



Members Newsletter June 2023

A Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

Well, here we are again. It seems like only yesterday that I wrote my message for the April Newsletter. Who knows where the time goes, as Sandy Denny once sang.

We have been enjoying a period of good weather (we will draw a veil over Coronation Day), and we are moving into the period when Group trips are taking place. We had the Art Appreciation trip to Carlisle (which I went on and thoroughly enjoyed), and the Architecture trip which is documented in this Newsletter, to name but two. There are other trips to come over the Summer; if you get a chance, go on one – I guarantee you will enjoy it!

Trevor Robinson

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Monthly Meeting – 20th April

Maria Chester - *"The Art of Bonampak"* - Learn about Mayan culture from their art



This very informative talk started with a summary of Guatemala and the Mayan civilisation. Guatemala is a country in Central America, bordered to the north and west by Mexico, to the northeast by Belize and the Caribbean, to the east by Honduras, to the southeast by El Salvador and to the south by the Pacific Ocean. The territory of modern Guatemala hosted the core of the Maya civilization, which extended across Mesoamerica (a historical region and cultural area that begins in the southern part of North America and extends to most of Central America).

The Maya civilization developed in the Maya Region, an area that today comprises south-eastern Mexico, all of Guatemala and Belize, and the western portions of Honduras and El Salvador. Today, the Maya descendants number well over 6 million individuals, speak more than twenty-eight surviving Mayan languages, and reside in nearly the same area as their ancestors.



The Mesoamerican area gave rise to a series of cultural developments that included complex societies, agriculture, cities, monumental architecture, writing, and calendrical systems. The set of traits shared by Mesoamerican cultures also included astronomical knowledge, blood and human sacrifice, and a cosmology that viewed the world as divided into four divisions aligned with the cardinal directions, each with different attributes, and a three-way division of the world into the celestial realm, the earth, and the underworld.

The Maya civilization is known by its ancient temples and glyphs. It is also noted for its art, architecture, mathematics, calendar, and astronomical system. Its Maya script is the most sophisticated and highly developed writing system in the pre-Columbian Americas.

The Archaic period, before 2000 BCE, saw the first developments in agriculture and the earliest villages. The Preclassic period (c. 2000 BCE to 250 CE) saw the establishment of the first complex societies in the Maya region, and the cultivation of the staple crops of the Maya diet, including maize, beans, squashes, and chili peppers. The first Maya cities developed around 750 BCE, and by 500 BCE these cities possessed monumental architecture, including large temples with elaborate stucco façades. Hieroglyphic writing was being used in the Maya region by the 3rd century BCE. In the Late Preclassic several large cities developed in the Petén Basin, and the city of Kaminaljuyu rose to prominence in the Guatemalan Highlands.

Rule during the Classic period (c. 250–900 CE) centred on the concept of the "divine king", who was thought to act as a mediator between mortals and the supernatural realm. Kingship was usually (but not exclusively) patrilineal, and power normally passed to the eldest son. A prospective king was expected to be a successful war leader as well as a ruler. Closed patronage systems were the dominant force in Maya politics, although how patronage affected the political makeup of a kingdom varied from city-state to city-state. By the Late Classic period, the aristocracy had grown, reducing the previously exclusive power of the king.

Monthly Meeting – 20th April - contd

The Maya developed sophisticated art forms using both perishable and non-perishable materials, including wood, jade, obsidian, ceramics, sculpted stone monuments, stucco, and finely painted murals.

San Bartolo murals

San Bartolo is a small pre-Columbian Maya archaeological site located in the Department of Petén in northern Guatemala, northeast of Tikal and roughly fifty miles from the nearest settlement.[1] San Bartolo's fame derives from its splendid Late-Preclassic mural paintings still heavily influenced by Olmec tradition and from examples of early and as yet undecipherable Maya script.



The Maya site includes an 85-foot pyramid named "Las Ventanas" (The Windows); the Temple of "Las Pinturas" (The Paintings); and an early royal tomb in the "Tigrillo Complex". The pyramid was constructed from c 300 BCE onwards (base rooms) and was completed c50 CE. They worked to a 52-year cycle – they rebuilt on top of the previous one.

