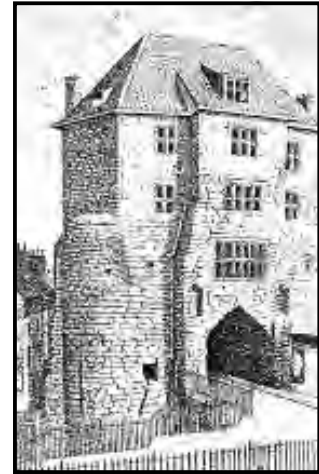


NEWS BULLETIN

THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No. 36: JUNE 2004



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne is one of the country's oldest antiquarian societies, founded in 1813. We have a regular programme of lectures and events, a learned journal, a library, and collections housed in several museums around the region. We also lease the Castle Keep and the Black Gate from the City Council.

Subjects for our monthly lectures range from prehistoric excavations in Northumberland and Egypt, to Tudor dining customs and early industrial disputes in the North East. During the summer months, there are Country Meetings – visits to places of interest by coach – and Country Walks.

Every ten years, the Society organises a week-long Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage in conjunction with the Archaeological and Antiquarian Society of Cumberland and Westmorland, at the other end of the Wall.

*As well as this twice-yearly Newsbulletin, the Society has an academic journal, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, and publishes occasional monographs.*

The Society's books, thirty thousand volumes or more, are housed in the Library at the Black Gate. Opening hours are Wed 2–4pm, Thur 5–7pm and Sat 10am–12 noon. Volunteers to help out are always welcome. Our collections, once in the Black Gate Museum, are now mainly in the Museum of Antiquities, the Bagpipe Museum at Morpeth, and the Castle Keep.

Contact the Membership Secretary for more information at The Black Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1RQ, phone 0191 261 5390. Our e-mail address is admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk, and our website is www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk

PROGRESS ON THE GREAT NORTH MUSEUM



Rhinoceros sculpture in the grounds of the Hancock; will it approve the changes?

In the last News Bulletin (December 2003), I reported on the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the planned Great North Museum. That bid was withdrawn for further work, and a new version has just gone in, with the blessing of our Council.

The Society is a partner in the “Cultural Quarter” partnership led by the University of Newcastle, and including Newcastle City Council and Tyne and Wear Museums. This has been working for some time on an ambitious proposal for a new “mega-museum” based around the Hancock on Claremont Road. There were fortnightly Stakeholder meetings throughout the spring, and a public consultation meeting on 24th April.

The idea of the project is to

- Refurbish the Hancock and build a new extension to providing a touring exhibition gallery, education spaces and a library. This would house the libraries of the

Natural History Society and ourselves, plus the Cowen library. There would also be offices and a meeting room which could be used by societies;

- Create new archaeology, ethnography and natural history displays within the main Hancock building; these would include the Hancock's own collections, and those from the Museum of Antiquities and the Shefton Museum;
- Provide new accessible off-site storage for the museum collections – though archaeological stonework would remain in the current store.

Having the Great North Museum would increase the display space available to the Museum of Antiquities collection, and provide access to dedicated education spaces. Access would also be easier for users across the 3 library collections (though individual ownership would be maintained and recorded).

The project was discussed at a special Council meeting on 2nd June. After a very full debate, it was unanimously agreed to support the project. We have written to the Project Manager so that HLF are aware of our commitment to our Museum being part of the new Museum, and our library re-housed in a more accessible place alongside it. We are also offering a contribution towards running expenses. The bid will go to HLF at the end of June, and will then be closely scrutinised by HLF officers in London. Watch this space!

Richard Bailey

NEW VENUE FOR THE PUBLIC LECTURE

The Public Lecture in 2004 on 27th October will be given by Professor Norman McCord, on the subject of early industrial disputes in the North East. It will be given in the Brunswick Methodist Church, a new venue for the Society.

Many will know this handsome building on Brunswick Place. It is a convenient city centre location close to the Monument metro and just off Northumberland Street, along the side of Fenwicks.

Colm O'Brien
Indoor Meetings Secretary

2004 RESEARCH DAY SCHOOL; ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE COASTAL PLAIN

The Society's research day-school this year, on 9th October 2004, will focus on the Northumbrian coast. This is an area of pre-historic archaeology that has been overshadowed by the seemingly greater wealth of archaeological remains in the adjacent uplands. Recent work has started to show the potential of this area for the study of prehistoric communities able to exploit a wide range of natural resources.

