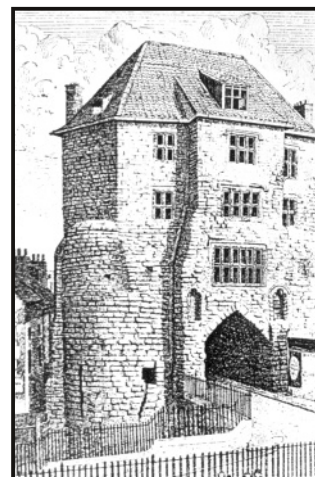


# NEWS BULLETIN

## THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.53 DECEMBER 2012



### WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

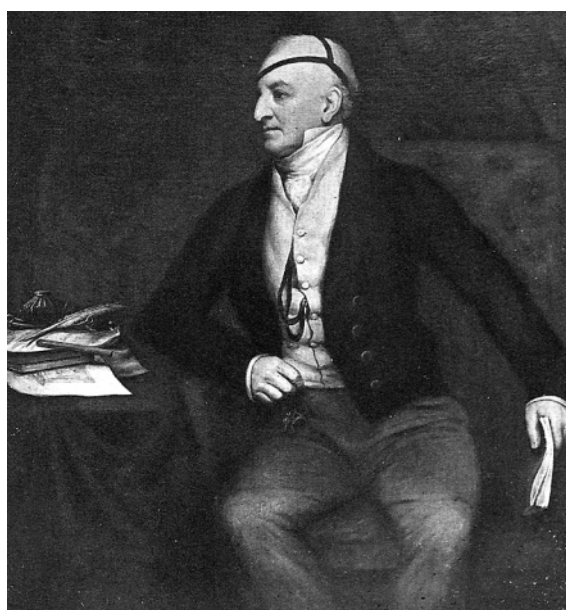
*The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne is one of the country's oldest antiquarian societies, founded in 1813. We have a regular programme of lectures and events, and a learned journal. Our library, our main collection and our offices are housed in the Great North Museum at the Hancock, with 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 (please leave a message if no reply), or e-mail [admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](mailto:admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk)*

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### TWO HUNDRED YEARS AND COUNTING...



*The Society's First President, Sir John Swinburne*

Not many organisations can claim a two-hundred year history, but ours can, and as we near our Bicentenary our programme for the year is firming up and we have several successes to report. Newcastle City Council has agreed to our proposal that a plaque be erected close to the spot where, on 23 January 1813, John Bell and his colleagues first met to discuss the forming of our Society. We hope that the plaque will be unveiled by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle on 23rd January 2013, marking our anniversary to the day. This will be followed by a reception in the Old George Inn to launch our Bicentenary book, expertly edited by David Breeze.

We were also delighted to learn that our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £30,000 towards the Great North Museum exhibition had been successful. The exhibition will run from mid-February to late April and will cover

our history and activities with sections on our involvement with the music and art of the region, our coin collection, archives and local archaeological interests, as well as our global collections. Anyone who would like to help to staff the exhibition or to do a podcast about a favourite item should contact either myself (Lindsay.Allason-Jones@ncl.ac.uk) or Andrew Parkin (Andrew.Parkin@ncl.ac.uk). A series of public lectures in the Great North Museum, linked to the exhibition, is also planned.

In June there will be a concert at the Sage Gateshead, and the President's evening will be on June 21st, at the Literary and Philosophical Society, our original parent body.

This is only a glimpse of the many interesting events that we have planned for 2013. They are all listed in the special programme booklet, which takes the place of the usual membership card this year. Updates and further details will be given throughout the year via the website.

*Lindsay Allason-Jones*

## AN INVITATION

The first meeting of 2013 will be on Wednesday 30th Jan, at the Mining Institute, Westgate Road, as usual. It will take the form of a Members' Miscellany, with several short contributions.

Also as usual, there will be a social evening after the lecture, upstairs in the Wood Memorial Hall. We would be grateful if members would 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 £2, for each glass of wine. New members who have joined in the last year will be especially welcome.

*Freda Thompson*

## RECENT AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Anyone who went on the 1999 Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall should by now have received a copy of the book arising out of that, *The First Souvenirs: Enamelled Vessels from Hadrian's Wall*, edited by David Breeze and published by our sister-society the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological

Society. There is an order form on our website.