In 2001, in the base of a pyramid, a team led by William Saturno (a researcher for the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology) discovered a room with murals that were carbon-dated as from 100 BCE, making them the oldest ones to date. Besides the murals, the oldest known Maya royal tomb was discovered in San Bartolo, by archaeologist Monica Pellecer Alecio.



A Maya king impersonating the hero Hunahpu by piercing his penis with a spear to spill sacrificial blood, west mural fragment, San Bartolo. (licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0)

BONAMPAK

Bonampak (known anciently as Ak'e or, in its immediate area as Usij Witz, "Vulture Hill") is an ancient Maya archaeological site in the Mexican state of Chiapas. The site is approximately 30 km (19 mi) south of the larger site of the people Yaxchilan, under which Bonampak was a dependency, and the border with Guatemala. While the site is not overly spatial or abundant in architectural size, it is well known for the murals located within the three roomed Structure 1 (The Temple of the Murals). The construction of the site's structures dates to the Late Classic period (c. CE 580 to 800). The Bonampak murals are noteworthy for being among the best-preserved Maya murals.



Ideal Reconstruction of licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International

Monthly Meeting – 20th April - contd

it is generally agreed that the narrative should be viewed in chronological order, beginning in Room 1 (scene of tribute, dressing, dance, mummery and musical performance); then on to Room 2 (scene of violent conflict, and a display in which a human cull is presented, tortured and killed in the company



of the highest members of court and upper echelons of the victorious force); and, finally, to Room 3 (scene of a dance, with observers, and ritual bloodletting). In total, there are some 281 human figures represented within the three rooms, many with captions (approximately 1/3 of the figures are named, while another 10 percent of the figures have blank captions, and slightly more than half have no caption at all).

Musicians on lower register of the east wall of Room 1.

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Room 2 contains the scene of what has been referred to as the greatest battle scene in all of Maya art. Room 2 is the largest of the three, which alludes to its greater importance. It also contains more human figures than either Room 1 or Room 3, with 139 of them. The south wall, which is the first that is viewed upon entering, along with the east and the west walls, depict warriors in the heat of battle. Bodies are intertwined on both the lower and the upper registers.



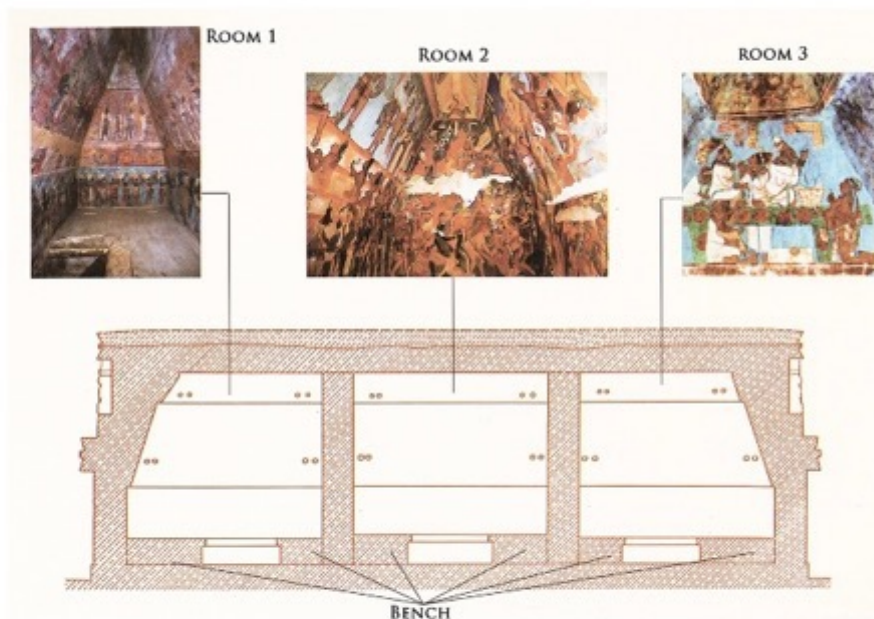
King Chan Muwan and Captives (De Agostini Picture Library)

