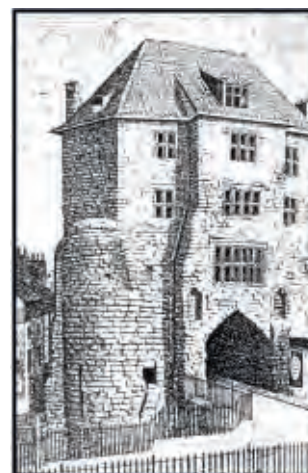


# NEWS BULLETIN

## THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.49 DECEMBER 2010



### 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, and a learned journal. Our library, our main collection and our offices are housed in the Great North Museum at the Hancock, with further items in other museums around the region. We lease the Castle Keep and the Black Gate from the City Council.*

*For more information, look at our website [www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](http://www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk), or contact the Membership Secretary at Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, Great North Museum: Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT. Phone 0191 231 2700 for administration; 0191 222 3555 for the library, or e-mail [admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](mailto:admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk)*

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### FROM THE PRESIDENT



*David Breeze receiving his European award*

It is difficult to appreciate that in a matter of weeks I will relinquish office as your President. How the last three years have flown! The main event of those years was the opening of the Great North Museum by HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. In many ways this was a further step on the long measured tread of the Society: a new display for our incomparable collection built up over very nearly 200 years, and the creation of a new relationship, this time with Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums. The Royal opening was also the end point of several years of serious activity by our Keeper of the Archaeological Collections, Lindsay Allason-Jones, to whom we offer our grateful thanks.

The move of our collection was accompanied by the move of the library into spanking new premises in the Great North Museum. Here our thanks are due to Denis Peel and his faithful band of volunteers. Our books

are now available to consult in peaceful and modern surroundings, cared for by Nicky Clarke.

The formulation of a new Memorandum of Agreement between the Society and the University has taken even longer than my Presidency to achieve and is only now in the process of being signed.

Our other major collection, the Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum (W. A. Cocks Collection), was also the venue for a Royal visit, in this case Princess Anne who opened the new display following the flood in 2008. The fact that I do not write 'disastrous flood' is almost entirely due to curator Anne Moore along with Kim Bibby-Wilson and her family who, as the waters rose, laboured to bring the many items of the collection to safety. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude.

The move out of our long-term home, the Black Gate, has left that important landmark seeking a new use. We hope that the revised bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to revitalise 'Old Newcastle' (see report elsewhere in this Bulletin) will encompass a new future for the Black Gate. In the meantime, discussions are underway between your President and Treasurer, and officials of Newcastle City Council with a view to seeking a new management structure for the the Castle Keep.

These are the special events of the last 3 years, but there are many more 'highs'. Every month there is an instructive and enjoyable lecture, every 6 months the *News Bulletin*, and every year the arrival of our journal. The preparation and production of each, together with the other activities such as the walks and excursions, regularly reminds me of the continuing hard work of the officers and committee members and other volunteers who quite simply keep the Society functioning: to all we owe our thanks.

Our next major challenge is to commemorate the 200th anniversary of our foundation in 1813 in appropriate style. A Bicentenary Committee has been formed and events are planned. These include a concert at the Sage, a booklet on the history and activities of the Society, a special lecture programme, and an exhibition at the Great North Museum to be accompanied by smaller exhibitions and events at other locations where our collections are held, linked by a trail. We also want to improve our archive by, for

example, recording the memories of our members and collecting film of past activities, such as excavations. We will produce an appropriate souvenir of the year, and end with a dinner for Society members. We hope that these events will not only celebrate our anniversary but also encourage new members to join.

Finally, I should like to emphasise thanks to the members of the Society who have sustained me for the last 3 years and who carry the Society forward.

*David Breeze*

*Editor's note; In September, David was awarded the European Archaeological Heritage Prize for 2010, by the European Association of Archaeologists. The citation records "contribution to the advancement of archaeology, and particularly to standards of archaeological scholarship within the United Kingdom and further afield" and specifies his role in "the field of international cooperation in heritage conservation and management, the acceptance of the Antonine Wall into UNESCO's list in July 2008, and the invention of a new type of trans-national, multi-centred, World Heritage Site." Our congratulations to him.*

## NEW YEAR SOCIAL EVENING

As usual, there will be a social evening after the January 2010 lecture, in the Wood Memorial Hall on the first floor of the Mining Institute. Members are asked to donate food for the buffet. Please contact me on 0191 285 5303 to say what you are bringing. We will also be asking for a small donation, around £1, for each glass of wine.

