

GROW BOLD

LEARN, LAUGH AND LIVE

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C3A Magazine

Spring 2024

Our shining star



The Sun, has long been revered by civilizations throughout history for its vital role in sustaining life on Earth. Millennia ago, ancient cultures recognized the significance of planning around the Sun's natural cycles, some of which spanned lengthy periods.

Composed primarily of hydrogen and helium, the Sun's colossal size, with a diameter of approximately 1.4 million kilometres, has captivated human imagination for generations. Its radiant warmth and luminosity provide the energy necessary to support life on our planet, fuelling the process of photosynthesis and nurturing ecosystems worldwide.

Yet, beyond its physical attributes, the Sun holds a deeper significance in human history. Ancient civilizations, including the Mayans, recognized the cyclical nature of the Sun's movements and incorporated this knowledge into their calendars, cultural practises and agricultural practices.

Through meticulous observation and study, they deciphered complex solar phenomena, such as solstices, equinoxes, and the subtle shifts in the Sun's position throughout the year.

For the Mayans, in particular, the Sun played a central role in their cosmology and cultural traditions. They developed sophisticated calendars, such as the Long Count and the Haab', which tracked the movements of the Sun and other celestial bodies with remarkable precision. These calendars guided agricultural activities, religious ceremonies, and societal events, reflecting the Mayans' profound reverence for the Sun as a divine entity and a symbol of life and renewal.

Our shining star

The importance of vast time spans recorded by ancient civilizations cannot be overstated. It is through their meticulous observations over centuries and even millennia that we have gained valuable insights into the Sun's impact on life on Earth. By documenting and analysing solar phenomena over extended periods, these ancient cultures laid the foundation for our understanding of the Sun's influence on climate, agriculture, and human societies.

The Sun, not only bathes us in light and warmth but also harbours powerful phenomena that can profoundly affect life on Earth. Among these are Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) and solar flares, which collectively constitute what scientists refer to as "space weather." These phenomena, while captivating in their beauty, possess the potential to disrupt modern technologies and even pose risks to human health.

Coronal Mass Ejections are massive expulsions of charged particles and magnetic fields from the Sun's outer atmosphere, the corona. These eruptions, propelled by the Sun's intense magnetic activity, can unleash billions of tons of material into space at speeds exceeding millions of kilometres per hour. When directed towards Earth, CMEs interact with our planet's magnetic field, triggering geomagnetic storms that can disrupt satellite communications, power grids, and GPS navigation systems.



Similarly, solar flares are sudden bursts of intense radiation emitted by the Sun's surface. These eruptions release enormous amounts of energy, equivalent to millions of hydrogen bombs detonating simultaneously. Solar flares can emit various forms of electromagnetic radiation, including X-rays and ultraviolet light, which can interfere with radio communications and pose radiation hazards to astronauts in space.

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The study of space weather is critical for understanding and mitigating the potential impacts of solar activity on Earth. Advanced satellite observatories and ground-based monitoring stations enable scientists to monitor solar activity in real-time, providing valuable data to forecast and predict space weather events. By understanding the behaviour of CMEs and solar flares, scientists can issue alerts and warnings to safeguard vulnerable technologies and infrastructure.

Despite their disruptive potential, space weather phenomena also contribute to the mesmerizing displays of auroras, or northern and southern lights, visible near Earth's polar regions. These ethereal curtains of light, generated when charged particles from the Sun collide with Earth's atmosphere, captivate observers worldwide and serve as a poignant reminder of the intricate relationship between our planet and the Sun.

Only last week we have received powerful X flares which have knocked out communications in some part of the world this is because we are heading to the grand solar maximum. Grand solar minimum and grand solar maximum are contrasting phases in the Sun's natural cycle of solar activity, each with distinct characteristics and implications for Earth's climate and space weather. Grand solar events are approximately every 11 years. This year and next it is expected that we will reach the peak of Grand Solar Maximum.

During a grand solar minimum, the Sun exhibits reduced levels of solar activity, characterized by a decrease in sunspot numbers and diminished solar radiation output. This period is marked by a relative calmness in solar phenomena, including fewer solar flares and Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs). Historically, grand solar minima such as the Maunder Minimum (1645-1715) and the Dalton Minimum (1790-1830) have been associated with cooler temperatures on Earth, leading to phenomena like the "Little Ice Age" in Europe.

Conversely, a grand solar maximum represents a phase of heightened solar activity, characterized by increased sunspot numbers, intense solar flares, and higher levels of solar radiation. This phase can result in elevated space weather activity, including geomagnetic storms and enhanced auroral displays. Grand solar maxima have been linked to periods of warmer temperatures on Earth, although the extent of their influence on climate remains a topic of ongoing research.

