



A Message from the Chair

Hello again and welcome to the June Newsletter. Fine weather at last! I think we are all waiting with bated breath to hear whether the final lockdown restrictions will be lifted on 21st June. In the northern hemisphere, 21st June 2021 is also the day of the summer solstice, the word solstice being derived from the Latin sol ('sun') and sistere ('to stand still'). As I am writing this on 10th June, I do hope that the final Covid constraints can be lifted on 21st June, as planned by the Government, and are not left to 'stand still' for another few weeks because of the concerns about the various variants. By the time you read this, let us be optimistic that the situation will be clearer and more positive, so that we can make definite plans for our new u3a year starting in September. Fingers crossed everyone!

Kathy Platt

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Feedback & contributions are very welcome!

Please send any comments on this newsletter, suggestions for improvement and contributions for future editions to:

Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com

The next newsletter will be published on 2nd August, and the contributions deadline is 30th July.

June Quiz - Food Anagrams

(as usual, answers on the last page – no peeping!)

1	AS ANGEL (7)	12	SNUG SHRIMP ADDICT (9,7)
2	ON US SIMON PETER (10,4)	13	TIE COAT PEG (7,3)
3	ICED DRIP GUN (4,7)	14	JOB HAS LONG ARM (4,5,4)
4	ENTHRAL SOCIOPATH (10,6)	15	AMOK AS US (8)
5	FIND HIS CHAPS (4,3,4)	16	BAD MAN GNASHERS (7,3,4)
6	PUNCH MOLL HAS GUN (10,5)	17	SKEPTIC TODD (7,4)
7	SCRUB HOST SON (3,5,4)	18	FILTER (6)
8	SUNRISE NEW COCKED HAT (5,3,4,7)	19	MANIC KHAKI SALT CAKE (7,5,6)
9	HER SHEEP DIPS (9,3)	20	WORSHIP PUNK AGENCY (4,5,4,4)
10	SHAGGIEST NOBLE POET (9,9)	21	NAKED BASQUE BULB (6,3,6)
11	EVIL BEAN FOOD (4,8)	22	CHECK IN OWN CHIME (7,4,4)

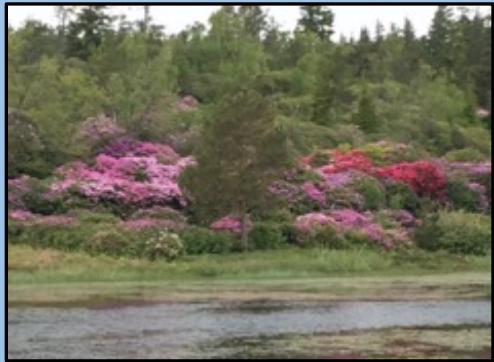
Zoom Groups

Here again is the table showing the Groups currently Zooming or continuing by other suitable methods. For more information, click on the Group. If you haven't yet tried a Zoom meeting, give it a go.

<u>ARCHAEOLOGY</u>	<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>ART APPRECIATION</u>	<u>BOOK GROUP 1</u>
<u>BOOK GROUP 2 (Fairfields)</u>	<u>BOOK GROUP 3 (St Michaels)</u>	<u>CREATIVE WRITING</u>	<u>HERB GROUP - Exploring Plant Medicines</u>
<u>HISTORY</u>	<u>LATIN ADVANCED GROUP</u>	<u>LATIN FOR IMPROVERS</u>	<u>PHILOSOPHY</u>
<u>POETRY 1</u>	<u>POETRY 2</u>	<u>POPULAR CLASSICAL MUSIC</u>	<u>SCIENCE</u>

June Photos

Taken at Cragside, Rothbury, by Trevor Robinson



Tom's Tales - An Italian Mother

Guiseppe excitedly tells his mother he's fallen in love and that he is going to get married. He says "Just for fun Mama, I'm going to bring 3 women round and you try and guess the one I'm going to marry". The mother agrees.

The next day he brings 3 beautiful women into the house, sits them down and they chat for a while. He then says "Okay Mama, guess which one I'm going to marry." Mama says immediately the one on the right. "That's amazing Mama, you're right. How did you know? Mama replies "I didn't like her."