New members who have joined in the last year will be especially welcome. Please don't hesitate to introduce yourselves to fellow-members; we all have shared interests!

*Freda Thompson*

## MONEY MATTERS

The Society is very fortunate. Nearly thirty years ago it was decided that a number of items which had found their way into its

collections fell completely outside our areas of interest and should be sold. The proceeds were invested and their capital value grew steadily for the next twenty-five years, producing a welcome flow of income. This has funded the purchase of important new items for the collections; grants towards archaeological digs and research; support for outside publications like the *Victoria County History*; subsidies for *Archaeologica Aeliana* and the *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, and much else besides.

In 2006 the capital value of the fund was above £700,000, producing an income of £28,000 in 2007. Then came the recession. The capital value fell below £500,000 in December 2008, and the income to £22,400; the latest valuation is £580,000, and the income this year will be less than £19,000, but even that is more than the annual total of members' subscriptions!

The Council's view is that subscriptions should cover in full the cost of administration, the monthly lecture series, reciprocal membership of regional and national archaeological and antiquarian societies, books and journals for the library, and as far as possible, the production of AA and other publications. We no longer have to meet the cost of using the Black Gate, but we are now contributing to the salary of the librarian of the Great North Museum. There was a modest deficit in 2009 and there will be another in 2010, although we do not yet know how large. The amount of tax we can recover through the Gift Aid scheme will also be cut in 2011.

This is the background against which Council has decided that subscriptions – which have been held at their current level for the past six years – should be raised for 2011. The benchmark increase is £6, which still offers amazingly good value for money, but anyone paying by direct debit will receive a discount of £3. It is hoped that this level will hold good for at least six years.

There are two ways in which members can improve our chances of achieving this aim. First, if anyone who is not paying by Direct Debit starts doing so, it will cut our administrative costs and give you a saving on your subscription. Second, if all members who currently pay tax at the standard or higher rate would sign a Gift Aid form – as many have already done – we can recover extra income

tax without any cost to you. You can get forms for both from Sarah Walter, our membership secretary, or download and print them off from the website.

*David Hide, Treasurer*

## THE LIBRARY ONE YEAR ON

*Our full-time librarian writes*

The library at the Great North Museum: Hancock has been open for over a year now and all three library collections (Society of Antiquaries, Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Cowen Library) are starting to settle into their new home. Many of the Society of Antiquaries' books have now been entered on Newcastle University's Library catalogue, and this can be searched at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/>. We hope to include the rest of the Society's books, tracts and journals in the next stage of cataloguing, so then it will be possible to see exactly what's in the Antiquaries' extensive library collection quickly and easily online.

My first year as librarian has flown, and it's been really good to see how much use is being made of the library collections. As well as working in partnership with the Antiquaries' librarian Denis Peel, I am also helped by an enthusiastic group of volunteers, many of them members of the Antiquaries. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their hard work and support over the last year. At the moment I am looking for volunteers to write short reviews of Society of Antiquaries' books to display in the library and for the library blog. Reviews can be of any book (or journal) in the Society's collection and should be around 200 words long, so if you know of an excellent book that you'd like to tell other people about then please send me your review.

If you haven't visited the new library yet why not come along and have a look around? Opening times are: Monday–Friday, 10am–4pm (term time) and 1–4pm (vacation time).

You can find information about the library (including opening times) on the Great North Museum: Hancock's collections webpage: <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/greatnorthmuseum/collections/>

Also visit the library blog\* at:  
<http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/engage/blog/gr eatnorthmuseum/>

If you have an enquiry, please contact the library on: 0191 222 3555 or email [gnmlibrary@twmuseums.org.uk](mailto:gnmlibrary@twmuseums.org.uk)

I look forward to seeing you in the library very soon.

*Nicky Clarke*

\* For the uninitiated, here is part of the Wikipedia definition of a blog; “A blog (a blend of the term web log) is a type of website or part of a website. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video... Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments...”