Overall, understanding the dynamics of grand solar minima and maxima is crucial for comprehending the Sun's influence on Earth's climate and space environment, as well as for informing predictions of future solar activity and its potential impacts on our planet.

Hope you enjoyed learning about our sun just as much as I have.

Catherine Britton

Technological challenges in the Third Age



“OK, one more time: Go home and log on to our website from your computer, create an account and purchase your ticket with your credit or debit card, download the ticket to a smartphone, then come back at the allocated time... Just what part of ‘easier and more convenient’ don’t you get?”

The importance of stone tools



With its varying temperatures and unsettled weather January is, by any definition, the heart of winter. For the C3A Archaeology group it is definitely not an enticing time to stand shivering or soaked on the edge of a trench at an archaeological site.

Instead, January has become known as research month, when the group leader, Pat Howarth, suggests a broad topic for individual members to do a little research on something within that topic that piques their interest. At the ensuing meeting the results of that research are shared with others in the group in a ten-minute talk. It is a chance for everyone to follow their own interests and then to share those interests; and for all of us hopefully to learn something new.

This year's research topic was 'ancient technology'. The individual choices within this topic ranged from such things basket making and embroidery, to bronze age weapons and gold. My own choice, because my historical interests veer towards human evolution, was stone tool technology. It may sound boring, but if you stop to think about it, the development of stone tools, the very first tools ever, underpin everything we use today in a world that would never survive without the millions of kinds of tools we use every day, from a simple hammer and nail to upcoming use of AI.

Our ability to devise, make and use tools has long been considered one of the defining attributes of our species, Homo sapiens, along with our uniquely opposable thumb that gives us the ability to grip those same tools. Now we know that this view is simplistic at best as other animals have been seen to use tools: chimps tailor twigs to fish for insects, dolphins wrap sponge around their noses to protect them when they're foraging on the seabed for food, octopuses use halves of shells to hide themselves, and sea otters carry stones around balanced on their stomachs and use them to pound open clams and oysters for food. Homo sapiens, however, has

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taken tool use to a whole new level, to a stage where we can't exist without using tools.

The earliest tools, stone tools, are considered markers along our path to becoming the species we are today and are believed to illustrate our social development. Stone knapping, the shaping of stone tools, is a skill which has to be learned either through observation, or teaching, implying that, right from the start, some sort of communication skills were needed, as well as a sense of community. In order to make a stone tool for a specific purpose the knapper had to have a clear mental picture of what he (or she) was trying to achieve and how to go about it. It was by making tools that our ancestors first began to enhance and extend their biological abilities.

There are a number of questions that can be asked about stone tools. The first question to ask is 'Why use stone?' That's an easy question: stone is a durable material, one that can easily be accessed. Our distant ancestors not only appreciated the durability of stone but quickly learned which type of stone made the best tools. Flint is an obvious example of this. And because it is durable, stone has stood the test of time, and is the type of tool most often found by paleoarchaeologists investigating prehistoric sites right across the world.

It's important to note, though, that there is no absolute proof that stone was the only material used to make tools. Stone tools are in short supply in areas like China and there is a school of thought that believes that tools here were made of less durable materials, such as bamboo, which can be shaped to have a very sharp edge. No examples have been found because wood and bamboo quickly rot and vanish from the archaeological record.

The next question to ask is 'Who made the first tools?' With our big brains and agile hands our species for a long time was, as I've said, considered to be the only one capable of making tools.



Mary and Louis Leakey found simple stone tools at Olduvai Gorge.....

Originally the earliest recognised tools came from excavations carried out by Mary and Louis Leakey in Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. It was Louis Leakey who first coined the term 'Oldowan' to describe the very basic, and limited types of tools found here. Although two very different species were represented in the fossil record, the Leakeys gave credit to the one most like ourselves, one which

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they named *Homo habilis*, or Handy Man rather than to the more robust *Paranthropus boisei*. In fact this was the first use of the term 'homo' (man) within the hominin fossil record and thus tied the tools to what were believed to be our direct ancestors. These types of tool date back to about 2.5 million years.