Spotlight on an Interest Group - Art Group

This just to say you would be welcome in our Art Group once we can get going again after lockdown. We welcome all facets of art watercolours, acrylic, oils, pastels, anything at all (not sure about tattooing no one has tried that yet I suspect the cries of pain would be a little off-putting)

The important thing about the group is that you don't have to be good at what you do, only enthusiastic. We don't have tutors, just ourselves to learn from and it seems to work, please come along everyone is welcome

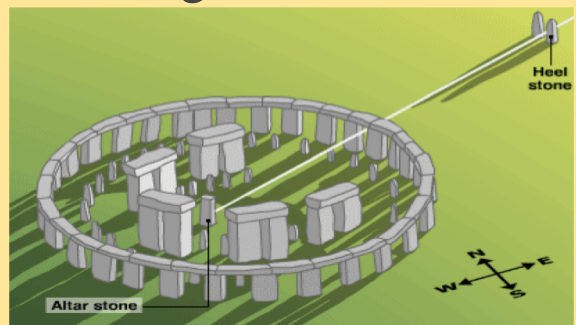
We normally meet at St Michael's church hall every Friday morning from 10 till 12. We will restart as soon as we are able to.

Brian Stephenson

Summer Solstice at Stonehenge - June 21st

Solstice, or Litha, means a stopping or standing still of the sun. It is the longest day of the year and the time when the sun is at its maximum elevation.

At dawn on 21st June - the summer solstice - the central Altar stone aligns with the outer Heel stone and the rising sun.



Midsummer day is marked around the time of the summer solstice but should not be confused with it. European celebrations of Midsummer take place on a day between 21st June and 24th June, depending on regional traditions. In the UK Midsummer day takes place on 24th June, the feast of St John the Baptist.

Anne McMillan, History Group Leader

What if?

When Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901, she was succeeded by her eldest son, who became Edward VII. Her eldest child, Princess Victoria, Princess Royal, could not become Queen because of the male-preference primogeniture rule; the oldest son became King upon the death of the Monarch, and only if there were no sons did a daughter become Queen.

This was changed by the Succession to the Crown Act 2003, which specifies that after the Monarch's death, the eldest child becomes the new King or Queen. If the 2013 Act had been in force at the time of Queen Victoria's death, then Princess Victoria would have succeeded her mother as Queen Victoria II. Unfortunately, she only outlived her mother by seven months, dying on 5th August 1901. Her eldest child was male, and would have then become King.

However, it is interesting to note that he was already the King of another country. He was Kaiser Wilhelm II, and our current monarch would have been Georg Friedrich, Prince of Prussia! This generates a whole series of potential alternative histories, such as, would there have been a First World War? Would Hitler have come to power in Germany? Would there have been a Second World War? Would there have been a Russian Revolution? The list is endless! It must be said, though, that Parliament would probably have found a way to prevent the German succession, which rather spoils the speculation!

Trevor Robinson – Newsletter Editor

Pastures New

Dawn and Bill McDonald, long-standing members of Alwick u3a, are moving away from the area. They are going to Yorkshire to be closer to their family. We wish them well for the future.

Need Help with Zoom?

If you would like to come to the Monthly Talk, or indeed any meeting, but don't know how to Zoom, we can offer a one-to-one Zoom lesson to enable you to do so. If you're interested, get in touch with Kathy Platt at kew6@btinternet.com

DID YOU KNOW... that on 8th June 793 the Vikings first landed in Northumberland? Longboats landed at the Holy Island of Lindisfarne and so began the Age of the Vikings in Europe.



Manhandling the Prince of Wales

At our monthly meeting on Thursday 20th May, Edward Cartner entertained those of us who had joined the Zoom meeting with a very interesting and entertaining talk on how he came to 'manhandle' the Prince of Wales and teach him how to carry out a military parachute jump.

Ed described how, in 1977, Prince Charles was made Colonel-in –Chief of the Parachute Regiment. Needless to say, this would entitle him to wear the appropriate uniform but he himself wanted to EARN the parachute badge which would adorn it so , in the spring of 1978 a fortnight was set aside in which Ed and his staff would have the privilege of training him to achieve it. This was the first problem. Spring, April in particular, is not a good time for parachute training because of weather issues but it was the only available fortnight in Charles's busy schedule so it had to be done!