*Our Hon Librarian writes*

I can't believe it is now eighteen months since we packed all those boxes. The dust has settled and we can review the first full year in our new home in the Hancock. I know it is supposed to be Great North Museum: Hancock, but it doesn't say that on the pediment at the front. Nicky Clarke, the full time-librarian has supervised hordes of students, mainly using the Cowen library, but also finding our library useful, so that some have joined the Society so they can borrow. Nicky has also coordinated the three libraries and the two honorary librarians and is supervising the cataloguing of our books. This is still ongoing, so a list of new acquisitions is regularly added to the website, and of course it is still possible to consult our card catalogue especially for older books. This won't be removed until every last book is electronically catalogued, including all the monographs loosely connected with journals. While our budget is finite, I do welcome recommendations of books we should purchase, as well as any donations of books you have bought and read.

Our library contains many old and fragile books, and those on public display have been moved into backroom, “controlled”, access to allow more Cowen books to be available for the students.

Our statistics show that fewer Society members borrowed books than previously in the Black Gate, but this may be because there

is more time to use them in the library. I know some people dislike using the lift for access. If you are one of them, ask at the front desk for directions to the secondary flight of stairs, which goes up to the second floor.

There are downsides to being in the Hancock. We have far less room to display new books, magazines and ephemera such as notices of meetings and events, but I am making arrangements to increase our display area in the library and also to use our website.

*Denis Peel, Librarian*

## TOUGH TIMES!



*One of the illustrations of the castle from the new guidebook, by Mark Hoyle*

2010 has been a tough year at the Castle Keep. The worst winter in thirty years, volcanic ash, an airline strike and the uncertain economic climate have all had a negative impact on paying adult visitor numbers, though under-18 visitor numbers showed only a slight fall. There have been noticeably fewer visitors from North America and Australia, though Dutch visitors continue to come in strength. Our ghost hunting clients are also feeling the pinch. More positively, our visitors are spending more with us. We have broken last year's revenue record. We have also had our best ever Heritage Open Day weekend with 1,302 visitors, 16% up on 2009. School groups have come from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Romania, Spain and Switzerland together with a group from a German college.

We now have on display a late 15th to early 16th century naval swivel gun returned after a loan of 35 years to the Royal Armouries at the

Tower of London. A Victorian fireplace, hidden for many years, has been uncovered in the lower hall. The Buildings of Newcastle models continue to attract much interest from both visitors and the media. Temporary displays entitled Castle Keep at War and Building the Castle Keep have been created, with much help from Society member John Nolan, of NCAS. John has also guided the production of six historical background leaflets. Three more are in preparation, together with a new Castle Guidebook. The Keep team have also coped with serious illness, an assault by a visitor, a flash flood and a major demonstration, which forced a closure on police advice over a critical bank holiday weekend. We look forward to brighter times and hopefully, a successful Stage 2 HLF bid for the Old Newcastle project.

*Tony Ball, Administrator*

## ARTS ACTIVITIES ON HADRIAN'S WALL

### **Mithras**

On a glorious wind-swept evening in early July Ruth Barker, Leverhulme Artist in Residence for the Centre for Interdisciplinary Artefact Studies at Newcastle University, gave a performance of her new piece 'Mithras' at the Mithraeum at Carrawburgh, courtesy of English Heritage, Northumberland National Parks, Hadrian's Art Trust and Miss J. du Cane. No-one who attended will ever forget this extraordinary experience, as the sounds of the wind and of larks singing overhead added to Ruth's words. In the true spirit of Mithraism, a large proportion of the audience stayed on after the performance to partake of a communal picnic.

### **Bards in the Bar**

Hadrian's Arts Trust also arranged a night of revelry in October, in pubs right across Hadrian's Wall from Newcastle to Carlisle. Some of the region's best contemporary poets and story-tellers entertained the customers with wit, humour and imagination in the old traditional way – at the inn.

Those taking part included Peter Mortimer at the Robin Hood near Matfen, Maureen



*Mithras at Carrawburgh, picture courtesy Lindsay Allason-Jones*

Almond at the Milecastle Inn, Ellen Phethean at the Greenhead Inn and Penny Grennan, the Antiquaries' own Artist in Residence, at the King's Head Carlisle. The idea was to bring the region's leading lights in writing and performing to the comfortable social ambience of the local for the enjoyment of people who like to think while they drink.