However, this has since been challenged by other finds at other sites such as the 2015 find of stone tools at a site called Lomekwi in Kenya. At 3.3 million years old, in many ways these tools resemble nothing more than shattered river rocks but scientific analysis has shown that they were in fact deliberately knapped, and the knappers had an understanding of the qualities of the rocks they were using. Unfortunately there were no associated fossil hominid remains to say who actually made these tools, but they are important because they were made before any species identifiable with *H sapiens* or its ancestors was around so the obvious conclusion here is that they weren't specifically made by *H sapiens*' ancestors



Homo habilis (Handy Man)



Paranthropus boisei

In February of 2023 reports were published of a find of 330 simple tools from the shore of Kenya's Lake Victoria at a site called Nyayanga on the Homa Peninsula. Along with the tools were the bones of 2 butchered hippos and 2 teeth from *Paranthropus*, making a possible link from this species to the tools. *Paranthropus* had a large face, a giant jaw and huge teeth indicating they had a tough-to-eat diet. Until the discovery of these tools it was believed that the only processing of food they did was with their mouths. Using tools to chop up their food would have made it easier to eat and digest.

These tools were 2.9 million years old – halfway between the Oldowan and Lomekwi tools.

(Given that Oldowan tools were found also associated with *Paranthropus*, perhaps the Leakeys assigned them to the wrong species after all?)

The importance of stone tools

So the answer to the question 'Who made the first tools?' is still open to debate, but it does look as if the first tools and their use predate our species.

Since this very crude beginning, stone tools continued to evolve and develop as construction was refined by an increasing number of precision blows used to shape the tools and a growing awareness of higher quality materials. By 1.76 million years ago, our ancestors had learned to strike really large flakes from a core and then to continue to shape them by taking smaller flakes from around the edges. This resulted in the introduction of a new tool, a hand axe. This type of stone tool certainly stood the test of time as it was in use for over a million years but between 400 thousand years ago and 200 thousand years ago the evolution of stone tools began to accelerate slightly as smaller and more diverse toolkits entered into use.

These innovations included the use of small flint points which could be hafted on to sticks to make spears, and even smaller points were eventually used to make smaller weapons like darts and arrows, or used as awls to make holes in animal hides, allowing them to be sewn into clothing, and scrapers to help in the preparation of these same animal hides, or to shape wood.

By 50,000 years ago the variety of tools in a Homo sapiens toolkit had increased immensely, with over 100 different types of tools, each with a specific purpose. These included blades, axes, scrapers, adzes, awls, harpoons, cleavers and arrowheads. These were the first steps on the road to creating a specific tool to meet a specific need. And about this time early Man began experimenting with other materials such as bone, antler and wood, expanding the tool kit still further.

And from then on, there was no looking back.

Janice Colebrook

Outing to Ayia Napa



A coach has been arranged on Thursday 14th March for an outing to Ayia Napa and is available to all C3A members and their guests.

Why not spend a few hours seeing the town, shopping, catching up with friends or visiting the Thalassa Municipal Museum? (The Museum houses collections of fossils, marine organisms and displays of sea and lake birds.)

This visit is organized by the archaeology group to see the museum's antiquities and its star attraction the life size exact replica of the Kyrenia, fourth century BC trading ship. The original wreck was raised off the coast of Kyrenia in the 1960's and is now preserved in Kyrenia Castle.

The coach will leave from the Wine Museum in Erimi at 9:30 a.m. and will stop at St. Anna Church in Agios Tychonas to collect those wishing to pick up the coach from there.

If you're interested in the outing, please [contact Pat via the Archaeology Group page](#) on the C3A website.

LOEL Winery Concert

I acted as videographer at a concert on Friday 23rd February, organised by the Limassol pianist and music school owner Tatiana Stupak. Tatiana gave her first concert in Cyprus back in 2015, for the C3A. I organised that event, and I have worked closely with Tatiana since then, helping her with her music school and her concerts. During the Covid lockdown, the Pattihio Theatre was opened for us as a private recording studio, and I recorded Tatiana playing sixteen of my piano compositions, which I subsequently mastered and produced in 2021 as her first CD 'Tatiana Stupak plays David Pentecost'.

That first concert for C3A in 2015 was unique, and so was the latest concert, held at a very unusual location: the enormous and impressive LOEL Winery at Agios Syllas, Limassol. Here is a photo of the hall, in the section of the building where the concert was held:



The piano music was by Ludovico Einaudi, played by Tatiana Stupak, and was appropriate for accompanying brilliant acrobatic acts from Phoenix | Pole & Aerial Arts Studio, and an amazing neon bubble show from Cyprus Shows.

At one point, towards the end of my video, you will see a huge bubble drifting directly towards my camera lens, and I was starting to panic: wondering what action I might need to take; I shall let you watch, to see what happened!

