two ancient rivals. Although those hopes were not immediately fulfilled, Margaret's marriage ultimately helped shape the future of the British Isles by creating the dynastic link that united the English and Scottish crowns a century later.

July Monthly Meeting

History of the Bathing House by Jen Teulon

Jen has lived in the North East for 50 years and loves Northumberland, Howick and the Howick Bathing House. She stayed there in 2019 and had the idea to research its history. Jen's talk covered some of her findings which are all included in her book 'The Story of The Bathing House at Howick'.

The Bathing House was created by Charles, 2nd Earl Grey and his wife Mary. Around 1813-15 the house was built, or possibly



renovated, from a smaller cottage. An upper level was added with a stone balcony off the upstairs room, which was known as Lady Grey's parlour. John Ravel was a stone mason who worked at Howick Hall, and he did

the work on the house. In 1864 the third Earl Grey added a porch to the house as a grand principal entrance for the family.

There is evidence of women being paid to look after the house, including Jane Patterson, also known as Jenny. Jane came from Alnwick but married a man from Seahouses farm. She worked for the Grey family and was offered the position of housekeeper after her husband died. The cottage was often described as 'Jenny Patterson's cottage'. In 1827 nine people were living in two rooms in the downstairs part of the house. These were Jane, her two youngest children, five grandchildren and a maid.

July Monthly Meeting (contd.)

The Grey family and their guests would go to the bathing house to swim. Lady Grey would stand on the balcony to watch her children playing on the beach. Four bathing pools were cut out of the rock and the children would learn to swim there. One part of the rock is cut out to form 'nannies seat' where the children's nannies would sit to watch them as they swam or played on the rocks. There is also evidence of metal hooks which were used to attach bathing huts to the rocks where family and guests would get changed.



After Jane Patterson's death, her daughter Elizabeth became housekeeper. She married John Douglas from Earsdon and they had four sons. It was a simple life with no electricity or running water, but they grew vegetables and kept pigs and evidence of a pig sty still remains. A memorial to the Douglas family can be seen in Howick Churchyard. Robert, the youngest child of Elizabeth and John Douglas, was born and spent his whole life in the Bathing House. Robert married Margaret Burgless and they took over the house after his parents died. They had six sons who all lived in the bathing house. Robert Douglas survived his wife and died at the Bathing House in 1892.

In the 20th century the house was occupied by the Turnbull family. John Turnbull and his wife Mary Ann moved into the Bathing House after Robert Douglas died. By 1911 only a son, James Turnbull, was living at the house and a Margaret Ann Henderson had moved in as housekeeper.

July Monthly Meeting (contd.)

At this time the house was sometimes known as 'Miss Henderson's House'. Her husband was a travelling salesman who was often away from home. Margaret was a spiritualist and held seances in the house. After James Turnbull's death she lived there with her nephew Christian Tully (Christie). After Margaret Ann died in the house, aged 91, Christian lived there on his own and it became known as 'Tully's' or 'Christie's House'. He lived at the Bathing House for most of his life and later ran Howick Post Office, cycling from the house to his work. In 1963 he moved into East House in the village to be closer to his work. This was the end of the Bathing House as a full-time home. It was in a poor state and needed many repairs.



In 1963 the balcony was taken down along with the principal entrance porch and just the outline of the door and some steps can now be seen. Additional windows were added and the house became a holiday

home for the Fellowes family who were Doctors from Jesmond. After the Fellowes left the house, it became a holiday rental but in the 1980s the accommodation was still very basic. A major renovation in 1999-2000 brought the house up to date. The stonework was still good, and some stones were retained but turned around. Central heating was installed and the interior is now comfortable and cozy. The house sleeps six, but the rental cost is understandably high, given the location and the look of the place.

Renewal of Annual Subs for 2026-27

It's that time of year again! The annual Alnwick u3a subscription for 2026-27 is due on 1st September, the start of our next financial year. Details are on the website at

<https://alnwick.u3asite.uk/membership/>

There's a link to a downloadable Membership Form, but **continuing Members do not need to complete this.**

In summary, the subscription for 2026/27 will be £27.00. This is unchanged from the current financial year. If you choose not to receive the National Magazine, u3a Matters, the annual subscription will be reduced by £4.20 to £22.80.