Another recent book by one of our further-flung members is *The Castles of Bedfordshire*, edited by James Petre, available from the publisher, Shaun Tyas, 1 High Street, Donington, Lincs, PE11 4TA e-mail [pwatkins@pwatkinspublishing.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:pwatkins@pwatkinspublishing.fsnet.co.uk), at a price of £24 inclusive of postage and packing. In due course, his book on *Crusader Castles of Cyprus. The Fortifications of Cyprus under the Lusignans 1191–1489*, will also be published, this time by the Cyprus Research Centre.

## TIME WALKS



*An Antiquarian investigates some old stones.  
Picture courtesy Gerry Tomlinson*

We have four walks planned for 2013. In January, Freda Thompson will lead a Bicentenary walk exploring the role played by antiquarians in the progress and development of Newcastle on Tyne. Denis Peel will lead a circular walk round the villages of Wylam, Horsley and Ovingham in March, looking at landscape, geology, the structure of the man made environment in the three villages and the history of three interesting bridges.

April sees Harry Beamish exploring the role played by the Trevelyans of Wallington in conserving our heritage. This will be a circular walk along footpaths on the lowland part of the estate, travelling from Wallington to Cambo to look at the Dolphin pant and medieval grave covers, then on to see the commemorative stone at Saugh House before returning to Wallington.

For June, Richard Pears has organised a fascinating visit to Little Harle Tower and Capheaton Hall. This is a rare opportunity to explore two privately-owned houses in

Northumberland, providing an insight into the transformation of north-east residences from fortified dwellings to country houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Phil Abramson has arranged access to Catterick Garrison for our July visit – a joint trip with Yorkshire Archaeological Society. “From Iron Age to Digital Age” sums it up nicely. We will be looking at an Iron Age enclosure at Castlesteads, carved rocks on Feldon Moor and the development of the modern site.

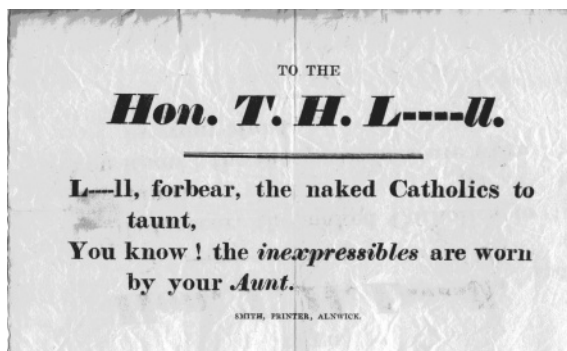
In the final walk of the year in September, David Breeze will take us in the footsteps of the Society in the 1930s, when it helped defeat a major new proposal to destroy the central sector of the Roman Wall by quarrying for whinstone, a campaign which led to the passing of a new Ancient Monuments Act in 1931.

The two walks planned for the second half of 2012 had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers. So for 2013 we are asking members to indicate if they are planning to attend, so that we can inform the walk organisers in advance. You won’t need to make an absolute commitment, just indicate likely interest. I would also welcome ideas for future walks; just get in touch.

*Rosie Serdiville*

## PRESIDENTS WITH A PAST

(number 1 of an occasional series)



*Naked Catholics, image courtesy Derek Cutts*

Henry Thomas Liddell, later first Earl of Ravensworth (1797–1878) became a Society member in 1848, and President in 1861. Liddell unsuccessfully contested the Northumberland seat in the venomous by-election of February 1826. In the equally venomous general election of June that year,

however, he topped the poll with 1562 votes with his colleague Matthew Bell of Woosington polling 1382. The two losing candidates were Thomas Wentworth Beaumont and Henry Grey, Viscount Howick, son of Earl Grey. Many of our members played leading roles in these elections and in late Georgian political life in general.

In the Society’s collections are numerous handbills from the two elections, including this one, although this copy is from my own collection. Liddell’s statements about his position on Catholic Emancipation were not always consistent, but he was a supporter of Emancipation in 1829. He was opposed to the Poor Law reforms of 1834. Less to his credit, he was also an opponent of the Reform Act of 1832.