[Click here to view my YouTube video of extracts from the concert](#), highlighting its acrobatic and bubble show.

Tatiana's next piano recital will be held inside Kolossi Castle on Saturday, 20th April and illuminated by candlelight. For more information, click "[From Baroque to Romanticism](#)".

David Pentecost

Commandments for Third Agers



Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision.

When I get a headache, I take two aspirin and keep away from children just like the bottle says.

Just once, I want the prompt for username and password to say, "Close enough."

Becoming an adult is the stupedest thing I've ever done.

If you see me talking to myself, just move along. I'm self-employed. We're having a meeting.

"Your call is very important to us. Please enjoy this 40-minute flute solo."

Does anyone else have a plastic bag full of plastic bags, or is it just me?

I hate it when I can't work out how to use my mobile phone and my tech support guy is asleep. He's 5 and it's past his bedtime.

Today's 3-year-olds can switch on laptops and open their favourite apps. When I was 3, I ate mud.

So, you drive across town to a gym to walk on a treadmill?

Old age is coming at a really bad time.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would've put them on my knees.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Now, I'm wondering . . . did I send this to you, did you send it to me or have I only sent it to myself.

You don't need anger management. You need people to stop irritating you.

Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.

"On time" is, when you get there.

Even duct tape can't fix stupid – but it does help muffle the sound.

It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free...and three sizes smaller.

Lately, you've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

"One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house.

The waiting room



I seem to spend a lot of time these days in doctors' waiting rooms, especially in the UK where it is easier to get an audience with the Pope than it is to see your local GP.

On arrival at the surgery of my local practice in Liphook, there is an intriguing check-in screen enquiring about my appointment.

Date of birth, it cheekily asks. First instinct is 'mind your own business' before accepting that if I don't put it in, I'll not get past the door.

Then I must choose from an array of dates, which one assumes are the birth years of the other patients. But hang on! 1911?

I look round in amazement for this Methuselah. That means he /she is 113 years old. These days I feel an instant affinity with anyone around my age and offer a cheery 'hello' and a smile. Most respond in like manner, after all we're all happy just to be here. However, a cursory look round reveals no one to fit the bill born in 1911. Slightly disappointed I ease down into a chair with arms: arms help with take-off and landing.

Just as I've settled down for the inevitable long wait, I am astounded to hear an elderly lady report to the receptionist that her name was '*****'

Now I know my hearing lets me down occasionally, but surely no-one has that expletive that for a surname. I'd miss-heard it, of course.

To keep boredom at bay, I read the notices on the notice board.

The waiting room

My gaze alighted upon some of the services offered.

You know how sometimes your brain kicks in before your eyes have read the word properly, often with the most nonsensical interpretation.

One caught my over-eager eye. It posed the question: 'If you are nearly pregnant....' 'My imagination ran riot. In what circumstances was one 'nearly pregnant'? Of course, the word was 'newly'.

My attention was now riveted on the other notices.

'Breast feeding was welcome at this practice'.

Thank you but I gave that up 89 years ago.

'Would you like a chaperone during your interview?'

Well, er no. In fact, I'd be rather chuffed to be chatted up at my age.

'Starting a nursery?'

Not on your nelly; been there, done that, got the T-shirt, one family is enough for any normal sane person, surely.

'Would I like to speak to my guardian?'

No thanks. I've always spoken up for myself and never been in trouble with The Law - yet!

'What is GDPR?'

I've absolutely no idea and I'm not interested anyway.

'Look after yourself?'

That's why I'm here, thank you very much!

By now I am smirking to myself and the person next to me shifts uneasily and moves away.

Eventually: 'JOHN PALMER' an imperious voice calls out from the 'pearly gates'. I rise and am greeted by God herself.

John Palmer

(Recently returned from a cold and wet Xmas in the UK)

Adjusting to a new Cyprus



Visiting my daughter one week before Christmas I got a very disturbing phone call from the very capable Lady who was looking after my house while I was away. *"Somebody broke into your house last night"*. I jumped in disbelief.

There are so many flashy villas around me, why my old house situated in the middle of a rather rural garden? I was in panic, trying to get a return flight 5 days before my scheduled flight. No chance so shortly before Christmas. *"No need to come back"* I was told by the Police Officer who took fingerprints of the place. *"Don't worry, we locked at the house"* the Lady and the Gardener told me, both of whom I've known for a long time and trust.