There is important new work on the earliest known inhabitants of Northumbria, from evidence recovered by underwater archaeologists from inundated landscapes off the coast. This will be complemented by the results of research on the settlement and hunting sites on the cliffs and coastal plains. Later in the day, we will cover the results of major new excavation programmes in southern Northumberland and Tyne and Wear which are transforming our knowledge of the Iron Age in this area. Speakers will include Penny Spikins, Clive Waddington, Rob Young and Steve Speak.

The day-conference will be in central Newcastle, in Brunswick Methodist Church. Places are available at a cost of £4:00 to members of the Society; a booking form is included in this mailing.

Dave Heslop

WHO WAS ROBERT BLAIR?

Robert Blair, Secretary and Editor of the Society of Antiquaries from c.1883–1923, left the Society 27 volumes of records, copies of correspondence with John Clayton, and other notebooks. They form one of the finest parts of our archives, now in Northumberland Record Office and being worked on by our Archives for All project.

He was born on the 8th June 1845, at the Lawe, South Shields, son, grandson and great grandson of Tyne River Pilots. He left school at thirteen and went to work in the office of Thomas Salmon, solicitor and Town Clerk of South Shields. After completing his articles, he



Robert Blair, as pictured in Archaeologia Aeliana 1923

was admitted as a solicitor in 1874 after which he set up in practice on his own. He was elected a member of the Society in the same year, and soon became secretary of the committee set up to supervise the excavations on the Lawe. He was appointed Secretary of the Society in 1883, instituting much needed reforms to its administration. In 1884 he became Editor, and then held both posts until his death on 14 July 1923.. He missed very few meetings during 40 years in both posts, and supervised the issue of nearly 60 volumes of the Society's publications.

He was a superb observer, as shown by the detail of both his drawings and notes made during many trips and explorations around the country, especially in the northern counties. When I first opened the records, I was staggered at the beauty, detail and diversity of the images and records within, and their amazing geographical spread. He travelled all over the country, and abroad. There are pictures from Northumberland to Kent, Gloucestershire to Essex, Scotland to Ireland and Wales to Belgium. He even managed to fit in four trips to Rome. Many of the views and buildings he recorded would not have been easy to reach, especially when considering the state of – or lack of –, the roads. He went by train making use of the then, very extensive network that existed, and then perhaps by horse drawn cab.

Sometimes he seems to have run out of

sketching paper, and made use of anything that was available. A drawing of a hill fort is on the back of a leaflet describing a rail outing from Newcastle to Falkirk with “carriages being provided to inspect Callander House, Castle Cary and parts of the Antonine Wall”, organised by none other than Mr. Robert Blair himself.

Many of the views that he drew have changed drastically since his travels, if they still exist at all. Others have remained the same for hundreds of years. The notebooks are a wonderful picture of a changing and beautiful country, and perhaps a sad sign of some aspects of ‘progress’.

The records are sorted by year from 1877–1913, and vary in size according, one supposes, to how much time he had in a particular year. They show his interest in archaeology, architecture – especially church buildings, history, nature, the landscape and travel. For example, there are details of the epitaph for Henry Jenkins “interred at the amazing age of 169, Dec 6 1670”, a bill for 8/6d for a night's stay, from New Inn Hotel, Gloucestershire, on 30 – 31 Mar 1899, and a drawing of the Royal Grammar School Newcastle, a copy of one belonging to John Clayton.

The records are being catalogued to item level, so that a description of every drawing/note/item will be available on a fully searchable database and then on to the world-wide-web. We are also in the process of digitising a selection of the images (including the illustration for this article).

James Cox, with help from Stuart Hill and Barbara Harbottle.

THE ANTIQUARIES MEET SOMEONE WHO KNEW MR HITLER

The theme of our Country Walks this year is World War Two. However, the Newcastle Antiquaries are just too curious to be content with a single topic and, as usual, interests from the prehistoric to the present have been catered for.

Dennis Peel led the walk on 18th April. He took us back before 1939 but kept the defensive theme by arranging permission to visit the towers at Craster and Dunston Steads. In both cases, a Newcastle Antiquaries link was important.