So far as I can discover, Liddell had only one aunt: Charlotte (1787–1872) (*née* Lyon of the Strathmore family), wife of his uncle the Rev Henry George Liddell, Rector of Easington (and therefore the grandmother of Alice in Wonderland). In contemporary usage, ‘inexpressibles’ or ‘unmentionables’ meant trousers. So the reference is probably a play on the Catholic unmentionables (masturbation, liberal Catholic politicians, evangelizing Jews, Protestants, etc.), taunting Liddell for his equivocal stance on Catholic Emancipation and implying that, in the household of the Rector of Easington, his wife wore the trousers. It would be interesting if anyone could throw more light on this.

Liddell was later MP for North Durham 1837–1847 and for Liverpool 1853–1855. On the whole, he was an active and conscientious representative of his constituents. He also found time to publish a number of articles in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, on topics such as inscriptions in Chillingham Castle, the Corbridge Lanx, and (intriguingly) Military Roads of the Romans and Incas. He also published volumes about and of poetry, and wrote for the Natural History Society, the Tyneside Naturalists’ Field Club.

*Derek Cutts*

## JOHN BLAKISTON: REGICIDE OR REFORMER?

Every now and then someone writing at the national level provides food for thought about a historical figure with a local connection. The

late Roger Howell wrote about the Parliamentary career of John Blakiston, 'Newcastle's Regicide' in *Archaeologia Aeliana* 1964. Blakiston was present at most of the court sessions and signed the King's death warrant.

However, Geoffrey Robertson QC, a leading human rights lawyer and UN war crimes judge, has a different slant. In his book *The Tyrannicide Brief: The Story of the Man who sent Charles I to the Scaffold*, on Solicitor-General John Cooke, Robertson credits Cooke with "the first prosecution of a head of state for what we now call crimes against humanity." Many lawyers fled, fearing future prosecution for treason, but Cooke was prepared to take the case. There was "evidence of pillage and the torturing of prisoners of war."

That Charles was accused of treason is well-known. But the High Court of Justice of the day (its jurisdiction disputed at the time, like that of today's international tribunals) also concerned itself with "murders, rapines, burnings, spoils, desolations, damages and mischiefs" or, in other words, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Robertson offers an enthralling account of the proceedings, correcting along the way errors by earlier writers unfamiliar with the state of the law as it stood at that time, and some "deep-seated errors of analysis and appreciation."

Robertson maintains that in general the court was neither browbeaten nor cajoled by Oliver Cromwell. If his interpretation of the trial is accepted, could Tyneside now claim John Blakiston as an early champion of human rights?

*Stephanie A. Jefford*

## THE COLLINGWOOD SOCIETY

After the success of the Collingwood 2010 Festival, a new initiative was taken for the establishment of a Collingwood Society in the North-East and it held its inaugural meeting at Trinity House on November 1st. The meeting was chaired by Captain Stephen Healy, Deputy Master of Trinity House, with over fifty people in attendance, including the Mayor of Morpeth and representatives from the RGS, HMS Calliope, the Nautical Institute and local history societies.

The Society will be run by seven Trustees,



*Admiral Collingwood's statue at Tynemouth*

and the 2013 programme of events, lectures and visits will be published on the Society's website <http://www.collingwoodsociety.co.uk> early in the New Year. We are keen to attract members, and so we are offering a foundation member subscription of £30 for 3 years, for applications received before 7th March 2013. Application forms can be obtained from Captain Stephen Healy at Trinity House, Newcastle or by e-mailing me at [TnyBarrow@aol.co.uk](mailto:TnyBarrow@aol.co.uk).

*Tony Barrow*

## THE LIBRARY – NEARLY FOUR YEARS ON

It was the best of times .... We have now been in the Great North Museum, Hancock for nearly four years. The initial trauma of the move is over, the plaster has dried out and the dehumidifiers are almost redundant. Most of our books are now catalogued on the University library system and in addition a complete list of all SANT books – wherever they are – is to be found on the SANT website. The library is well used particularly by students



*Denis Peel surrounded by empty shelves in the library four years ago*

who are encouraged to join SANT. For much of this we owe a large debt of gratitude to the librarian, Nicky Clarke, who against many odds made the whole thing work.