A very thick instruction manual was delivered to Ed and his team covering issues such as what was to be the Prince's rank during training; a private 'retiring' room was to be provided and fresh orange juice for the Prince's morning break among other requirements stipulated by palace staff who had little understanding of what parachute training involved. With the (in Ed's mind) threat of incarceration in the Tower for treason or worse, the military staff did their best to comply with all the instructions, only to discover that Prince Charles himself was happy to drink Naafi tea in the crew room with the other trainees.

To make Ed's life more interesting an exuberant, 18 year old Prince Andrew had, by now, been included in the scheme and tragically there had been a rare fatal accident in training just before the princes – 1st and 2nd in line to the throne at that time- were to begin their training.

Ed and his sergeant were summoned to Windsor Castle but only to give Prince Charles some preliminary ground training, not to face the axe! And I particularly enjoyed Ed's story about abortively crawling round a room in Windsor Castle looking for a suitable socket to plug in a projector for a slide show (The Prince ended up holding slides to the light while Ed talked over his shoulder)

Anyway, in the end, despite the weather, which was unhelpful and by training on seven days a week and 'jumping' at 4am on some days, Ed and his staff enabled the Prince of Wales to complete the course (except for the night jump for which the Palace resolutely denied permission) and they all went off to the pub!

On 28th April 1978, Prince Charles marched in with his fellow students to be presented with his Parachute wings, which he still wears with pride. Well done, Ed and thanks for an excellent talk which was greatly enjoyed.

Meryl McConnell

The Battle of Flodden

On 17 June Alnwick u3a members were treated to a very detailed and interesting zoom presentation by Bryn Owen with the title **Flodden, The Anglo-Scottish war of 1513**.

Bryn's talk encompassed not only the battle of Flodden itself, but also briefly described the events leading up to the battle going back over 30 years and a short biography of the two Commanders of the battle namely King James IV of Scotland and Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, who was 70 at the time.

James IV came to the throne in 1488 when he was 15 years old after the death of his unpopular father James III. He proved to be an effective ruler and enlightened King who learnt Gaelic, united Scotland and was very pious, went on pilgrimage and proposed to lead a Crusade against the Turks. He also saw the importance of building a fleet with effective artillery to provide a strong maritime presence. In 1502 he signed the Treaty of Perpetual Peace with Henry VII of England and married Margaret Tudor, sister to the later Henry VIII. However he also maintained Scotland's traditional good relations with France.

Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey was born in 1443. He served both Edward IV and Richard III, fought in the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 and was thus stripped of his lands and placed in The Tower. Having convinced Henry VII of his loyalty (he was always a king's man) in 1489 he was sent North to quell a rebellion. He served Henry VII well, became a Privy Councillor and Lord High Treasurer in 1501. When Henry VII died in 1509, Thomas became Duke of Norfolk and Earl Marshall to Henry VIII and in 1513 Lieutenant General of the Army in the North when Henry VIII departed to invade France in 1513.

Relations between England and Scotland deteriorated with the death of Henry VII and James IV saw an opportunity to invade England with Henry's departure. On 17 August, James mustered an army of 30,000 men on the Burgh Muir of Edinburgh and by 22 August they had crossed the Tweed. On 24th August they laid siege to Norham Castle, which fell after 6 days due to the use of 5 big siege guns. Etal Castle followed and James IV set up his headquarters at Ford Castle and encamped his army on Flodden Edge, a commanding hill top position.

As Lieutenant General of the North, Thomas Howard's headquarters were at Pontefract. By 29 August he arrived at Durham, mustered his 20,000 troops, was presented with St. Cuthbert's Banner, and then marched North reaching Alnwick by 1st Sept, and Wooler by 6th Sept.

The two Commanders were very different in age and battle experience, and the two armies also differed. Although the Scottish Army was 30,000 strong, they were less experienced, the infantry raised by levies, not paid, and were ill trained both in the use of the siege guns which had to be dragged by teams of oxen, and the use of the 18' long pikes which had been recently introduced. By contrast, although the English Army was only 20,000 strong, the men were paid (by the day when mustered) and trained. They had light artillery and were armed with billhooks ideal for close combat.