As one potential (?) Bard, Kevin Greene, put it,

*The pubs along Hadrian's Wall*

*Are hardly frequented at all*

*By pottery shards*

*Because all the bards*

*Make cooking-pots feel very small...*

The event was generously supported by Northumberland National Park, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, and the Bards themselves. For more information on the poets and the Hadrian Arts Trust go to [www.hadrianartstrust.org](http://www.hadrianartstrust.org)

*Lindsay Allason-Jones*

## EMPTYING THE BLACK GATE

Slow but sure progress is being made in emptying the Black Gate of the lumber of many years. All the prints and paintings are now in the Society's Office in the Great North Museum, properly wrapped and awaiting a conservation assessment. A large number of printing blocks (both wood and copper), and other artefacts relating to printing and the written word, including John Buddle's writing desk and a Victorian writing slope, have been loaned to Palace Green Library, Durham University. A wide selection of social history items, such as cock spurs and lanthorns, has

been lent to The Heritage Centre at Bellingham.

We are having some difficulty in finding an institution willing to take on loan the large collection of wax cylinders and pianola rolls, plus the equipment for playing them, that formed part of the William Cocks Bequest. If any member can suggest a good home for these, please let me know as soon as possible.

*Lindsay Allason-Jones*

*E-mail: l.allason-jones@newcastle.ac.uk*

## DINNER WITH ADMIRAL COLLINGWOOD



*The dinner at Trinity House, picture courtesy Howard Phillips*

Trinity House is probably one of Newcastle's best-kept secrets. Crossing the threshold to attend a banquet in celebration of the Lord Admiral unlocked many more.

The Summoner scrutinised each of the twenty-four guests on entry but once inside the Boardroom we were able to relax with a glass of "Admiral's Flip", a mix of rum, champagne and spices suggesting exotic destinations. Captain Stephen Healy, Deputy Master of Trinity House, and Mrs Healy proved charming and knowledgeable hosts, the former in wig and full period dress uniform and his wife in a gold satin dress from the same era.

We were taken past paintings from the Rubens School, pictures of ships battling in full sail and portraits of British royalty, into an antique library and then through a concealed door into an impressive medieval chapel. Fortunately, the resident ghost made no appearance during our visit. The Deputy Master's illuminating commentary diverted us as we passed through panelled rooms to the

Banqueting Chamber.

A delightful themed meal followed, the diners being offered additional distraction by Captain Healy, Dr Tony Barrow (who lectured us in February on Collingwood) and John Grundy the broadcaster. As course followed upon course – "St. Vincent's Terrine", "Pork Sovereign" and "Boney's Just Dessert" – our tables were visited in turn by each of these gentlemen dispensing information and salty wit. We were almost sunk before being towed towards the inevitable port.

Following an evening of impressive hospitality and remarkable entertainment, and the examination of a handwritten letter from the Lord Admiral himself, we stepped back into the 21st Century. We now look forward to the completion of a new Quayside memorial to the Admiral and the growth of a greater public awareness for an outstanding historical figure and a highly accomplished Northumbrian.

*Howard Phillips*

## WALKS 2011

Four outings are planned for 2011. Roger Fern will lead a New Year expedition round Newcastle on the afternoon of 2nd January. Ellison Place to the Response should get our legs and our brains going again after the festivities.

The morning of 21st May offers a unique opportunity to explore the cold war remains at RAF Spadeadam. We will need to provide a list of those attending plus confirmation of identity – apologies for this but the RAF is a trifle security conscious these days!

19th June is another rare treat. Paleoarchaeologist Louisa Giddens will be exploring the nature and organisation of early medieval farming in Northumberland. For preparatory reading, take a look at Angus Winchester's book, *Harvest of the Hills* (it's in our library).

On 10th July, Blawhearie near Old Bewick should make for a pleasant and interesting ramble as we explore our region from the prehistoric to the modern era.

Finally, David Breeze will take advantage of late summer on 4th September to tour some of the Roman quarries alongside the Wall, particularly Fallowfield and Queens Crag.