Arriving back at Larnaca Airport on the scheduled flight, I drove back towards Limassol in the late afternoon with very mixed feelings, this one week before Christmas. Prepared to meet a dismantled house, according to the photos I had received. When I opened the badly damaged kitchen door, I carefully entered the house ... and was confronted with the most excruciating mess. In the quick search for money and gold.

My bedroom was hit at the most. But also, all adjoining rooms. Everything had been thrown onto the floor, a challenging mixture of cloth, underwear, documents, and lots of pieces of all kinds of things. Discouraged and shocked, I sat down and thought, what to do first.

Adjusting to a new Cyprus

The next day I phoned the police officer. *"Put the recordings of the cameras onto a USB stick and bring it to us, so that we can compare, thank you"*. I called the security company to assist me. Reluctantly they did via Team Viewer. The saved recordings were of poor quality. *"We call you back"*. After I had no reply, I took the laptop and went to their office. And received a crash course on how to do it myself.

Two days to go until Christmas holidays. Costas, the Aluminum man (I've known him for decades) saved my life and had mercy on me. He came and screwed the open window close. And that was it.

And so, Christmas holidays came and stayed for long 3 weeks, and so did my worries. The more I watched the recordings with 2 people, hooded, climbing over my back fence, the more I had nightmares and couldn't sleep.

Reflecting the weeks before I had left Cyprus, I remembered that I had noticed a car repeatedly parking somewhere near my house and watching my movements. My fault was that I didn't react and thought that I still lived in the old Cyprus where you could leave everything open, house and car. My fault was that I still felt cozy in times which don't exist anymore. I shall have to bury these lovely decades and I am considering putting a headstone on the grave. *"Times move on, don't forget my friend"*.

In the meantime, I got out of the worrying phase, and I am prepared to defend myself. Using my imagination (which I am blessed with) and where everything is coming down in life ... money.

But also, old Cyprus friends. Thank God they are still around and ready to assist and to give their "I will fix it for you" skills. I take this opportunity to thank them.

A Security System has been installed, fences secured, motion detectors installed, gates repaired etc. etc.

And I am working on it, to take the advice of the police officer *"don't spent too much money, just do what you can to secure your place, and don't worry too much"*.

I still haven't got the USB stick back, which cost me €30. I shall fight for it.

Discovering Cyprus ... again, and I live here!



Family run Commandaria winery in Doros

I know you don't want another advert, but I just wanted to comment on how super these day tours to a part of Cyprus are.

For example, Ascot Tours near me in Limassol, have a range of vehicles and drivers to suit the trip - Jeep, van and limousine. Ascot collects you from your home, office or hotel - you can call or visit Bill in their office, on 357 35329388, or 99687085. I've been on several Ascot trips with friends over the years. They're good.

One tour I've enjoyed recently [Jan 2024], was to some traditional villages of Cyprus - we stopped at villages, including Lania, Troodos and Kakopetria.

A family Winery, of which there are many across the island, greeted us warmly, and in the Winery the lady of the house freely served us some heart-warming Commandaria and nibbles. We gazed at their huge wooden casks, barrel-shaped, and pot-bellied clay amphorae, maturing the wine as we sipped. A small collection of wooden articles and photos reminded us of the labour intensive, hard-working, but happy past. We bought some Commandaria to bring home.

The Lania village lanes were full of plants - flowering geraniums, bunny-rabbit antirrhinums and richly painted gates and houses - captivating. We walked carefully along the narrow cobbled one-way Lania streets with a modicum of traffic that morning! Visiting the small inviting, cosy Olive and Farming Museums, we saw

Discovering Cyprus ... again, and I live here!



Church of Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis in Kakopetria (UNESCO World Heritage Site)

courtyards, clay pots, old wooden farming equipment, and in Lania's small Library, an array of soft and hardback books for all ages, honesty borrowing and returning. There is a nearby wine press yard and house, all lovingly decorated. Artists are always in residence here in Lania. Lania Cafes and Tavernas are always open for your return. It's another friendly place. Cyprus villages welcome visitors at all times of year. There is so much to see and take in, not possible in one trip.

Next was the zigzag climb to Troodos up and around the mountain contours, glimpsing deep pine-treed gorges, valleys, and the far blue Mediterranean as we passed. We stopped to walk down to Milimeri Waterfalls, the path down through the luxurious greenery stepped and railed safely. There we looked up at a ridge where busy construction was developing another forest spa hotel with views. You could see and hear water cascading merrily down the falls and into the deep valley stream below.

Discovering Cyprus ... again, and I live here!