Who cares about a castle when there's a concrete pillbox to visit?

There was an excellent turnout, despite a poor forecast. It didn't rain (*well, not much* – Ed). The sun was seen. Even sitting on tombstones for lunch failed to lower spirits.

The variety of World War Two pillboxes and their relation to the very important radar installations gave the cue for the sort of debate which makes country walks so much fun. A whole series of putative machine gun emplacements are a strong candidate for listing.

As always, the thorough preparation of the leader and the knowledge and interests of the party combined to make this a stimulating and entertaining visit.

The Antiquaries get high

The second and last country walk of 2004, on September 12th, will take the society to new heights: 815 metres to be exact – Cheviot top. That's a bit lower than the ideal height for the Flying Fortress and the Warwick planes whose remains can be found there. These moving and interesting relics are deteriorating rapidly and should be visited.

Visitors have been ascending Cheviot since at least the 1720s, and we will share their recollections. Taken slowly, the walk is not difficult. Shoes with a decent tread, waterproofs and lots to eat and drink are the main requirements. Bogs must be expected.

Antiquaries who enjoy good company, a modest challenge, tangible evidence of the recent past and an insight into the literary landscape of Northumberland should not fail to meet at the foot of the Hawsen Burn in the Langleeford Valley on 12 Sept at 10.30am

Derek Cutts

MIKE SALTER BOOKS

When I was in the embryonic stage of turning into a buildings archaeologist, at around the age of ten, I discovered a couple of books on castles in our local library, written by Sidney Toy. They introduced me not only to medieval military architecture, but also to the concept of the ground plan. The books were full of them, making hypnotic patterns of curtain walls, keeps and moats. They gave me an introduction to the concentric defences of Edwardian fortresses in Wales and the petalalled rosette forms of Henry VIII's coastal gun forts. I copied many of these plans by hand – this was before the days of photocopiers – and also started collecting Ministry of Works guide books, because they had splendid plans in as well, with complex date codes to their cross hatching. I recall toying with a fantasy of visiting every castle in the British Isles and producing a book with ground plans like this of each and every one, down to the merest fragment in a field.

A few years ago I discovered an alter ego who had actually carried out this mammoth task. Mike Salter has been to virtually every castle in the British Isles – as I write he is working on the last corner of Ireland – and has published, through his own company, the fruits of his labours. The Salter volumes are tribute to dynamic energy and many many hours of draughtsmanship. The recent "The Castles and Tower Houses of County Durham" for instance packs 22 plans, 74 photographs and a scatter of ink drawings into its 60 odd pages, as well as close-packed information – historical facts and building dates, not legends or poetic rhapsodies – and all for £3.95. His "The Castles and Tower Houses of Northumberland", published in 1997, is twice the size (with 90 plans!) but only £1 dearer, and has an equally plan-packed companion "The Old Parish Churches of Northumberland", at the same price. His churches survey lags a little behind the castles one, but has covered most of the western half of the country.

Details can be found on the website www.follypublications.co.uk or obtained from the author at Folly Cottage, 151 West Malvern Road, Malvern, Worcs WR 145 4AY.

Peter Ryder

OUR WEBSITE

The Society's web site has recently been re-designed and thoroughly overhauled by Tom Chadwin, the Society's new Master of Web Site. Using a brand new system called ClearSight, the site can now be updated and expanded by authorized Society members who do not have any technical expertise in web matters.

Using ClearSight means that the site can be kept much more up-to-date than in previous times, since there is no longer the bottleneck of a single person who has to do all the updates. In addition, there is a new search facility.

Another result of this redesign is that the site is now thoroughly accessible to users with disabilities. This is a growth area in web publishing, and its importance cannot be overstated. Someone with a visual disability can now use the site almost as well as someone with 20-20 vision. We are leading the way in this field, one which will be increasingly important as accessibility legislation starts to take effect.

A major project currently in progress on the site is the listing of all *Archaeologia Aeliana* contents pages. When complete, this large job will prove a valuable reference tool to members and non-members alike. Further expansion of the site is anticipated, and ideas for future content are extremely welcome. Please forward any such suggestions to a member of the Publications Committee.

