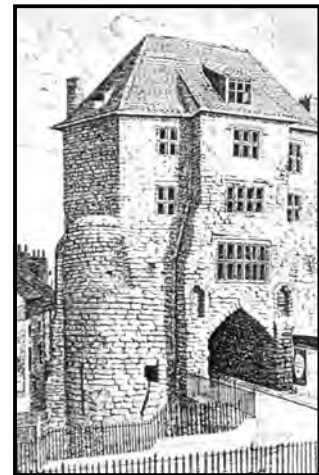


# NEWS BULLETIN

THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No. 39: DECEMBER 2005



## 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 Neolithic remains in the region to churches in Byzantium. 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 Westmoreland, at the other end of the Wall.*

*As well as this twice-yearly News Bulletin, 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 are held 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](mailto:admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk), and our website is [www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](http://www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk)*

## THE PRESIDENT WRITES...

What other Society can offer its members the opportunity to see a production of a locally-written play in the Great Hall of a Norman Keep, to have buffet supper on the roof of that Keep, and then to watch the Tall Ships fireworks display over the Tyne from that high platform? Now I am almost at the end of my first year as President, I am increasingly amazed at the great range of the Society's activities and resources.

This year there has been a fine range of outdoor events, walks and 'country meetings' (coach trips, just as they were when in earlier times our members made excursions by train or by charabanc). The indoors programme has been equally stimulating, with an excellent series of lectures. This lively newsletter keeps members up-to-date, and our journal, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, is sought by libraries and scholars around the world and also allows us all to enjoy the most recent research into the history and archaeology of our region. The Society's website has been ably designed and managed by Hermann Moisl and more recently by Tom Chadwin, and I offer many thanks to them both for their pioneering work. Now hosted and managed by Cornwell Internet, it retains the links to all aspects of the Society and its buildings which have made it so successful. For the more traditional, the library allows members to borrow books to read at home and also allows non-members, by appointment, to consult our books.

The Society could not do any of these things without the care of its tireless officers and committees, and of many volunteers who have worked both in the library and in the Northumberland County Record Office, improving our understanding of our archival holdings

and maintaining access to the library. Our Librarian and the Keeper of the Archaeological Museums in the University report elsewhere in this newsletter on the plans for the Great North Museum, designed by Terry Farrell, a graduate of Newcastle University.

I take this opportunity to thank all members for their help with our programme and all our ventures, and their participation in them, and to wish them a congenial Christmas and an enjoyable year in 2006.

*Grace McCombie*

## THE LECTURE PROGRAMME

In the 2006 programme, we catch up on a number of current archaeological projects in the region. Philippa Walton will speak on the portable antiquities scheme, based in the Museum of Antiquities, in January. In March, John Mabbitt will review the excavations which he directed at Tuthill Stairs in Newcastle and in the following month Clive Waddington will be back to talk about some of the work which has attracted headlines in the national newspapers. At the end of the year, in November, David Petts will describe a project which began in the summer of this year and is due to have a second phase next summer, in which a large civilian settlement of the Roman period has been found near Sedgefield. Arbeia too is a current project and it has become clear that the site had a role long after the Roman era. In June, Alex Croom and Paul Bidwell will review the evidence which has emerged.

Aimee Lawrance will give us an insight in February into the research she is doing on Byzantine churches. This will be one of two journeys outside the region. Christopher Burgess was unable to lecture to us in 2005 – and I am most grateful to Roger Miket for standing in at short notice – but he has kindly offered a re-arranged date in May to talk about his work in the west of Scotland. Richard Allen also has a theme with a religious connection when in September he will speak about his studies on Quaker communities in the north east. John Sadler is currently active in publishing on Borders themes and in August, close to the anniversary, he will reconsider the battle of Flodden.