Now for the worst – after three years in post Nicky has moved on to better pastures at Durham University creating a vacuum which will be difficult to fill. The hoops to be jumped through in her replacement are considerable, involving the University, Tyne/Wear Museums, City Council and the two societies, NHSN and SANT. He or she is not likely to be in post until well into the New Year.

Meanwhile, temporary librarians Karina Forrest and Julie Brett are holding the fort professionally, but the opening hours have been reduced to 1–4 pm. If anyone cares to volunteer to help, we need someone to sit at the desk, greet visitors and help with their queries and of course supervise the lending of books, but there are slack times when it is possible to do your own thing.

We have benefited recently from two generous bequests. Our late ex-President Barbara Harbottle left us over a hundred books, along with 24 boxes of pamphlets and guide books. Stan Tate, accountant and wartime Bevin boy, has bequeathed us a small collection of books on coal mining and local history. I and a small band of volunteers have almost finished listing these. However, there is now a backlog in cataloguing so certain books on the shelves still do not appear on the university catalogue but are on my list on the website.

A complete shelf check is pending, but a preliminary survey suggests we may have “lost” some 500 books in the last eighty years. Members have a habit of bypassing the

borrowing system with every good intent, but then fail to return the books – another reason that the entry desk needs staffing. Recently an ex-member has had to go into a care home and when helping to clear the house, I found ten of our books, some of which I had been trying to locate for several years.

Mysteriously, another missing book was deposited on the Black Gate steps by person or persons unknown, under the cover of darkness. If you have any more – just drop them in daylight at the GNM Hancock, no questions will be asked.

*Denis Peel, Hon Librarian*

## BEING PART OF HISTORY



*Violet's table in the GNM, laid out to attract visitors*

I am in the Great North Museum, sitting beside a photograph of a Roman Soldier, the roar of the dinosaurs ring through the area.

On the table in front of me, a portable altar to Mars attracts attention, while a tiny lamp just big enough to place in the palm of the hand, delights many adults and children. I am in discussion with all, be they from the Toon, Italy, China or Canada, explaining what the objects are and giving information about the Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. All part of encouraging interest in our Bicentenary in 2013.

*Violet Rook*

## SANT FACES HARD FINANCIAL TIMES



*Our Treasurer Simon Pallett*

The Society is spending more than it receives. Our outgoings are greater than our income. This is unfortunately an ongoing trend rather than just a blip. The anticipated transfer of the Castle Keep to the Heart of the City Board will save administrative time, but will leave SANT worse off, as we receive 20% of the proceeds of Ghost Hunts which over a year amounts to a couple of thousand pounds, while the City Council reimburses staffing and other costs.

The gap is partly due to such things as unrecoverable VAT at 20%, the huge rise in postal costs and generally rising prices at a time of low investment returns. But the major reason is that our income does not match our commitments to publish AA, run a Library, run monthly meetings, make grants, add to our collection and all the excellent things the Society does.

Council has left the essential activities of the Society untouched, but we are making an immediate saving of about £1,500+ a year by no longer posting out the annual report. It will be on the website, and supplied to any member on request either as a photocopy or an e-mailed PDF. We are legally required to produce this report, but it is common these days not to mail out copies. The AGM notice will include details of where to find the report

on-line and how to request a copy.

Further economies will be needed, however, and Council will address these next year as part of a review of where we should go in the next two hundred years. Subscriptions will have to rise sooner than planned, but not until after the Bicentenary.

If any member has questions or comments please contact me by e-mail [Simon.Pallett@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Simon.Pallett@ncl.ac.uk) or by post c/o the GNM.

*Simon Pallett*  
*Treasurer*

## FESTIVAL OF THE NORTH EAST

Celebrating the exceptional creativity and innovation of the region throughout June 2013, the Festival of the North East is the inspiration of Northumbrian folk musician Kathryn Tickell. It will coincide with the visit of the Lindisfarne Gospels to Durham from July 1st to September 30th. The Gospels will be the starting point for a celebration of 1,400 years of creativity in the North East.