At Troodos a small pile of a recent January snow reminded us of recent falls, now melted, with more to come. The valley view is always stunning, seen from behind the cafes on the small square. Troodos Visitors' Centre highlights in film and posters the unique and beautiful Troodos Mountain environment and wildlife, often encountered on the many local walking trails. We took a welcome break, and had a coffee in the Hotel opposite. The air was bracing! I bought a toffee apple and some mushrooms to enjoy later.

Just up the Road from Troodos, nestled in another scenic valley is the village of Kakopetria.

Kakopetria, as you know, means 'bad rock', from the time when a boulder fell and crushed some newlyweds a while ago. The old village itself is beautifully arranged on each side of a river valley that you can walk through and along. The small river, merely a brook in parts, is shaded with trees, just in leaf and shimmering in the January sunshine.

Old buildings with wooden upper stories hang precariously above. Wattle and daub buildings jostle happily with more modern concrete storied houses, and flowering plants large and small hide the ducks that waddle along towards the busy centre of the village, as we did. Shops are open; some enterprising housewives in Old Town by the river selling their dried herbs and spices and fresh collected honey at their house door. I bought some at very reasonable prices I thought.

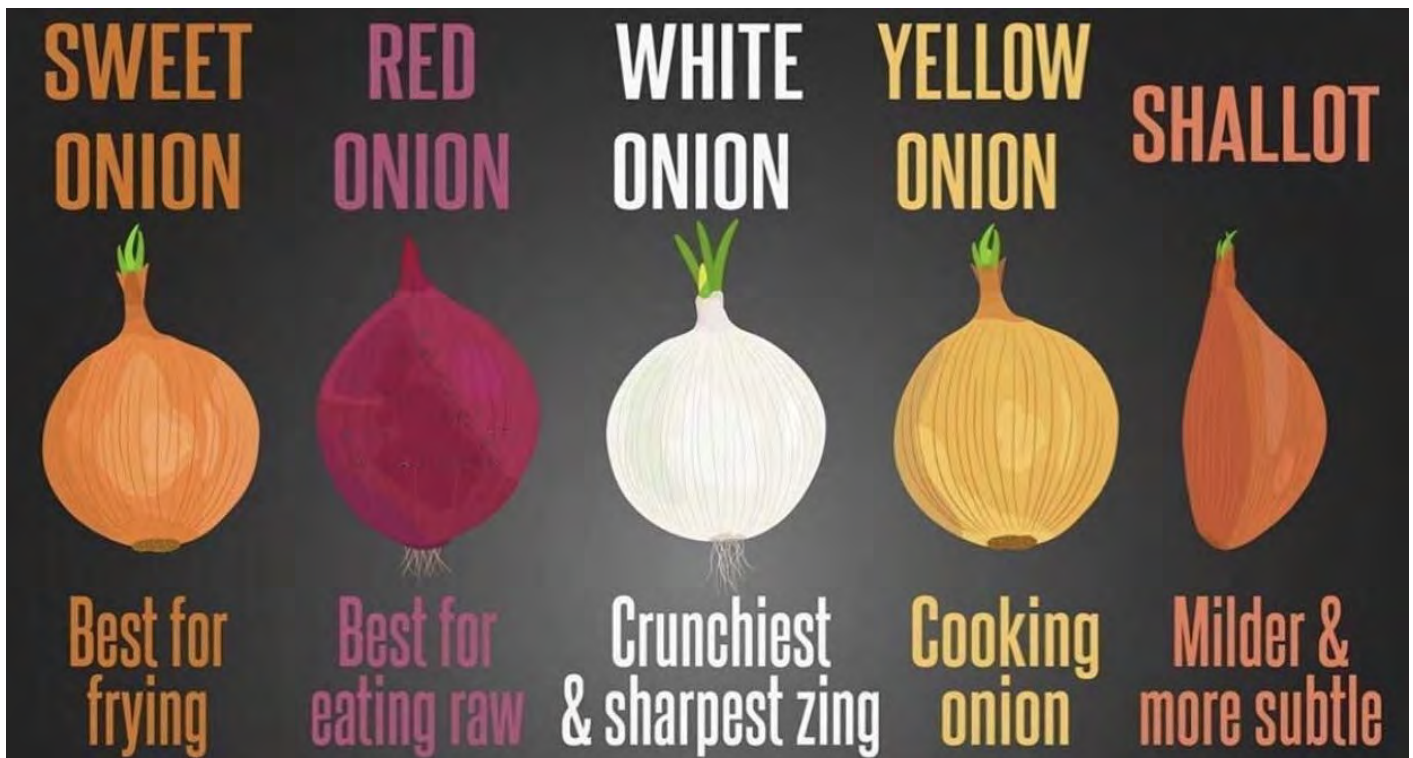
Lunch was taken in a Kakopetria Taverna at our own cost. Delicious, the service is so friendly, and conducted in a mix of languages. Lunch was well worth it - the varied conversation and food was super.