The Public Lecture is in October in 2006 (We usually offer the speaker the choice of October or November and so over the years it has varied). We welcome a distinguished archivist and architectural historian, Dr Alex Buchanan. He will talk about how Hull architect John Bilson recognised that Durham Cathedral, correctly interpreted, would overturn all the most up-to-date scholarship on Gothic architecture. And who is the magnificently named Walker Featherstonehaugh? Well, for one thing, he was a distinguished member of this Society. To learn more, come and listen to Andrew Newton in June.

As always, I am only too happy to express my thanks to all who have assisted the lecture programme this year by opening discussion or giving the votes of thanks.

*Colm O'Brien*  
*Indoor Meetings Secretary*

## COUNTY RECORDS ON THE MOVE



*Map storage at Morpeth Records Centre before re-packaging*

Northumberland County Archive Service is moving next year to new purpose-built accommodation at Woodhorn, near Ashington, Northumberland. As a result, the Gosforth and Morpeth offices of the Service closed to the public in early September 2005, so that staff could prepare for the transfer.

Our new accommodation will be on the site of Woodhorn Colliery, a listed building with Scheduled Ancient Monument status. The colliery buildings are being restored, and a new landmark building is being constructed to house the County Archives, the reference collection of

Local Studies material currently held at Morpeth Library and the Woodhorn Museum collection. The three collections will together form the Northumberland Collections Service.

New facilities for archive users will include a Study Centre with spaces for up to 80 users, space and facilities for education work with schools and community groups and an interpretative area with interactive tools that will form an introduction to the Archives. Visitors will also have the opportunity to visit 'Coal Town', an exhibition exploring the coalmining heritage of south-east Northumberland, explore the extant colliery buildings and see an exhibition of Ashington Group paintings, as well as enjoying refreshments in our café.

Preparing for the removal of almost four linear miles of records to Woodhorn means stock-checking and re-packaging them all in conservation grade materials. By mid-November we had dealt with more than 1000 boxes of records and almost 36 linear metres of maps and plans. This will allow us to make the best use of space in the new strongrooms, and ensure that records are presented appropriately to our users when we re-open at Woodhorn in Autumn 2006.

Our second major activity has been the continued work on the electronic catalogue. Society members will already know about the project of re-cataloguing the Society's archives in an electronic format, which by October 2005 included details of more than 50,000 of the Society's records. By mid-November we had added a further 50,000 records, from a variety of collections. These include business records, parish and non-conformist records, Parish Council records, Quarter Sessions records and school records. In the coming months we shall be editing and adding to the catalogue, embedding several thousand images into the database, and developing it to allow remote access.

This will mean that users can identify references in advance of a visit and therefore plan their research more effectively. The freetext search facility provides a much more effective means of locating references to documents of interest, and the facility to view images of some holdings remotely may mean that long distance users no longer need to visit the Archives.

*Sue Wood*  
*Senior Archivist, Northumberland County Archives Service*

## VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF DURHAM



*Darlington North Road locomotive works; erecting bay – one of the illustrations from the Darlington volume*

September saw publication of the first volume of the revived County Durham series, *Durham VCH, iv, Darlington*. This is in the new VCH style. In 200,000 words and 270 pages, with 57 illustrations and eight maps and plans, it covers the landscape, economy, political and social history of the town. It is available at Ottakars in Darlington, to order through any bookshop, or direct from the publisher, Boydell and Brewer Ltd. (<http://www.boydell.co.uk/vchpg1.htm>) at PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, tel. 01394 610600. The price is £95.00.

Research on the Sunderland parishes (Bishopwearmouth, Monkwearmouth and Sunderland itself) is now in full swing. The first Sunderland paperback, *Origins of Sunderland*, is in the final stages of preparation for publication in 2007. Maureen Meikle and Christine Newman chart the development of the town from the earliest times to 1719. The volume includes a notable contribution by Professor Rosemary Cramp on the St Peter's site.

In due course there will be a second paperback, *The Townscape of Sunderland*, covering the development of the landscape throughout the town's history. Later will come *Durham VCH, v*, likely to be a two-volume work and including contributions by a number of historians seconded to the project by the University of Sunderland; Maureen Meikle on the 17th century, Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton on 18th-century social and administrative

history, Stuart Howard on 19th-century labour, and Tony Hepburn on 19th-century politics.