CORBRIDGE EXCAVATION REPORTS

Excavations of the Roman site at Corbridge were carried out in two goes: the first ran from 1906 to 1914, when war stopped play. The excavation started again in 1938, and ran until 1939 when war again stopped play (I don't think the excavations led directly to the outbreak of hostilities despite appearances to the contrary). The Trustees of the Corbridge Excavation Fund have a number of sets of the 1907-1914 *Archaeologia Aeliana* reports on the Foster and Knowles excavations for sale, and a rather more limited number of single copies of the 1938 and 1939 reports.

The sets can be obtained from Lindsay Allason-Jones at the Museum of Antiquities, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU for £20 plus postage and packing. Single copies, including the 1938 and 1939 reports, are also available at £2.50 + P&P. Please make cheques out to the Corbridge Excavation Fund.

RETICULUM PROJECT PIPPED AT THE POST

The Museum of Antiquities got into the finals for the recent Gulbenkian Museum of the Year Prize for its Reticulum Project. In the end, though, we were narrowly beaten by the Scottish National Gallery. The prize, worth £100,000, is the biggest arts prize in Britain and the Museum of Antiquities was the first university museum to get to the finals.

Reticulum started in 2000 as a joint venture between the Museum of Antiquities and the

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members, who have joined (or in some cases rejoined) in the year to 31 May 2004

Michael Carr
Jonathan Clark
John Cruse
Alisdair Dobie
Alex Grant
John Griffiths
Linda Heitmann
Gill Johnson

Valerie Kirkley
D.C. Makepeace
Tom Makepeace
David Mayne
Ann Nalyor
Kristian Pedersen
Andrew Sage
David Sleep

John Taylor
Collingwood Thompson
Paul Thompson
John Waldron
Diana Whaley
Alison Wilkins
Janet Wilkinson
Geoffrey Woodward



*Reticulum's logo, from its website
museums.ncl.ac.uk/reticulum*

first schools in the Blyth Valley to explore the use of IT in teaching History, particularly the history of the Romans in Northumberland.

Since then, it has developed into a completely new method of engaging children's interest in their past in a way which has delighted the children, their teachers, the Museum staff and the wider archaeological world.

Lindsay Allason-Jones

CANON WILLIAM GREENWELL AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES



Canon Greenwell. Photo Copyright Durham Cathedral

William Greenwell, antiquarian, archaeologist, collector, historian, numismatist, fisherman...polymath (1820–1918) spent much of his life in Durham. Plans are afoot

for a Greenwell Conference, covering the history of British archaeology in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, at the Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, April 16–17, 2005, with a reception in the Monks' Dormitory in Durham Cathedral on the Saturday night. Professor Tim Murray from La Trobe University, Australia, is to be the keynote speaker. The cost will be £6.00 for students, £10.00 for other delegates.

The conference aims to give a flavour of the rich and varied research environment of Greenwell's time. The organisers are inviting papers relating to his life and work, and especially on the broader context of Greenwell's archaeological researches from both professional and amateur enthusiasts.

Details of what is required should be obtained from Dr. Anne O'Connor, Greenwell Organising Committee: Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, e-mail canon.greenwell@durham.ac.uk.

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

The Victoria County History of Durham was re-launched in 1999, to continue work started by Madeleine Hope Dodds in the early years of the 20th century. The three published volumes deal with the county's topography, early history and themes from later history, and begin a parish by parish coverage with Durham City and Stockton Ward.

Strengthened by the appointment in 2000 of an assistant editor, a medievalist, Dr Christine Newman, we have produced a national first, a VCH paperback – *The Townscape of Darlington*, out in 2003 – and have also completed Durham VCH, vol. iv, on Darlington, to be published by June 2005. The volume is arranged by themes – landscape, local politics and government, trade and industry, and social life – each covered chronologically. It will present a comprehensive history of medieval Darlington, and detailed accounts of the town's modern history, including little-known features such as the important and long-standing textile industry.