*Participants in the September walk around Peterlee, on the steps of the Apollo Pavilion. Picture courtesy John Griffiths*

Full details of all these will appear on the website nearer the time. Please get in touch with me for any queries. I will be co-ordinating transport to Spadeadam since access (and parking) are restricted and would be happy to arrange lifts for anyone who wants to join us for the other dates. If you can offer (or need) transport, or for more details, please contact me on 0191 230 3897 or [rosie.serdiville@gmail.com](mailto:rosie.serdiville@gmail.com)

*Rosie Serdiville*

## SUMMER WALKS

The Summer Walks programme had two ‘hits’ and one ‘miss’. John Sadler began the series with a tour around some of the seamier and more disputatious sites in Newcastle’s long history; this was followed by a walk around ‘Dan Smith’s Wallsend’, looking at some of the controversial politician’s old homes and old haunts. Unfortunately the final walk – a tour of the modernist planning and architecture of Killingworth – was seen off by unseasonable (hah!) foul weather.

As summer walks co-ordinator, I would welcome any suggestions or offers to lead

walks. The walks take place on Monday evenings at 7pm, and should last 1.5 to 2 hours, starting and ending at Metro stations or other locations easily reached by public transport. If you have any ideas, please email me at [johnfrancisgriffiths@hotmail.com](mailto:johnfrancisgriffiths@hotmail.com)

*John Griffiths*

## LOCAL HISTORY FAIRS

Three Antiqs volunteers enjoyed a sunny day by the sea in June, running the Society’s stall at the Sunderland Local History Fair at the Seaburn Centre. We were able to answer questions about the Society and its activities, as well as to sell a satisfying number of our publications, at a lively and well-attended event. We were very fortunate in having Bill Arbuckle’s help: a resident of Washington and expert on matters Wearside, he is well-known to many Sunderland historians.

We hope to attend more such events in the future. If any members would like to help run the stall – even for a couple of hours – please let Rosie Serdiville know at [rosie.serdiville@gmail.com](mailto:rosie.serdiville@gmail.com)

*John Griffiths*

## OTHER SOCIETY NEWS

### Research Day

Sadly, the Research Day scheduled for 30th September had to be cancelled for lack of support, for the second year running. The Activities Committee are keen to find out, from anyone who *didn’t* book, why this was. Thoughts are that it might have been because the advert went out in the June mailing, and it was too far ahead at that stage for people to think about booking; it was a Saturday at the end of school half-term week; the topic perhaps did not appeal to enough people (if so, what would have a wider appeal?)

If you have any thoughts, Richard Bailey and the Committee would be glad to know of them.

### Two AA editors together across the Pennines...

The new enlarged Pevsner for Cumbria has



*The cover of the new Pevsner guide to Cumbria, showing St Andrew's church at Kirkcandrews-on-Esk, 1775. Picture courtesy Yale University Press.*

just emerged from Yale University Press (edited and beautifully written by Matthew Hyde). Its 'Archaeology' introduction is written by Humphrey Welfare and the introduction to Anglo-Saxon sculpture by Richard Bailey.

It's not cheap, at £35 full price (though a search on Amazon found it at a 30% discount not long after publication), and it would be hefty to take on a fell walk, at 800 pages. However, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's original account of the area dated from 1967–8, and was split between two volumes. The revised edition is twice as long, and covers the whole region.

### **Internet Things**

A number of early volumes of *Archaeologia Aeliana* (out of copyright) have been digitised by the University of Toronto and are now available on the internet. Much of the Second Series, from 1855 to 1902, is there, and a couple of the 3rd series as well. Look on [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) (it's a not-for-profit site), and

put *Archaeologia Aeliana* into the search box.

The e-mailing list continues to grow, and now stands at just over 80. If you would like a monthly reminder of what's going on (plus additional e-mails when people send notices about events in the near future), please contact the Membership Secretary on [admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](mailto:admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk).

Given the ever-increasing cost of postage, the membership secretary would also like to have comments on whether anyone would be willing to have their regular mailings (3 a year) completely by e-mail – though AA of course would remain a paper volume. It would save money, paper, and time if we went electronic for those who wanted it. Please let Sarah know.