The Battle of Flodden (contd)

Needing to avoid a frontal attack on James's commanding and well-prepared position, Surrey marched his army east and then north and west to behind James's position, splitting the army in two to either ford the River Till or cross via Twizel Bridge.

Realising he had been outflanked, James hastily moved his army from his commanding position on Flodden Edge to Branxton Hill.

On 9 September, a wet and windy Friday morning, the English Army were located on the opposite rise to the north of Branxton Hill, thus cutting off any retreat for the Scots to the north. James was the first to attack using his western flank with some success but the following central attack was repelled and the pike formation (400 soldiers wide and 20 deep) was soon in disarray because of the ditch and deep muddy marshy land at the bottom of the hill. The English troops were soon amongst the Scots, where the billhooks became effective, and the Scots were slaughtered. Many of the Scottish nobles who were at the front of the battle were slain, as was James IV.

Bryn pointed out that Flodden involved at least twice as many fighting men as any battle on British soil fought previously. There were possibly 20,000 at the Battle of Hastings, at Bosworth even less, but Flodden had at least 50,000 participants, and the result was devastating for Scotland with the loss of its King and the majority of its nobles.

I'm sure I'm not alone in hoping that this fascinating and informative talk can be repeated when we can meet face to face so that more of our u3a members have the opportunity to learn more about the Battle of Flodden.

Pat Ashton

July Monthly Zoom Meeting

At our next monthly meeting on Thursday 15th July, George Ellames will give a talk entitled ***Pentimenti, Overpainting, and "That sort of thing"***. George has given us a trailer...

"This is an art related presentation that I hope will amuse both those interested in art and those who just want to be amused. It is looking at what lies beneath the surface of a painting. Is what you see now what the artist actually intended? Has it been modified by a later hand? Has the passage of time caused pigments to become fainter, enabling the artist's discarded earlier efforts to reappear? The eye can detect hints of the answers to these questions, but nowadays science can really see what has previously been hidden."

The Discussion Group Comes to a Conclusion

Sadly, Eileen Peckham has decided that after twenty years, the Discussion Group has now come to an end. We would like to thank Eileen for leading the group and hosting the lively meetings in her home. Looking to the future, if anyone feels they would like to start up a Discussion Group or any other type of group, please contact me.

Anne McMillan, Groups Coordinator

Hobbies and Interests

This is a regular item for the Newsletter, where u3a members can tell us all about their hobbies and interests. If anyone would like to write something for a future Newsletter, please do contact us at Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com.

My Interest in Photography – Colin Platt

Up to the year 2000, my memories of holidays were mostly rekindled by playing back videos as I had very few snapshots. That came about because in the early 80s I recall borrowing a friend's rather large Sony Camcorder for a holiday in the USA. Thereafter, I was hooked on camcorders and on my return home I invested in a Sony Sure Shot which was much smaller!

Panasonic then introduced a tiny video recorder with hard drive storage rather than cassettes – I was very keen on this one and now have several vacation 'movie' records which were all simply transferred onto my PC.

Digital SLR cameras with the ability to take sharp photos as well as the occasional video became my favoured option after about twenty years of using video recorders. The reason for the change was because during a whale-watching holiday in Baja California, my Panasonic broke down at a crucial time when we were surrounded by grey whales and their calves. Fortunately, my wife had her Olympus Pocket size digital at the ready and she managed to take some great photos!



My general interest in photography became more of a serious hobby in 2009. At that time Kathy and I were planning a holiday to Ecuador & Peru, so buying a suitable camera prior to departure, became a priority. The camera needed to be compact, owing to restricted luggage space on various internal flights, yet versatile enough to enable me to capture both close-up nature shots as well as landscape photos.

I received some invaluable advice from an experienced photographer and a member of the Alnwick Photographic Group. He happened to be the owner of the bed and breakfast, in which we were staying whilst on another weekend visit to Northumberland, as we lived in Cambridge at the time. His words were "Invest in a Canon G9" and he kindly gave me a demonstration of the camera in his back garden. I was quite impressed with the camera, so within a few days I was the proud owner of the latest Canon G10, which, for me, ticked all the boxes on specification.