If you are a member of the **North Northumberland Network (NNN)**, i.e. Berwick, Coquetdale and Wooler) the cost is half of our normal subscription minus the cost of the u3a Matters magazine, making the annual subscription £9.30.

For those of you who are Members of any other u3as, the Associate Member subscription is based on the normal fee, minus the Third Age Trust Annual Capitation Fee (currently £4 per member) and annual subscription to u3a Matters, making the cost £18.80.

The best way to renew your membership is via BACS direct from your bank account, and you can do this now; you needn't wait until September. The details are below: **please make sure you include your name in the transaction details, and, if there is room, the word "subs":-**

Sort Code 20-59-43 Account No. 00278882

Cash or cheques, made out to "Alnwick u3a", can be paid to the Treasurer or the Membership Secretary at our monthly meeting. But if you pay by cash, **please put it in an envelope with your name and amount clearly marked, to avoid confusion, especially at the September meeting.**

Groups Update

We currently have two **Ukulele** groups: Beginners and Improvers. However, in September we will be combining both groups, each session lasting an hour and a half. Dates/times as follows:-

September – 10th, 1.30 – 3.00 pm;

September - 24th, 10.30 – 12.00 noon.

October – 8th, 1.30 – 3.00 pm;

October - 22nd, 10.30 – 12.00 noon.

November – 12th, 1.30 – 3.00 pm;

November 26th, 10.30 – 12.00 noon.

There will be no meetings in December, so we'll start again in January 2027.

Trevor Robinson – Group Leader

There have been a few changes of **Group Leaders** this year but it's great to hear that some new Leaders have been found from within the groups. One Group which is ending is Book Group 2. This has been held in the evening at Tessa Nichol's house for the past 12 years, so I think she deserves to have a rest. Thank you very much Tessa for all your years of organising and your help at the New Members Meetings. We very much appreciated it.

Although we still have Book Groups 1 and 3, thank goodness, this leaves us one Book Group down and this type of Group is very popular. Do you think you would like to run a new Book Group? This could be in the comfort of your home like Book Group 1 or in St Michaels Small Hall like Book Group 3. Please get in touch and we can discuss it.

I would also like to thank ALL of our Group Leaders, Without them we would not have a u3a.

Anne McMillan. Groups Coordinator
Groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com

Geology Group News

We have a hall meeting and talk on the first Wednesday of the month and have an excursion on the third Friday of each month.

Our July excursion was to see the hills formed by an ancient tropical reef at Tunstall Hills, near Sunderland, (pictured) followed by a visit to the nearby cliffs behind Hendon Beach with their fascinating rock formations.



The tropical reef was formed some 270 million years ago in the Zechstein sea which stretched from the edge on what are now the Pennines across to Germany and Poland.

The barrier reef was formed from the remains of ancient plants and animals with deeper

sea to the east and a shallow tropical lagoon to the west.

A range of low hills now mark the course of the main reef and its outliers, including the obvious Penshaw monument on one of the outliers. We toured the reef hills, which have excellent views, and are cut by a steep sided valley, formed as a much more recent glacial meltwater channel (some 15-20,000 years ago), when water from a melting glacier surged through to end up meeting the North Sea at Seaham.

A five-minute drive then took us to the car park above Hendon Cliffs on the coast where we met Christine BurrIDGE, Secretary of the North East Geological Society, who had kindly offered to show us the cliffs. These are made up of limestones and magnesian limestone (limestone enriched with magnesium) formed in the Zechstein Sea.

Geology Group News (contd.)

Subsequent water movement through the limestones removed some of the magnesium and dissolved the rock. Limestone was then re-crystallized from the concentrated solutions forming very strange formations known as concretions. The concretions are abundant in both the cliffs, rock debris below them and in the local stonework.