Work in progress is also to appear on our website – [www.durhampast.net](http://www.durhampast.net) – where some of the results of volunteer transcribers can already be seen. The volunteer programme, supervised by Stuart Miller, is a major element of this project.

There will be other spin-offs, including a proposal I am working up on the east coast coal trade. Watch this space...

*Gill Cookson*

## THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE



*Roger Cornwell and Jean Rogers, who as Cornwell Internet will be running the Society's website from now on*

Council has reviewed the arrangements for the Society's website, and has decided to engage Cornwell Internet to host and maintain it. This is a small business based in Durham, set up in 1998 by Roger Cornwell when he left BT after a thirty-year career in computing. By 2004 the business had grown to the point where his partner Jean Rogers was able to join him.

The company specialises in web site design for writers and small publishers. Nicholas Rhea, Anne Fine, Michael Jecks, the estate of Julia Darling, and the Crime Writers' Association are among their clients, along with over half the members of the Independent Northern Publishers consortium. Last year Cornwell Internet won a Visionary Design Award from the National Library for the Blind for Anne Fine's website, judged by experts and users to be the best in the children's category.

Outside their day-jobs, Roger has been chairing the City of Durham Trust for the last 7

years, while Jean's doctorate in Mediaeval French has proved surprisingly useful!

Cornwell Internet may be contacted via their website, [www.cornwellinternet.co.uk](http://www.cornwellinternet.co.uk)

## BASTLES ON OTTERBURN TRAINING GROUND



*Iron House Bastle on Otterburn Training Ground, and eager archaeologists. Photo; Rosie Serdiville*

In July 2005 the Ministry of Defence (MoD) organised a trip round the bastles on Otterburn Training Ground as part of National Archaeology week. Many of the 52 people on the bus were members of SANT.

Bastles are fortified farm buildings used for both domestic accommodation and the securing of livestock in troubled times in the early post-medieval period. They are peculiar to the Border area.

The MoD were keen to demonstrate the care taken of both the archaeology and natural environment of this 23,000 hectare site. It was quite strange to find "Warning, Archaeology" signs posted on gates and fences to keep squaddies out. Also surprising was the realisation that the estate is almost entirely a managed rather than a natural environment with stands of trees and open ground carefully designed to provide military training opportunities.

Over a four-hour period, we visited a number of bastles in varying states of preservation. Some, such as Hepple, are still intact and in use as farm buildings. Others, such as Iron House, are little more than partial remains.

High Shaw provided a taste of what it must have been like to shelter in such an environment as forty of us crowded in to a dark enclosed space (12.6m by 7.65m) and then shut the door.

Torchlight revealed a semi-circular barrel vault with a ladder hole on the north side. The upper storey has been dismantled and a fireplace was installed at one stage. A doorway has been knocked through into the shed next door, demonstrating how these buildings were altered and re-used over time.

*Rosie Serdiville*

## MORE PROGRESS ON THE GREAT NORTH MUSEUM

The Great North Museum project moves on apace. The second stage Heritage Lottery Fund bid is now in and we will hear in January if all has gone according to plan. In the meantime, the building has received planning permission and applications have gone in to ONE for other public sources of funding. The best news is that we have had a generous donation of £500,000 from the Northern Rock Foundation – an important milestone on our road to gathering £4m from charitable trusts and individuals.

The design of the galleries was a major element of the second stage HLF bid. Antiquaries will, I hope, be pleased with the plans for the archaeological galleries. Hadrian's Wall will have the largest gallery on the ground floor, flanked by the prehistory and post Roman galleries. The first thing visitors will see will be a full size screen showing the height of Hadrian's Wall plus a very large static, three-dimensional model of the Wall with its outpost forts and hinterland forts. The model will be surrounded by touch screens which will allow visitors to find out more about each site, turning the model into an interactive book.