Monthly Meeting – 20th April - contd

Room 3



This is the scene of ritual celebration for victory in battle, including bloodletting by nobles, and contains 65 human figures. As with Rooms 1 and 2, the south wall is the first to be viewed.
(photo from the Smithsonian Museum)



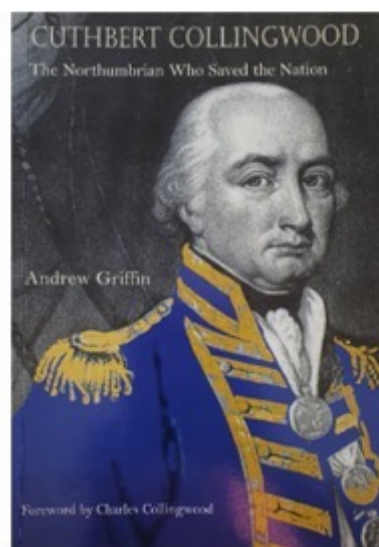
Trevor Robinson

Monthly Meeting – 18th May

Andy Griffin - "Cuthbert Collingwood" - The Northumbrian who saved the Nation –

Andy Griffin gave us a very enlightening and entertaining account of Cuthbert Collingwood at the May Meeting entitled "The Northumbrian Who Saved The Nation". Much of the material used by Andy in his presentation is contained in his book (see right), free copies of which were available to take away.

Cuthbert Collingwood was born in Newcastle on the banks of the Tyne in 1748. He was educated at the Royal Grammar School and joined the Navy in 1761 when he was just 12 years old. He rose swiftly through the naval ranks during the American War of Independence followed by the Napoleonic Wars which plunged him into a number of victorious encounters.



His connection with Lord Nelson began in the 1770s and as Nelson's second in command at the Battle of Trafalgar, Collingwood's ship the Royal Sovereign (shown on the left) led the British Fleet into action.



The naval campaign began as part of Napoleon Bonaparte's plan to invade Britain in the summer of 1805. Napoleon needed to gain control of the English Channel to allow his Grand Armée to cross. To achieve this he ordered the French fleet's three squadrons blockaded at Brest, Toulon and other ports to break out, meet in West Indies and then return as one fleet to gain control of the English Channel.

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In March the squadron of Admiral Villeneuve at Toulon was able to evade the British blockade, joined up with a Spanish squadron and left for the West Indies. Nelson learned of his departure and was soon in hot pursuit. Villeneuve lost his nerve and immediately returned to Europe.

Nelson's fleet of 27 ships now waited for Villeneuve's force to emerge. The British fleet was at a high peak of fighting efficiency, having been at sea blockading the French for almost two years. At the end of September, Nelson revealed his plan to his captains; the fleet would be split into two columns to break through the enemy line and overwhelm the centre and rear sections of the enemy's fleet.

At 11.48 on October 21st, 1805, HMS Victory under Nelson hoisted the famous signal 'England Expects That Every Man Will Do His Duty'.

Monthly Meeting – 18th May - contd

This was followed by 'Engage the enemy more closely'. Collingwood's flagship was the first to be engaged as Royal Sovereign, with a new copper bottom, was faster than older ships with wooden bottoms, and pulled ahead of the other ships in the fleet.

Collingwood aimed to cut in between the French and Spanish vessels, who tried to shut the Royal Sovereign out, but Collingwood would not be denied and ordered the Royal Sovereign to sail straight at the enemy ships with raking cannon fire (see right). The fighting was severe and much of it was at close quarters.



This work is in the public domain

Many of the British ships were damaged, some seriously, including Nelson's Victory. Nelson himself had been shot by a musket ball at about 13.15 and died around 16.30. The French under Villeneuve surrendered at 13.45 and despite renewed resistance by some Spanish ships the battle was over by 16.30.