I collected some examples from the foot of the cliffs which are illustrated below (the grid is of 1cm squares).

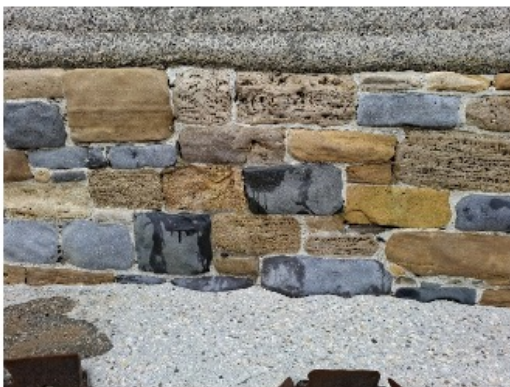


How the concretions formed and why they are so variable is not really understood but they are certainly impressive.

Cannon ball concretions are common, as are formations that resemble corals, lace-like structures are also seen, and the fractured surfaces of cannon

balls often have a radial structure resembling needles.

Frequently used as building stone a small groyne down by the beach



shows a chequerboard of limestones, whinstone, local sandstone and granite blocks!

A thoroughly enjoyable trip.

Our next excursion, on August 21st, will be to Siccar Point where we will explore the new Deep Time Trail to

the world-famous unconformity.

Bob Pass, Group Leader

A New Group

Don't get too giddy here, but there's a new Group starting In September. It's the Choir for People Who Can't Sing. I know, I know – and neither can I, but this one's different

There are definitely

- NO AUDITIONS
- NO READING MUSIC, and
- NO PRESSURE TO SING SOLO

Instead, it's all about

FUN – HEALTH (singing improves lung function and posture) -
SOCIAL CONNECTION - CONFIDENCE

I'll provide the backing tracks and words and all you have to do is turn up and sing. Please note – this isn't the same as Kyla's Singing Group in that we'll be learning songs, but you can be in both!

The idea would be to initially meet every 4 weeks at St Michael's Parish Hall, on the 3rd Tuesday 10-12am, but much will depend on the numbers interested.

To learn more, you can email me, Pete Cook, at cookie_pete_christine@yahoo.co.uk

Another New Group

Yes, another new group, isn't this wonderful. I am starting a **FAMILY HISTORY** group in September. This is aiming to bring together people of all abilities to share their knowledge and help each other.

We will discuss our latest successes and help with any Brick Walls members may have. Maybe your family are in the UK or have travelled far away. It might not be your family you are researching; it doesn't matter. They could be famous or infamous, rich or poor.

We are always looking for new sources. Where did you get your information?

We'll be discussing different topics each session from how to get started on your family tree to Wills and occupations. The **FIRST MEETING ONLY** will be on **TUESDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER AT 10am IN ST MICHAELS SMALL HALL** where we will discuss the format of the group and future topics (I have a long list).

The first regular **MONTHLY MEETING** will be held on **1ST WEDNESDAY 2-4 IN ST MICHAELS HALL, STARTING ON 7TH OCTOBER.**

Please send me an email via the group on the website if you would like to come or have any questions. It would be great if you could join us.

Anne McMillan

Other Updates

A message from the Treasurer

Elsewhere in this Newsletter is an item about membership renewals., in which I say that while I much prefer payment by BACS, payment by cash is acceptable. However, I would like to avoid the problems we had at the September 2025 meeting, where some people were simultaneously paying cash for both the £2 charge for the meeting and for their annual membership fee, and the record keeping became a bit confused.

In future, and starting this coming September, if you want to pay the annual fee, please put the exact money in an envelope with your name clearly marked. This will avoid confusion and hopefully will also reduce the length of the queue at the door!

Trevor Robinson – Treasurer

First Aid Training

We had a well-attended First Aid Training session in February, given by Ian Chisholm, from St Johns Ambulance. Everyone who went said it was a useful and informative event. I have previously announced that there will be another training session on 29th September at 10pm in the Small Hall, but I thought there should be a reminder.

I have asked Ian to cover some of the original topics, but also some new ones. If you are interested in attending, please send me an email, via the website.