The artefacts will be divided into themes but each theme will have an inscription with a known person as its core. Each inscription will be linked to a specific fort so its named individual can act as a guide to his/her site as well as his/her theme. Visitors will also be able to use modern technology to access alternative voices. For example, medicine and Housesteads will be represented by Anicius Ingenuus. He was trained in the Mediterranean tradition of medicine but his unit of Tungrians may have preferred their traditional methods, so we would have a soldier's view as well as Anicius Ingenuus's. In this way, we hope to make the displays more personal, put the people back

into archaeology and offer a range of interpretations.

*Lindsay Allason-Jones*

## THE HEART OF THE CITY

Plans are to be developed for the area surrounding St Nicholas Cathedral, the Black Gate and Castle Keep, following the award of a Project Planning Grant worth almost £50,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to a partnership covering St Nicholas Cathedral, the Society and the City Council. Hopefully, this will help to raise the profile of the area, giving it a sense of identity as the historic Heart of the City through landscaping, signage and interpretation, and providing improved educational and visitor facilities.

This project is in the true spirit of the Society, and echoes past involvement in the development of this area. Below is a letter and drawings sent by members of the Society to a local newspaper in the 'Roaring' decade of the 20th century.

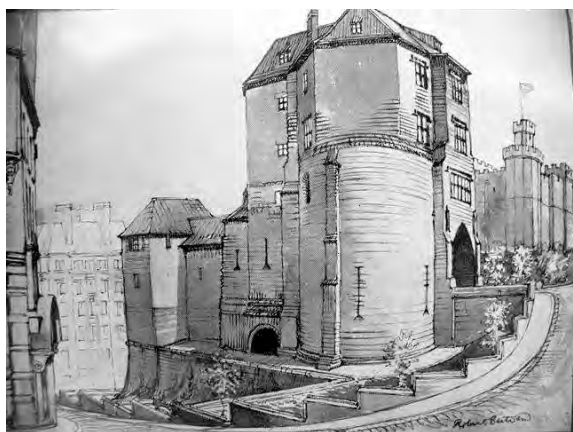
*Sir,*

*The Newcastle upon Tyne Society has had under its consideration the changes brought about by the clearing of the approach to the city from the south, consequent upon the building of the new Tyne Bridge. On behalf of the Society, we beg to submit, through the medium of your paper, to the city authorities and to the citizens generally, the accompanying drawings and suggestions. The alterations have opened up a new and delightful prospect of our city – one of the most interesting and most picturesque views of a great seaport city to be seen anywhere. It is, therefore, unfortunate that this view should be so greatly spoilt by the ugly broken-down slum property and advertisement hoardings upon the southward slope of the Castle Hill, as depicted in sketch Number 1.*



*This could be so easily altered; the dirty, dilapidated remnants of the buildings upon this steep slope cannot be of any great value and should all be swept away, together with the advertisements, and replaced by some such terraced plan as shown in sketch Number 2. (not included here – Ed) Such an improvement would provide a present promenade and resting place for tired citizens, whence they might view the busy activities of the river, the bridges and the quayside. It would also bring to light the splendid stretch of twelfth century masonry forming the south curtain wall of the castle, with its massive Norman postern gate of like date, still used, as it was nearly eight hundred years ago, as an entrance to the castle bailey. This suggested clearance would reveal the full grandeur of our noble Norman tower and, as a background to it, the heavy mass of the Black Gate and the Cathedral Church of St, Nicholas, with the crowning glory of its many pinnacled tower; these, with the foreground of the busy river, would give a view of the city unsurpassed for its mingling of present day interest with that of the historic past.*

*The surroundings of the Black Gate are also deplorable, and they also could, at comparatively small cost, be made greatly better. The road between this thirteenth century gatehouse was the chief entrance into the Castle, and it is still the more direct road for pedestrians to the Moot Hall of Northumberland and to the offices of the county education authority.*