A great storm blew up on 22 October and when it subsided only four enemy ships out of the eighteen captured remained in British hands, most having sunk. The total number of killed and wounded on both sides was about 8,500 whilst the British took about 20,000 prisoners.

Trafalgar was a pivotal moment in the fortunes of our nation and of Cuthbert Collingwood. Collingwood was promoted to Vice Admiral of the Red Squadron, which took him past the highest rank that Nelson achieved and by the time of his death he was Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet.



Most of us know his name from Collingwood Street in Newcastle or from his imposing Grade II listed monument in Tynemouth (*see left*), but how many of us were able to recall his crucial role in the Battle of Trafalgar?

He married relatively late in life, and his home was in Morpeth from 1791 until his death in 1810 (not that he was at home that often).

Collingwood has arguably been undersold by history. He was, in his own right, an inspirational leader, a dedicated naval officer, a devoted husband and father, a shrewd strategist and a highly capable diplomat. His life was characterised both by great achievement and ultimately, great sadness.

Collingwood died at sea at the age of 61 years and was buried in St Paul's Cathedral, his remains placed next to that of Nelson.

Maureen Sayers and Trevor Robinson – photos courtesy Andy Griffin

Architecture Group Outing – 25th May 2023

An outing in May, organised by Peter Carter, Architecture Group Leader, was a huge success. The first visit of the day was to St Andrew's Church in Hartburn, a largely thirteenth century building. Inside the church in the chancel floor is a Frosterly marble slab, a monument to Sir Thomas Errington who died in 1310 and a beautiful white marble monument to Lady Bradford (*see left*) designed by Sir Francis Chantrey in 1834.



The churchyard has an impressive amount of Momento Mori headstones (*see right*) with carvings of skeletons on gravestones that are a depiction of

'Death' in human form, reminding visitors of their own mortality, the hourglasses representing the passing of time and the end of a person's time on earth.



Our next stop was to St Andrew's Church, Bolam (*see left*), a small church with a late Anglo-Saxon tower. One of our members was very surprised to find a headstone belonging to her great grandparents who were buried in the churchyard.

After a pleasant lunch stop at the Blacksmith's Coffee Shop in Belsay we visited Capheaton Hall,

built in 1668 for Sir John Swinburne designed by a local architect, Robert Trollope.

Architecture Group Outing – 25th May - contd



In the late 18th century, the house was “turned around”; this was fashionable at the time, so a new north front (*pictured left*) became the main entrance.

The present owner Willy Browne-Swinburne gave us a tour of the house, which was highly entertaining as he delved into his ancestral past.

The head gardener gave us a tour of the gardens which are well tended (*see below*),

the vegetables that are grown are for the benefit of everyone living on the estate. As well as vegetables there are several varieties of fruit grown both in the walled garden and in the large greenhouse. (*see below*)



Architecture Group Outing – 25th May - contd



The day ended pleasantly over tea and biscuits served in an elegant room with splendid views overlooking the estate.



Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this interesting and well organised day out, and hats off to the excellent coach driver for negotiating some tricky but beautiful country lanes.

Special General Meeting (SGM) – 18th May 2023

In the April Newsletter, I set out the reasons why it was necessary to increase our Annual Subscriptions for 2023-4 (i.e. the Subs we will ask you to pay this coming September). In summary, costs for heating are increasing and we knew that this would also apply to the owners of St Michaels Hall (St Michaels PCC). They want to increase our rent from £3000 to £3600 from September 2023, an increase that we cannot sustainably absorb without increasing our Annual Subscription.

Your Committee proposed to the SGM that for the year 2023-4 our Annual Subscription be raised from £24 to £27, payable in September 2023. This was agreed by the Meeting.

George Ellames, Treasurer

Corny Jokes (courtesy of Shelley Willis)

Where do sharks go for their holidays ? Finland

Found a message in a bottle on the beach today. It said No Milk Today !

Wife: Where do you want to go on holiday this year ? Husband: I want to go somewhere I've never been before. Wife: Well, how about the kitchen

My son came to visit for the summer holiday. That's nice, did you meet him at the train station No, I've known him for years !