Trevor Robinson

Remaining Monthly Meetings in 2026

SEPTEMBER 17th '*We are what we eat: how our food intake expresses our affiliations and life journey*' - Lynn Harbottle, dietitian and medical social anthropologist, will talk about her own food influences to illustrate the meanings and significance we assign to food and eating.

OCTOBER 15th (AGM first) '*A marine animal on the beach - what should you do?*' - Lorna Llewellyn, a volunteer with the British Divers Marine Life Rescue, will enlighten us with her presentation.

NOVEMBER 19th '*The buildings of David Stephenson*' - Richard Pears, Durham University Librarian, makes a welcome return to introduce us this time to David Stephenson, an 18/19th century architect from the Northeast.

DECEMBER 10th '*Daring to make a comeback*' - Martin Shingler, writer, editor and film historian, making a welcome return to explore the reasons why some ageing film stars have risked reputational damage by making a comeback after a significant period of absence.

After this, we will have our Christmas Social

Committee Members 2025/26

Lin Jones has joined your Committee as a co-opted member. The full Committee is now:-

Chair	Carollyn McDonald
Vice Chair	Shelley Willis
Business Secretary	Cathy Robinson
Membership Secretary	Pat Ashton
Treasurer	Trevor Robinson
Groups Coordinator	Anne McMillan
Minutes Secretary	Mary Brazier
Committee Member	Sue Willoughby
Co-opted Member	Lin Jones

As usual, we will elect the new Committee for 2026/27 at the Annual General Meeting on 15th October. It already seems that a couple of existing members will be standing down, and it would be really good if we could get some additional Alnwick u3a members to stand for election.

We need a Committee to keep our u3a in business; without one we could not continue to operate, under Third Age Trust rules. Indeed, some u3as have had to fold, including a couple in our own region, because they were unable to establish a functioning Committee. So please consider becoming a Committee member. Why not chat to one of the Committee members above to find out more.

OPENED ON THIS DAY - 1ST AUGUST 1831

🎵 LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN 🎵

London Bridge opened nearly 200 years ago, but by the 1960s it was sinking under the weight of modern traffic. Instead of pulling it down, City of London put it up for auction. It was bought by American entrepreneur Robert P. McCulloch in 1968 for \$2.5 million as a publicity stunt to sell property in Lake Havasu City. This was a planned community he had established in 1964 on the shores of Lake Havasu.

However, McCulloch only had the exterior granite blocks from the original bridge cut and transported to the United States for use in the construction of the new bridge.

The only parts of the "New London Bridge" that made it to Arizona were the exterior masonry. The Arizona bridge is a reinforced concrete structure clad in the original masonry of the 1830s bridge.

The bridge was completed in 1971 (along with the Bridgewater Channel Canal, separating the peninsula from the mainland), and links mainland Lake Havasu City with Pittsburgh Point. The "rededication" of London Bridge took place on October 10, 1971.



There is a popular rumour that the bridge was bought in the mistaken belief that it was London's more recognisable Tower Bridge, but the allegation was vehemently denied by both McCulloch and Ivan Luckin, who arranged the bridge's sale.