On our way back to Limassol we took the B9 and passed the closed Amiantos Asbestos Mine, now opened as a Botanic Park. The fascinating Geological Centre and grounds are just down the road. We didn't stop, but each of these parks is worth a visit too. There is so much history on this Island, something for everyone.

A final comfort stop and visit to Katerina's showed us all sorts of local wares: candles, toys, souvenirs, filled jars, tubes and bottles. We drove out at 8 and were back by 5 or 6, despite traffic. Clever experienced driver! It's well worth the 50 or 60 pp euros fee not to drive, but sit comfortably, enjoying the views and visits and being driven! I am driving my own car, but being driven on a tour was nice for a change.

Lilian Hayball

Fact or fiction?



Do you know your onions or do you believe in fairies?

My interest in plants goes beyond growing them, I am also fascinated by the meanings behind their names and the stories that are attached to them.

For instance, I was born and grew up in Derbyshire but had never heard the following until I read it in a book several years ago.

The piece claimed that girls in Derbyshire would, on St Thomas' Day (21st Dec), peel a red onion and while sticking nine pins into it recite a rhyme:

Good St Thomas, do me right,
Send me my true love tonight,
In his clothes and his array,
Which he doth wear every day,
That I may see him in the face,
And in my arms may him embrace.

Before going to bed they would put the onion under their pillow, so that they would dream about their future husband.

Onions have also featured in other dream beliefs.

To dream of eating onions means
Much strife in thy domestic scenes,
Secrets found out or else betrayed,
And many falsehoods made and said.

Dreaming of fried onions tells that a friend is ill, but will recover.

Fact or fiction?



With regard to fairies, who would have connected them to Hollyhocks?

Apparently long ago on the Welsh border with Gloucestershire, at the junction of the Rivers Wye and Severn, an island would manifest itself at midsummer. On it was a castle surrounded by trees and flowers, the home of fairy folk. Access to this island was via a tunnel beneath the river. Although the occupants were never visible to humans food and refreshments in abundance were provided for their enjoyment. There was but one golden rule, one enduring condition, that must be obeyed. Nothing was to be removed from the island.

However, one year a small girl, having picked some flowers wished to take them home. Her mother strictly forbade her to do so, but she secreted a single flower in her pocket. The instant she left the tunnel she was transformed into a hollyhock, its flowers taking on the colour of her pink dress.

The fairy island immediately disappeared, never to be seen again.

It is said that fairies love hollyhocks, particularly the pink ones.

John Joynes

Archaeology Group

Conducting ground breaking research in a Kouklia Tavern!



Winter is not kind to archaeologists and our group turns to alternative activities with two annual events.

Firstly, members are asked to take part in research of their own to share with other members of the group. This year's theme was "Ancient Technology"

Secondly, we have a group social meal which this year was held in Gabriel's Tavern in Kouklia. It is an opportunity to extend social bonds and contacts beyond a shared interest in Archaeology.

Until the Spring the group leader has planned a talk about a Bronze Age village and a visit to a museum.

We will then pick up our core activity, visiting excavation sites around the Island accompanied by knowledgeable archaeologists both from Cyprus and around the world.

In 2023 the group visited Chalcolithic, Bronze, Iron, Hellenistic and Roman sites with Cypriot, British, American, Australian, Greek and French experts also covering pottery identification and Hadrian's Wall and visited Larnaca and Nicosia Archaeological museums.

Archaeology Group

Conducting ground breaking research in a Kouklia Tavern!



Preceding the lunch interested members joined Pat at Kouklia Stillarka – a site just ten minutes from the taverna. Pat's winter research was into this site which features two huge fenestrated monoliths which had focussed centuries of folk traditions; and over a hundred years of conjecture by archaeologists. Excavation around them in 1990 proved, beyond doubt, that they are part of the mechanism used for pressing olives to produce oil.

C3A Groups

All about books

Caro Fraser writes so imaginatively, and so stupendously addresses the latest trends in relationships in her books, that I'm going to take her to C3A All About Books next time. We'll discuss her take on things in that book - and have a laugh. I am writing on Valentine's Day after all!