*Sue Ward*

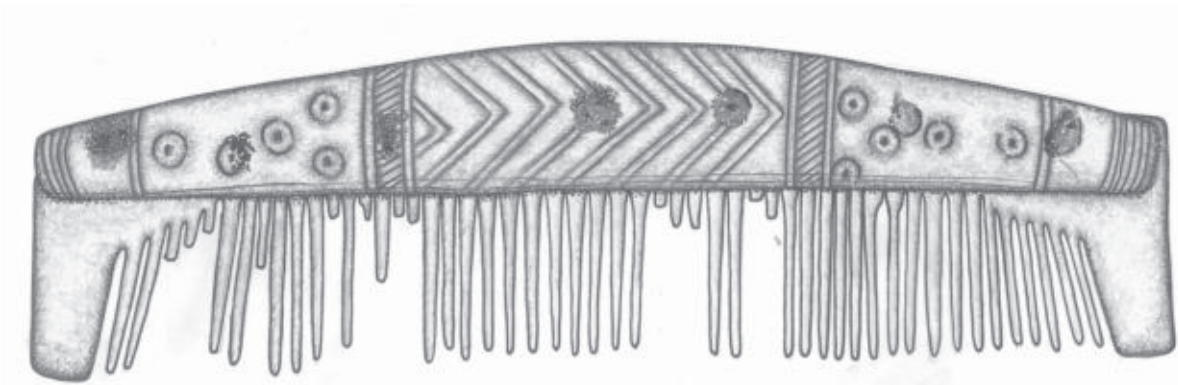
## 'OLD NEWCASTLE – WHERE THE STORY BEGINS' PROJECT

The Old Newcastle Project (formerly the Heart of the City project) has been awarded a first-round pass by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This means that it meets the HLF's published criteria for funding and that it has the potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. It shows that the HLF values our proposals and wants to have the opportunity to assess them in detail at the second round.

The Partnership has been offered a 'development grant' of up to £43,400 which is 75% of the total eligible development work cost of around £58,000 towards the cost of preparing designs, an activity plan, a conservation management plan and an interpretation strategy. This work should be completed in March 2011, and will allow the preparation and submission of a Stage 2 Heritage Grant application to the HLF in April 2011.

The proposed works to the buildings funded through the HLF will be complemented by works to the 'public realm' (streets and open spaces) within the Old Newcastle area. Work on the enhancement of St Nicholas Square, led by NE1, has already started and is due to be completed by the end of March 2011.

*Fiona Cullen*



*One of the combs under discussion by Steve Ashby*

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### May 2010

This meeting was held jointly with the North East Ancient Egypt Society, Dr Penny Wilson talked about the royal tombs of Egypt's Delta area. One could trace the history of Egypt, she said, through its construction of tombs. The Pyramids dated back to the Old Kingdom; they were still being constructed during the Middle Kingdom, but in mud-brick which was much less durable.

However, pyramids gave grave-robbers too good an idea of where to dig, and so in the New Kingdom tomb construction moved to the mountains, with tunnels being excavated back into the rock and then infilled afterwards. At the end of the New Kingdom, the capital moved to the Delta, where the terrain was very different, since the Delta was covered with water for three months of the year. The political system was also much more influenced by other dominating political cultures such as Greece, Rome and Persia.

The 21st Dynasty built a massive temple- and tomb-complex at Tanis; its central building was a temple to the God Amun. The site was excavated by Petrie and a French team that was especially interested in Biblical connections. In 1939, tombs of the 21st and 22nd dynasties were found; they were large boxes made of limestone, well below ground level, with a chapel above. Inside each were several sarcophagi, of red granite, intact. One of them contained a silver coffin for the king – at the time in Egypt, silver had a greater rarity value than gold. Confusingly, some of the objects were re-used from much earlier tombs, including those from the reign of Ramses II, a thousand years earlier. Other tombs had more modest heirlooms within them.

The great prize would be locating the tomb of Alexander the Great. Contemporaries stated that his body had been brought to Egypt for burial, to Memphis and then Alexandria. There were several possible sites for it, but sadly, it could well have been lost in the great tidal wave that ruined Alexandria in AD 365.

*Penny can be contacted on  
penelope.wilson@durham.ac.uk*

### June 2010

Dr Steve Ashby, of the University of York, spoke about his research on bone and antler combs in Britain and Scandinavia. There were, he said, underlying questions about the development and communication of technology. In the early medieval period, hair and grooming had a widely recognised significance; Alcuin of York for example had inveighed against men who took up 'foreign' hairstyles. This in turn invested combs with a certain meaningful capital; they might have been seen as dress accessories, worn on belts and kept in decorative cases, while they were also frequently interred as grave goods.