*Sketch Number 3 shows how easily these surroundings might be improved, and how greatly such an improvement would add to the appearance of the gatehouse upon its northern side. Within the gate, the old tumble-down buildings, lean-to sheds, ashtips and filthy rubbish heaps, which now encumber the ground, should be cleared away and the whole made into a*

*dignified approach to the tower and to the county buildings, with a pleasant terraced slope looking down upon the Side.*

*When the Corporation purchased the Castle early in the last century, it re-edified the then ruinous tower and cleared and paved the immediate neighbourhood as we see it today. The making of the railway later in the same century caused a further clearance, and once again towards the end of the century another clearance was made of the slum property within and abutting upon the Black Gate. In these later years our city authorities have not been unmindful of the need for cleansing and beautifying “the place where the great city stands,” Vast clearances have been made and great improvements carried out in many places. Will they not now consider the historic centre and birth place of our city? Will they not now complete the work begun more than one hundred years ago and cause some such improvements to be made as we have here ventured to suggest.*

*C. H. HUNTER BLAIR and ROBERT BERTRAM*

*Newcastle upon Tyne*

*October, 1928.*

We have no doubt that in another 77 years the Society will be involved in some similar scheme. We just hope we don't have to wait so long for this project to come to fruition!

*Pat Blue and Paul McDonald  
Castle Keep*

## COUNTRY WALKS 2006

Three walks have been planned for next year. John Mabbitt will lead a Midwinter walk on 2nd January 2006 around Civil War sites in Newcastle. We will probably start at the place of the King's escape. Suggested accessories include rope and Christmas cake with a file in it!

In May Rob Young will take us on a journey based on the Historical Atlas of villages in the National Park, and in September Ian Ayris will take us to Wallsend Dene to look at waggonways.

We will be starting a little later in the mornings in 2006, at 11 am, to make it easier for everyone to get there. See you there....

*Rosie Serdiville*

## ONE STEP NEARER

During the summer, the Society has been discussing how its library might be housed alongside the University's Cowen Library and the Library of the Natural History Society of Northumbria in the proposed Great North Museum. Members will find longer opening times in a purpose-designed and easily accessible library. We now await a funding decision in January 2006. If all goes to plan the new library should be well established by our bicentenary in 2013 and hopefully even earlier.

*Denis Peel,  
Librarian*

## ONLINE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NORTH-EAST HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

A searchable bibliography of articles on north-east history and archaeology has been launched at [www.sunderland.ac.uk/nebibliog](http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/nebibliog).

Thanks to a grant from the Marc Fitch Fund and considerable technical support from the University of Sunderland, we have been able to digitise and mount online a card index of 6,500 articles, the result of a Manpower Services Commission scheme in the 1980s which has since been gathering dust in an attic.

The index can currently be searched by author or by any keyword in the title, but is roughly grouped by theme, so the browse facility will shortly be improved to make it more easily searchable that way. Most of the entries relate to Co. Durham, Cleveland and Northumberland, although there are also references to places beyond. There is particularly good coverage of the Society's *Proceedings*, and of *Archaeologia Aeliana*.

The site should be useful for tracking down obscure articles, especially those in unindexed 19th-century journals without a full table of contents. The University of Sunderland is helping to develop it further during the coming months, with support from its History research budget, and we hope among other things to update some of the journal runs which currently stop at the point when the MSC scheme halted in the late 1980s.

Please tell your friends and colleagues about the site. We think it's going to be immensely useful.

*Gill Cookson*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### **Bede's World**

Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 December; Christmas Extravaganza – Bede's World first pantomime. The Vision Theatre Group will be performing their own version of Cinderella, based on the 7th century saint Bathilda.

Saturday 28 January 2006, 12 noon Lives of saints in Anglo-Saxon England Lecture by Dr Mary Swann, Institute of Medieval Studies, University of Leeds.