Below are three photos from our visit to Ecuador entitled 'The Equator Line', 'Amazon Jungle Hike' and 'Isle de Plata blue footed boobies'. The two photos from our Peru experience are 'At Machu Picchu' and 'Cusco, Peru'.



I have found that being part of a photography group is by far the best way to improve one's skills. To this end, I joined the Alnmouth Camera Club and later, the Amble Photographic Group. In January 2019 I started the Lesbury Photography Group in the village hall, holding monthly meetings, which were well attended. Subject matter included tutorials, presentations, photographs on a theme and, occasional guest speakers. Covid has confined the group to zoom meetings since last March but hopefully, we shall be able to achieve a 'near normal' situation in the Autumn.

Of course, photography is very subjective. What constitutes a good picture for one person might be completely different for another. I often ask myself "what **does** create a good picture" and most people would probably agree that composition and correct exposure are essential. Cropping an image can dramatically change the composition when carrying out some 'post processing' of the image and again, subjectivity plays a big part in determining what to leave in and what to omit.

Getting the correct exposure is much more technical, although most cameras have an automatic setting which takes care of exposure to an extent. I have learned that setting the ISO (light sensitivity); adjusting the shutter speed and the aperture are the three main ingredients required to achieve the best from my camera, which I upgraded to a Canon 70D some time ago.

I find using mnemonics to be helpful when trying to remember the best order in which to address these settings. When running a tutorial, I encourage people to think in terms of 'I Am Shooting'. 'I' is the reminder for 'ISO'; 'Am' stands for 'Aperture' and 'shooting' is for 'Shutter Speed'. Last, but not least, I would always encourage amateur photographers, like myself, to use 'manual' settings rather than consistently using 'auto'. Although this might seem a little onerous at times, with practice, the results can be most rewarding.

I find my interest in photography fits in very well with my other hobby, that of bird-watching – but more of that another time perhaps!

Marriage is a relationship where one person is always right and the other person is the husband.

Being 20 in the seventies was much more fun than being 70 in the twenties

FOOD ANAGRAMS ANSWERS

NUMBER	ANAGRAM	ANSWER
1	AS ANGEL (7)	LASAGNE
2	ON US SIMON PETER (10,4)	MINISTRONE SOUP.
3	ICED DRIP GUN (4,7)	RICE PUDDING
4	ENTHRAL SOCIOPATH (10,6)	LANCASHIRE HOTPOT
5	FIND HIS CHAPS (4,3,4)	FISH AND CHIPS
6	PUNCH MOLL HAS GUN (10,5)	PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH
7	SCRUB HOST SON (3,5,4)	HOT CROSS BUNS
8	SUNRISE NEW COCKED HAT (5,3,4,7)	SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN
9	HER SHEEP DIPS (9,3)	SHEPHERDS PIE
10	SHAGGIEST NOBLE POET (9,9)	SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE
11	EVIL BEAN FOOD (4,8)	BEEF VINDALOO
12	SNUG SHRIMP ADDICT (9,7)	CHRISTMAS PUDDING
13	TIE COAT PEG (7,3)	COTTAGE PIE
14	JOB HAS LONG ARM (4,5,4)	LAMB ROGAN JOSH
15	AMOK AS US (8)	MOUSSAKA
16	BAD MAN GNASHERS (7,3,4)	BANGERS AND MASH
17	SKEPTIC TODD (7,4)	SPOTTED DICK
18	FILTER (6)	TRIFLE
19	MANIC KHAKI SALT CAKE (7,5,6)	CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA
20	WORSHIP PUNK AGENCY (4,5,4,4)	KING PRAWN CHOP SUEY
21	NAKED BASQUE BULB (6,3,6)	BUBBLE AND SQUEAK
22	CHECK IN OWN CHIME (7,4,4)	CHICKEN CHOW MEIN

End piece

Summer

The sea strolls ashore.

Above a cornflower sky where clouds

Whisper to the sun draped earth,

Dream, dream, dream.

Mary Atkinson