X Factor:- The original Roman sun cream

Father: I bought you this handbag while on holiday in Iraq Daughter: Thanks for the Baghdad

Why don't aliens visit our planet ? Terrible ratings - only one star !

I went on a once-in-a-lifetime holiday last year. Never again !

Remaining Monthly Meetings in 2023

June 15th Dinah Iredale - "Bondagers" - The forgotten workers of Northumberland and the Borders

July 20th Sarah Winlow - Officer with Northumberland Coast AONB

"How climate change is affecting our coast".

Sept 21st Professor Brian Ward, American Studies, Northumbria University - "Transatlantic Blues: 60's N.E. Music Scene & the Civil Rights Movement"

Oct 19th Edward Cartner, Published Author - "Amusing tales from the R.A.F."

Nov 15th Sam Stephenson, Senior Coastguard, Seahouses - "The work of the Coast Guard"

Dec 14th Martin Shingler, Senior Lecturer in Radio and Film Studies, University of Sunderland - "Diana Dors: Film Star, Actor and Paperback Writer"

Note that the December date is one week earlier than normal, due to hall availability. The Christmas Social will also take place on that day.

Also note that the July speaker has replaced the previous possible outing

Feedback & contributions are very welcome!

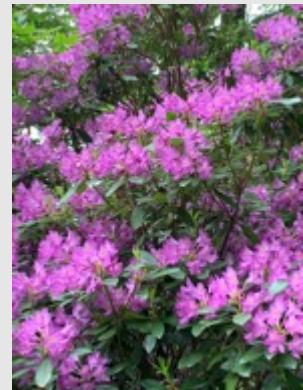
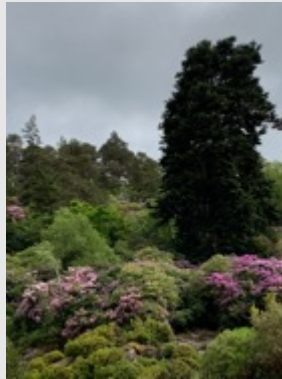
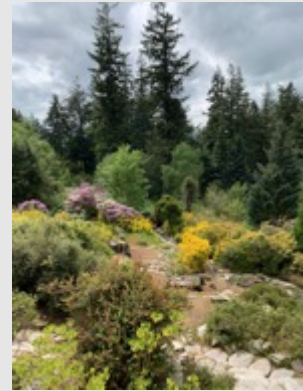
Please send any comments on this newsletter, suggestions for improvement and contributions for future editions to:

Newsletter.Alnwick.u3a@gmail.com

The next newsletter will be published on 4th September, and the contributions deadline is 1st September

June Photos

Cragside Flowers - taken by Trevor Robinson



Wellbeing Event at Alnwick Garden – 11th May

Carollyn McDonald, Maureen Sayers and Trevor Robinson attended this event to showcase Alnwick u3a. We had quite a few visitors to our stand, and many were interested in what we do. We also networked with the other stands. We will be invited to do this again later this year.



Quiz

(Courtesy of Shelley Willis)

Complete the following (Example 7 W of the W is 7 Wonders of the World)

- 1 16 O in the P
- 2 12 S of the Z
- 3 32 P on a C B
- 4 29 D in F in a L Y
- 5 12 D of C
- 6 77 S S
- 7 21 K of the D
- 8 100 C in a E
- 9 9 L of a C
- 10 30 D H S
- 11 50 W to L Y L
- 12 360 D in a C
- 13 1000 W in a K
- 14 3 C in a F
- 15 13 U for S
- 16 1440 M in a D
- 17 101 D
- 18 240 O P in a P
- 19 54 C in a P (with Js)
- 20 100 C in a E

Odds and Ends

The man who invented the Ferris Wheel never met the man who invented the Merry-go-round. They moved in different circles.

1st person – what do you know about atoms?

2nd person – very little
1st person – besides that

In 1916, Einstein finally published his theory...and it was about time, too!