Anne McMillan

Architecture Trip – 23rd July 2026

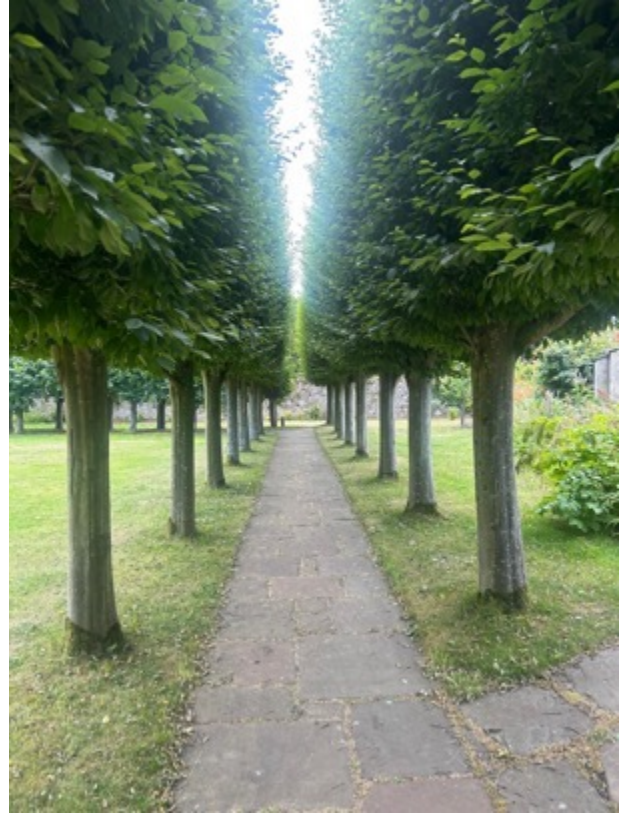
Haddington and Lennoxlove

This was a trip organized by several people. This summer we have also had the very successful trips to Vindolanda (Archaeology Group) and Galashiels (Art Appreciation Group).

Grateful thanks are due to the various organisers – George Ellames, Sue Bairstow, Peter Carter and Pat Ashton.



Architecture Trip – contd.



Architecture Trip – contd.



QUIZ - CAPITAL CITIES

**Can you name the capital city of each of these countries?
(This is Part 1 – Part 2 will be in the next Newsletter)**

No.	Country	No.	Country
1	Afghanistan	16	Libya
2	Australia	17	Malta
3	Barbados	18	Morocco
4	Bulgaria	19	North Korea
5	Chile	20	Oman
6	Costa Rica	21	Paraguay
7	Cuba	22	Poland
8	Egypt	23	Romania
9	Ethiopia	24	Seychelles
10	Finland	25	Slovakia
11	Greece	26	Spain
12	Iceland	27	Switzerland
13	Ireland	28	Turkey
14	Japan	29	United Arab Emirates
15	Latvia	30	Vietnam

Odds and Ends

As you get older, three things happen. The first is your memory goes.

I can't remember the other two.

Did you know that the longest word in the English language is SMILES? The first and last letters are a mile apart.

I'm very worried about my upcoming date with a vegan girl. I've never dated herbivore.

I once worked in a snooker hall. The pay wasn't great, but the tips were good. And if I took time off, I got a long rest.

The doctor poured a can of coke over my broken leg and fixed it straight away. Fizziotherapy is amazing.

The King of Spain has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, and he has been quarantined on his private jet.

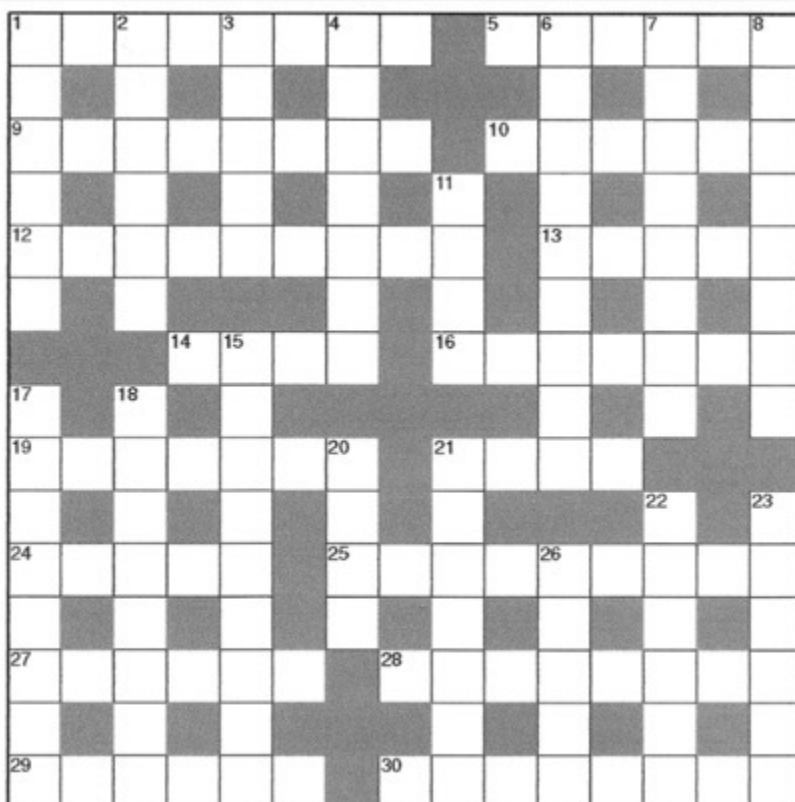
This means the reign in Spain stays mainly on the plane.