Received wisdom was that the complex process of comb-making was guided by a concern with efficiency, to produce the maximum numbers with the least effort. Anthropology, however, has shown that this was not always the case; one might instead carry out the tasks in the way that gave the most pride in one's work. This might mean going through from start to finish, rather than dividing the process into discrete tasks.

Studying artefacts such as combs could also give insight into networks of trade and contact. For example, a number of 'Pictish' combs seemed to be made of reindeer antler. Since reindeer were not living in Scotland at the time, the raw material must have been

imported from Scandinavia. Recently developed technology now allowed us to address this question in detail. More generally, one could see from the distribution patterns where the links with Scandinavia came in, and how long they persisted.

Steve can be contacted at [spa105@york.ac.uk](mailto:spa105@york.ac.uk)

### July 2010

Richard Pears of Durham University spoke about Patronage and Palladianism; the career of William Newton.

Eighteenth-century architect Newton, he said, had developed an extensive network of clients and patrons in the North East in the course of his career, and had made his style a key and distinctive one in the region. Between 1760 and 1798, he had been responsible for over 40 country houses, churches and civic buildings in Northumberland and Durham. He began his career, however, with his father as a contractor for Daniel Garrett, gradually taking on more work including redrawing Garrett's plans to fit the site and budget.

Newton's breakthrough had come with the building of the Infirmary, for which virtually everyone of any importance in Newcastle had subscribed. Satisfactory work there had given him a contact list to exploit throughout the rest of his life, and allowed him to largely neutralise potential rivals such as the London-trained Newcastle architect David Stephenson.

Among other projects he built Howick Hall, Dissington Hall, St Ann's Church and the Assembly Rooms in Newcastle. He was, however, much condemned by nineteenth-century commentators for his work on St Nicholas' Cathedral, which removed many of the medieval monuments (though in his



*Dissington Hall, picture courtesy Richard Pears*

defence, the elite subscribers had ordered this).

Unfortunately, none of Newton's personal records had survived, so one had to reconstruct his career and contacts from other records. He styled himself 'architect' from 1760 onwards, thus claiming for himself professional expertise and the right to charge fees. He clearly held enormous prestige among his contemporaries in Newcastle.

Richard can be contacted on [richard.pears@durham.ac.uk](mailto:richard.pears@durham.ac.uk)

### August meeting

A clash of commitments meant that Rosie Serdiville gave the lecture on Kindertransport in the North East instead of John Sadler, in her role as a fellow member of the enactment group, Time Bandits.

She explained that there were several different movements to bring Jewish children out of Nazi Germany in the months before the start of the Second World War, with trains from Berlin and Vienna, airlifts from Prague, and movement from the Netherlands until May 1940 when the Dutch surrendered. Around 10,000 Jewish children were brought to the UK, many of them with the help of Quakers across Europe and in Britain.

Those who did not have agreed foster homes were placed in temporary internment camps, sometimes for prolonged periods. Most were well treated, but inevitably some unscrupulous foster-parents took the opportunity to acquire domestic staff at no cost. Some children saw dramatic reversals of fortune, perhaps coming from wealthy homes and having to sleep in bug-infested bedrooms with other children.

There was an established Jewish community in Newcastle, and an ultra-Orthodox Talmudic school and community in Gateshead - which still exists today. The beginnings of Nazi persecution in 1933 considerably enlarged the community, including a number of children from the Kindertransport.

Two other Time Bandit members, Sarah-Jayne Goodfellow and Bill Pickard, presented oral testimony from published letters, memoirs, and interviews by John Sadler, with descriptions of their experiences from a number of people who had themselves been involved as children.

Rosie can be contacted on



*One of the atmospheric pictures of Lindisfarne used by Christopher Ferguson to illustrate his lecture*  
rosie.serdiville@gmail.com

### **September 2010**

Christopher Ferguson spoke about 'Early Medieval Bernicia: the rise and fall of a coastal society'. Taking Bernicia at its widest geographical extent from the Tees to the Firth of Forth, he explained, a high proportion of its key sites in the sixth to the eighth centuries were on the coast, or on navigable rivers.

Visibility was highly important in the construction of early medieval spaces. Early burial sites not associated with monasteries, Christopher suggested, tended to be near the sea but not easily visible from it. On the other hand, secular settlements such as Dunbar, Doon Hill and Abercorn in Lothian tended to be much more visible, and were also often placed on sites which had their own historical importance. Dunbar, for example was on the site of an Iron Age promontory fort.