Two cowboys were lost in the desert and starving. Finally they saw a tree in the distance, draped in bacon. “Look!” said one cowboy, “it’s a bacon tree, we’re saved!”. He ran to the tree but was shot down in a hail of bullets. With his dying breath, he said “It’s not a bacon tree, it’s a ham-bush.”

Cowboys in the old west used to hang lanterns on their saddles at night to help them find their way home. This was an early form of saddle light navigation

The population of the planet Zog was all but wiped out by a plague caused by ticks living on the mouths of alpacas. The survivors now live in a post-alpaca-lip-tick wasteland.

Your Committee Members

This is a feature where Committee members say a bit about themselves. This month it is **George Ellames**, our Treasurer, and co-leader of the Archaeology Group.

What did I do before I retired? From 1986 to 2013 I was Head of Chemistry at what is currently Quotient in Alnwick, but in my day was first Sterling, then Sanofi, then Sanofi-Synthelabo, then Sanofi-Aventis and finally Covance. I was originally recruited to start a Medicinal Chemistry Department but, very soon after I joined, Sterling was bought by Kodak, who didn't want this. They needed a Radioisotope Chemistry team and so, to keep us employed, I rather exaggerated my knowledge of this area (well it was greater than theirs!) and this became our role.

Drug companies must know not just what a drug does to a human but also what the human does to the drug. The human turns it into other things (metabolites) which might contribute to the desired effect, have no effect, or be toxic. They find out what these other things are by having synthetic chemists (us) make a version of the drug in which one of the carbon atoms is replaced with a radiocarbon atom. When you give this radiolabelled drug to volunteers you know that everything radiolabelled coming out "the other end" must originate from the radiolabelled drug. You can't just add this radiocarbon to the periphery of the molecule as it might too easily be removed, so you need to bury it in the core of the molecule. This can be difficult, requiring the design of completely new syntheses. This was our role.

Radioactivity understandably scares people, but the quantities we used meant that anyone working in our labs (unless they chose to eat what they were working with!) was exposed to less radiation in a year than you would be if you took two transatlantic flights. This meant I slept at night!

Science Group Outings

In the previous Newsletter I mentioned two possible Science Group outings this year: a trip to Kielder Observatory probably in October, and a visit to Rock Distillery in August.

You do not have to be a Science Group attendee to go on either trip. No interest yet, so I thought I would give it one more go.

If you are interested in either or both of these outings, email me using the Bluebird clickable link on the Science Group website page.

Trevor Robinson – Science Group Leader

New Guitar Group

I am aiming to set up a new Guitar Group. It will meet every second Thursday at 2pm in the small hall at St Michael's. The Group will start on 14th September, if we get enough interest.

The aim is for people to play their guitar (at any standard) in any chosen style (pop, rock, folk, jazz, classical etc), and share techniques and tricks. Lessons will be given to beginners if needed.

I have no thoughts at the moment about group playing (like the Ukulele Group do), but in time anything is possible!

If you are interested on giving this a go, contact me directly on the clickable Bluebird link at the top right of the Guitar Group page on the website.

Trevor Robinson

Quiz Answers

1	16 Ounces in the Pound
2	12 Signs of the Zodiac
3	32 Pieces on a Chess Board
4	29 Days in February in a Leap Year
5	12 Days of Christmas
6	77 Sunset Strip
7	21 Key of the Door
8	100 Cents in a Euro
9	9 Lives of a Cat
10	30 Days Have September
11	50 Ways to Leave Your Lover
12	360 Degrees in a Circle
13	1000 Watts in a Kilowatt
14	3 Coins in a Fountain
15	13 Unlucky for Some
16	1440 Minutes in a Day
17	101 Dalmatians
18	240 Old pence Pence in a Pound
19	54 Cards in a Pack (with Jokers)
20	100 Cents in a Euro

End Piece

*The cuckoo's call is late
Yet cow parsley proliferates
And summer lingers at the gate
Where fields of barley and wheat wait*

Mary Atkinson