During my career, I have established many businesses. Of them all, by far the most profitable was the second-hand chandlery shop.

It was money for old rope.

Crossword

(courtesy of Maureen and Alan Sayers)



ACROSS

- 1 Some, indeed, withdrew (8)
- 5 Puts forward proposals (6)
- 9 Spaniels strangely are not suffering at all (8)
- 10 Observe the poster (6)
- 12 Battlegrounds that slopes about 3ft. (9)
- 13 Go on the lookout for a talent spotter (5)
- 14 Get rid of the shack (4)
- 16 A component of bad weather (7)
- 19 The last thing you'll probably want to say to anyone (7)
- 21 The final piece of equipment that a cordwainer needs to finish the job (4)
- 24 Eager to change yet still have the same opinion (5)
- 25 Will alter a statement (9)
- 27 The sort of idea where a light bulb suddenly appears (6)
- 28 Troublemaker who stirs things up (8)
- 29 Sank a putt earlier than expected (6)
- 30 Surgeons often enter through these (8)

DOWN

- 1 Posted off to the warehouses (6)
- 2 Sounds like these are the bottles that are kept in the office cabinet (6)
- 3 Recover enough to take part in a mass meeting (5)
- 4 Made certain and positive in the end (7)
- 6 They're likely to be heard behind you (9)
- 7 Incidents that happen during television programmes (8)
- 8 From the terraces keep an eye on the ball (8)
- 11 Man stranded in the Irish Sea (4)
- 15 Lucky magnet (9)
- 17 Make an emergency take-off during a motorcycle race (8)
- 18 Early gin cocktail for the youngster (8)
- 20 Don't lie under this (4)
- 21 There's a dip in the road where they serve up Italian food (7)
- 22 Learnt about the lease agreement (6)
- 23 Avian midwives! (6)
- 26 A letter that's dropped many a time (5)

Quiz Answers

No.	Capital	No.	Capital	No.	Capital
1	Kabul	11	Athens	21	Asuncion
2	Canberra	12	Reykjavik	22	Warsaw
3	Bridgetown	13	Dublin	23	Bucharest
4	Sofia	14	Tokyo	24	Victoria
5	Santiago	15	Riga	25	Bratislava
6	San Jose	16	Tripoli	26	Madrid
7	Havana	17	Valletta	27	Bern
8	Cairo	18	Rabat	28	Ankara
9	Addis Ababa	19	Pyongyang	29	Abu Dhabi
10	Helsinki	20	Muscat	30	Hanoi

Crossword Answers

ACROSS - 1 Departed. 5 Offers. 9 Painless. 10 Notice. 12 Tiltyards. 13 Scout. 14 Shed. 16 Element. 19 Cheerio. 21 Last. 24 Agree. 25 Testament. 27 Bright. 28 Agitator. 29 Eagled. 30 Keyholes.

DOWN - 1 Depots. 2 Phials. 3 Rally. 4 Ensured. 6 Footsteps. 7 Episodes. 8 Spectate. 11 Isle. 15 Horseshoe. 17 Scramble. 18 Yearling. 20 Oath. 21 Lasagne. 22 Rental. 23 Storks. 26 Aitch.

End Piece

*Embraced by the sun,
yellowing fields yearn for rain
to water the scorched soil,
while the earth yields its fruit.*

Mary Atkinson