In All about Books we cover so much ground every month because members follow such different interests, reading and writing as we do, on a vast array of topics. All this is allowed at the Group meetings. So refreshing. Not like the traditional Book Clubs of old, when I found it next to nigh impossible to get The book, the same one for us all to read! No kindle or mobile phone, then, sorry! Some months were a yawn because of the book chosen. Now we embrace our differences, and enjoy not being pigeonholed.

We have fun over there at the Aphrodite Bowls Club, and Lorna brings us teas and coffees from the kitchen. Inside, in these winter months we're warm. Outside, the Bowling Group dodge inside to avoid the showers on the perfect green, cool under the gaze.

Some of us stop for a cheery lunch: omelette, or burger, scotch egg, a sandwich. Chips or crisps an option. A small fresh salad too, our healthy option!

Breakfast

C3A Breakfast and Cinema have been well supported, surprising at this cooler time of year. Thank you!

The €10 Harmony Bay hotel buffet breakfast with good company and books, etc., always welcomes. The comfy hotel open terrace gives us a glistening sunny view over the sea and promenade too. Super chats we have had.

Cinema

I'm always watching films, but the C3A Cinema social event plus your voted film is special, now held at the UKCA Club, with its Bar, lovely room, and drop-down big screen. Kitchen-savvy folk bring sweet or savoury home-made nibbles, for which we are always grateful. Meanwhile, Limassol resounds to construction-itis, and it's high rise all round - casting shade, but trespassing on the view. The little Dubai here, some say! So many comparisons to make; but then it's all so individual. Ho, hum, that's life!

Lilian Hayball

British expats get 'Votes for Life'



Back in 2017, the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 'Forward, Together: Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future' stated "We will legislate for votes for life for British overseas electors."

Six years later that manifesto pledge has been honoured enabling an estimated three million Britons living overseas to vote in UK general elections removing the previous 15-year time limit.

The following press release was issued by the Electoral Commission on 15th January:

All abroad! More Brits overseas can now register to vote

British citizens living abroad are now eligible to register to vote in UK general elections, regardless of how long they've been living outside the UK. A new law, coming into effect tomorrow, removes the previous 15-year time limit.

The Electoral Commission is calling on voters in the UK to help spread the word and tell friends and family living abroad to check if they are eligible. The Commission is working with partner organisations to inform eligible voters around the world.

People that have previously lived in or been registered to vote in the UK now have the right to vote in UK parliament elections. They can register online at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) and will need to confirm their personal information every three years. Under electoral law, those on an electoral register are also permitted to donate to political parties and campaigners.

British expats get 'Votes for Life'

Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, said:

"This change gives more British citizens living abroad the opportunity to participate in UK Parliament elections, and to contribute to the funding of political parties and campaigns."

"We know there are eligible voters in every corner of the world so we're calling on those with friends and family abroad to help spread the news. With a general election likely this year, it is important this newly enfranchised group of voters are aware of the change and can take action. Registering to vote can be done online in just five minutes."

The change is part of the UK Government's Election Act, passed in 2022. The [government estimates](#) that the abolishment of the 15-year rule could mean three million overseas British citizens could be eligible to vote.

British citizens living abroad will need to provide details of the address and time they were last registered or resident in the UK. Local authorities, which are responsible for the electoral roll in their area, must be able to verify an applicant's identity and past connection to the area.

More information is available on the [Electoral Commission website](#). Voters living overseas can [find contact details for the relevant local council](#) by entering the postcode of the last place they lived in the UK, using the Commission's postcode lookup tool.

New rules in Cyprus when selling your home



If you are thinking of selling your home here in Cyprus there are some new rules to consider:

Additional tax to pay. As well as the Capital Gains Tax that's payable when you sell your home, you'll now have to pay an additional tax of 0.4% on the sales price.

The tax collected goes into a fund managed by the Central Agency for the Equal Distribution of Burdens, the state agency tasked with assisting refugees of the 1974 invasion.

Amendments to the law. Among other things, the amendments require the vendor (seller) of the property to include a [Search Certificate](#) in the contract of sale, which must be dated no more than five working days before the contract of sale was signed.

Furthermore, if the property is mortgaged, the Land Registry will only accept the deposit of the contract of sale for that property if it is accompanied by written declarations from the mortgagor(s) (typically a bank) and vendor(s), of which the buyer must have been informed in writing.

This change in the law will help ensure that those buying property are promptly and accurately advised of any mortgages and contracts encumbering the property.

The change will also help safeguard property buyers from potential fraud, particularly in cases where developers have mortgaged a share of the land on which they're building to help secure home loans for other buyers on their developments.



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