The latter part of the Darlington work has been blighted by funding problems, as we awaited a long-anticipated Heritage Lottery Fund award under the auspices of England's



Pease's Mill, Darlington, from a letterhead of the 1880s, picture Darlington Local Studies Library

Past for Everyone. We have been kept afloat by the generosity of a number of local funders, including significant – and much appreciated – support from the Newcastle Antiquaries. After many frustrating delays, we are at last poised to start the four-year Sunderland project proper on 1 June 2004. Christine and I have been appointed to the new posts of Team Researcher and Team Leader. Novel features of the Sunderland work are a volunteer scheme, in which local people will carry out directed research under the guidance of a volunteer leader; and a schools project, more details of which will be determined once an Education Manager has been appointed to EPE. A rolling programme of secondments from the University of Sunderland's history department will introduce specialist insights into local early modern, political, social and labour history.

Text is to be mounted on-line – as with the Darlington pilot scheme – and there will be two paperbacks. The first, on the town's development up to the time Sunderland parish was carved out of Bishopwearmouth in 1719, is to be *The Origins of Sunderland*, by Maureen Meikle and Christine Newman, with a contribution on Anglo-Saxon settlement by Rosemary Cramp and Alan Thacker. Later will come *The Townscape of Sunderland*.

Almost as soon as we begin, we must plan ahead and think of how to sustain the Durham VCH so that the original aim – to complete a parish by parish coverage within the historic county's boundaries – can be

achieved. We need funds even to turn the outcomes of the HLF project into Durham VCH, vol. v, work which falls outside the remit of EPE. But with luck, using the momentum and achievements to date, and with the staunch members of the Durham VCH Trust on our side, we have high hopes that the great enterprise will in time be completed.

*Gill Cookson
County Editor, VCH Durham*

NORTH EAST RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Last year a new North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (NERRF-HE) was launched, grant-aided by English Heritage.

The objective is to provide a viable, realistic and effective academic basis for undertaking work related to the historic environment in the North East. This involves a three-stage process of

- Resource Assessment; quantifying and evaluating the information already available on the North East's historic environment, by reviewing all the major archives and other sources;
- Research Agenda; identifying gaps in the resource and areas that require attention
- Research Strategy; a final publication offering recommendations for addressing problem areas, and agreed priorities for research.

The first two stages are planned for completion by December 2004. Much work has already been done collating research and identifying all those concerned, but it is vital that the process is as inclusive as possible. We want enquiries, advice, input and opinions from as many "stakeholders" as possible. To help keep people informed of our progress, we have web-pages at

www.durham.gov.uk/research.

When the Resource Assessment and Research Agenda are complete, we will be holding an open public meeting at which we will present results and invite comments for consideration in the next phase.

You can contact the Research Framework team at
e-mail research@durham.gov.uk

phone 0191 383 4212
post Archaeology Section, Culture and
Leisure, County Hall, Durham, DH1
5TY

*Graeme Stobbs (representing the Society on
the Steering Group)*

NOT-SO-GRIMM PICTURES

A new website created by the British Library, www.collectbritain.com/galleries/grimm, features over 50 drawings by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733–1794). Grimm made his living accompanying well-to-do patrons in their travels around England in the late 18th century, capturing their journeys in detailed pen-and-ink drawings. When Richard Kaye, his chief patron, became a Prebend at Durham Cathedral, Grimm followed him north and set out to record the buildings and landscape.

Kaye bequeathed 12 volumes of Grimm's watercolours, covering most of the counties of England, to the British Museum in 1810. The originals are now in the British Library.

The drawings show famous Northumberland buildings such as Warkworth and Alnwick castles, the Guildhall and Hexham Abbey, as they were over 200 years ago. Some – such as that of the mediaeval



*Grimm's drawing of the Guildhall, Newcastle.
Picture, courtesy of British Library*

bridge at Dilston – are thought to be the only ones available of that particular site.

The site is a partnership between the British Library, the North-East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (NEMLAC) and Beamish Museum. There is an article about Grimm in the British Library's on-line journal, at www.bl.uk/collections/eblj/2003/article2.html

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I would be very glad to have readers' comments or suggestions for the content of the Bulletin. I am also happy to receive contributions from members, but with the warning that pressure of space means that articles frequently have to be drastically cut, deferred, or dropped altogether. My address is 5 Goldspink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1 NQ, phone 0191 232 2968, fax 0191 222 1559. E-mail is sue.ward@btinternet.com Deadline for the next edition will be Nov 5th. The mailing date will be Dec 8th. Anyone who wants to have an insert included in that mailing should contact the Membership Secretary at the Black Gate in good time before that, for details of requirements.