One theory was that early Anglo-Saxon monasteries were seen as places of escape, sited in the 'desert' as with the early Church fathers. However, those on the coast of Northumbria seemed to have been placed deliberately and carefully to be highly visible. On any journey down the coast seamen could always have one in sight and usually two. Moving a site even fifty metres one way or the other would have reduced visibility.

This placement of sites was because the sea acted as a coastal highway and was considerably more useful for transport than the old Roman roads. The fine clinker-built boats of the period had very shallow draughts, and could be beached or moored in shallow bays such as Jarrow Slake. Use of sails, as opposed to or in addition to oars, allowed rapid

journeys on this coast, with sailors using the visible places as seamarks in their cognitive geographies of Bernicia.

Christopher can be reached on christopher.ferguson@arch.ox.ac.uk.

### **October 2010**

Dr Suzie Thomas, the Council for British Archaeology's Community Archaeology Support Officer spoke about Community Archaeology in Britain and the North East. Suzie is responsible for liaising with voluntary archaeological groups around the country.

Archaeology, she said, gave pleasure to many people, and more were getting involved these days than ever before. The distinctive characteristic of 'community' archaeology was that at least some control was relinquished to local people, as opposed to being held purely



*Suzie Thomas by the City Walls in Newcastle, picture courtesy Abi Paul*

in the hands of professional archaeology units. It was linked to, but not the same as, archaeological outreach, which meant allowing the public to visit or look round developer-led project sites.

In April 2010 the CBA had issued a report on the scale, nature, location and needs of the voluntary sector in archaeology. This was based on a questionnaire and detailed interviews, including a number in the North East. The number of community archaeology groups, it had turned out, was far higher than had been previously estimated, perhaps as many as 2,200, which would mean that upwards of a quarter of a million people could be involved. Archaeological excavations were carried out by around 40% of those groups, although the most popular activity was talks and lectures.

Group activities tended to be influenced by the level of support offered by paid archaeologists. Some were reported to be very helpful, while others were not and effectively put up barriers to volunteer participation. The research had highlighted the need for advice and literature, and for better signposting of where information was available. As a result, the CBA had set up a Community Archaeology Forum and was shortly going to publish an *Introduction to Standards and Guidance in Archaeological Practice*.

Suzie can be contacted on [suziethomas@britarch.ac.uk](mailto:suziethomas@britarch.ac.uk). The report of her survey, details of the Community Archaeology Forum and all their publications can be found on the CBA website, [www.britarch.ac.uk/research/community](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/research/community).

## EDNA THORNBORROW

Our member Edna Thornborrow, who sadly died in May this year, was a stalwart of archaeology in the North East for 60 years. Born in South Shields in 1918, she graduated with a degree in history from Durham and commenced a career in teaching. Towards the end of the War she met her future husband, John, in Kirkby Lonsdale. On marriage they returned to South Shields.

A chance meeting with John Gillam in 1948 – they had been at university together – sparked the interest in archaeology. Edna and John helped found the South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society. Edna acted as secretary (with John), editor and contributor to the Papers which continued for another 40 years. The Society amalgamated with the Arbeia Society in 1996. Edna had a knack of persuading distinguished people such as Mortimer Wheeler and Viscount Gort to serve as President of the Society. Small excavations were undertaken in South Shields which provided valuable information about the Roman fort and helped keep the flag of archaeology flying in the town.

Edna was also active in our Society. She joined in 1962 and served on Council for 17 years before retiring at the age of 81. Edna and John continued to attend monthly meetings until just a few months ago, sitting at the front so that they could hear the speaker better.

Edna's memorial service was attended by the President and three Past Presidents as well as many other members of the Society.

*David Breeze*

## 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 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, or e-mail me at [sue.ward@phoncoop.coop](mailto:sue.ward@phoncoop.coop)*

*Deadline for the next edition will be 6th May 2011. The mailing date will be 15th June. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Secretary by 8th June. The Spring mailing will be on 16th March, and inserts must be with the Membership Secretary by 9th March. Anyone who wants an insert included in either mailing should contact the Membership Secretary in good time before these dates for details of the requirements. An electronic copy of any insert should also be provided (as a Word or pdf document) so that it can be included on the website.*