Contact Bede's World for further information, and topics for later lectures (held on the last Saturday of each month) on 0191 489 2106 [www.bedesworld.co.uk](http://www.bedesworld.co.uk)

### **Northern Architectural History Society**

4 April 2006, Structural Carpentry in the 17th and early 18th centuries, lecture by Professor David Yeomans, in Fine Arts Lecture Theatre, Newcastle University at 7.30. For details of membership of the Society, contact David Hide, 24 Towers Ave, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 3QE

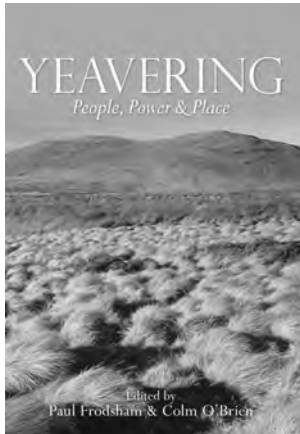
### **Northumberland Archaeological Group**

11 January 2006, The Coquet Valley Archaeological Project, lecture by Elanor Johnson, Newcastle Arts Centre, Westgate Road, at 7pm. For details of membership, contact Sheila Day, 0191 258 2479

## TYNE PILOTS

Our member Mark Egan is currently researching the history of pilotage on the Tyne. His research covers the sea pilots based principally at South Shields and the river pilots based at various points between Newcastle and South Shields, the development of trade in and out of the river from the Middle Ages onwards, and the role of Newcastle Trinity House in overseeing pilotage until the 1860s. He can be contacted at 10 Beltinge Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 6DB or by e-mail via [marksanddancer@onetel.com](mailto:marksanddancer@onetel.com)

## YEAVINGER; PEOPLE, POWER AND PLACES



Yeavinger in Northumberland has been a key site in Northern England for thousands of years. In close proximity lie a Neolithic henge, a Bronze Age cemetery, an Iron Age hillfort and finally a spectacular Anglo-Saxon palace.

In 2003, Society members attended a highly successful conference at Bede's World on Yeavinger, organised by our leading lights Colm O'Brien and Paul Frodsham. A book based on the conference papers has just been published by Tempus, edited by Colm and Paul. It is lavishly illustrated, and should appeal not only to archaeologists but to those who want to know more about the landscape they are walking through or seeing.

It costs £19.99 plus p&p, and is available from Tempus Publishing, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG, phone 01453 883300, fax 01423 883233, e-mail [sales@tempus-publishing.com](mailto:sales@tempus-publishing.com)

## COUNTRY MEETINGS

Country meetings went well in 2005. The sun shone, there was a splendid variety of houses, gardens and churches to explore, and the hospitality and the teas were truly memorable.

We hope to enjoy equal success in 2006. Members will have the usual three outings to choose from. First, on 22nd April we head to Carlisle, to explore some of that city's familiar landmarks with expert guidance as well as some recent developments. We will be travelling by train, repeating the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway's memorable opening run of 1838 in rather more comfortable circumstances, and observing a ribbon of history. On 1st July, we are in North Yorkshire to visit the enjoyable Captain Cook Birthplace Museum on the outskirts of Middlesbrough and Mount Grace Priory. We end at the delightful almshouses and fine baroque chapel of Sir William Turner's Hospital at Kirkleatham.

Finally, on 2nd September we have a long run to Dumfries and beyond. We shall explore Cistercian Sweetheart Abbey, the New Abbey Corn Mill, and the mid-Victorian Shambellie House which houses a modest costume museum. On the way home we shall visit the remains of Lincluden Church, and possibly other sites in Dumfries.

Full details and booking forms will appear with the March mailing, but diary dates should be reserved now. We would welcome rather larger numbers on country meetings. Members are welcome to bring friends, and we hope to extend an invitation for members of the Association of Northumberland Local History Societies to join us.

*Tom Corfe*

## 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](mailto:sue.ward@btinternet.com). Deadline for the next edition will be May 19th 2006. The mailing date will be June 21st. There will also be the usual Spring mailing, scheduled for 29th March. Anyone who wants an insert included in either mailing should contact the Membership Secretary at the Black Gate in good time before these dates, for details of the requirements. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Secretary at the Black Gate by noon Wed 22nd March or 14th June respectively.*