Organisations and individuals from all over the region have responded to the call, and currently over a hundred projects have been proposed, with more coming in all the time. These include exhibitions, plays, music performances, premieres of new works and special commissions exploring the creative spark in the arts, heritage, science and industry.

Projects exploring our heritage include *A History of the North East in a Hundred Objects*, featuring objects from museums across the North East, and *A History of the North East in a Hundred Sites*, being developed by the region's Historic Environment Forum. Explorations of the region's role in innovation such as the development of early railways, inventors such as Armstrong, and of course our own Society and its significance as the first Antiquarian Society outside London, will also feature.

This festival will be no rose-tinted spectacled view of the past. Its role is to demonstrate the unique ability of our region to reinvent itself, and to look forward to a future built on our successes to date.

*Bill Griffiths*

## NEWS FROM OLD NEWCASTLE

### In the Cathedral

The Cathedral has been busy with construction work this autumn, with a £0.5m project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the St Nicholas Cathedral Development Trust. This has involved much-needed rewiring, and a comprehensive and spectacular new lighting and sound system. After many weeks in which parts of the Cathedral were inaccessible, 10th November saw a Big Clean by volunteers.

The next stage for the Cathedral is to use the new lighting to open up the hidden history of the building. The plan is to help conserve and explain the monuments through a project called Illuminating Stories. This will seek to relate the history of Newcastle through the stories behind the people commemorated and as well as traditional forms of interpretation will include new technologies such as QR codes, which allow people to download information about monuments onto their phones.

*Christopher Dalliston*

### It never rains...



*The ceiling in the Keep's Lower Hall after the collapse and clean-up; picture courtesy Tony Ball*

2012 has been a challenging year at the Castle Keep. For the first half of the year we struggled with falling visitor numbers, a reflection of stringent economic times. The weather also played its part with sub-zero temperatures in the first half of February and the wettest April on record. All things considered, we were doing OK. Then it rained with a vengeance.

On 28th June, Thunder Thursday, the

heavens opened and the water poured from the roof of the Keep, cascading throughout the building before forming a 4" deep pool in the Garrison Room. Most rooms were flooded as the torrent passed through. Unable to open the next day, we cleaned up and counted our blessings that it had not been worse. On 5th August a second deluge occurred, lighter in itself but to even more devastating effect. The Georgian ceiling in the Lower Hall collapsed with a loud crack shortly after the room had been evacuated. The Garrison Room filled with 3" of water this time. Close inspection of the ceiling rubble revealed that it had been repaired on several previous occasions with post-war materials. It took 15 days to clean up during which time we were closed to visitors. We decided against putting the ceiling back as some rather nice joists were revealed. All is now in order save for the lighting in the Lower Hall, half of which was destroyed and has not yet been replaced. Plans for remedial actions are with English Heritage for approval.

Hot on the heels of the clean-up we hosted 1,279 visitors on Heritage Open Days. Everyone appears to have enjoyed themselves despite our need to manage the congestion.

*Tony Ball,  
Manager – Castle Keep*

Note; we gave the wrong e-mail address for Kate Sussams in the last edition. The correct one is [Kate.Sussams@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.Sussams@newcastle.gov.uk). Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

### Researching the Black Gate

In the last *News Bulletin* Kate Sussams, Project Manager for Old Newcastle, appealed for volunteers for help with researching. I volunteered, and she asked me to hunt for archive pictures or photographs of the original SANT museum in the Black Gate which opened in 1880, and any newspaper publicity on the opening. She also wanted to know how much material existed in the various archives relating to the Castle area and its buildings, whether more light could be shed on Patrick Black, a 17th century character who gave his name to the Black Gate, and finally, whether any credence could be given to the legend that Shakespeare once gave a performance at a theatre in the Castle Garth.

I had some good pointers from Paul MacDonald at the Keep. Unfortunately there appear to be no images of the interior in our

archive at Woodhorn, the Local Collection at Newcastle Central Library, or the Discovery Museum, although there were plenty of drawings and photographs of the exterior. I could find no reference to the opening of the Museum in the newspapers. The Central Library seems to possess the most material on the Castle area. Regarding Patrick Black there was little new information in the archives about his life, and he remains a rather shadowy character. And sadly but not unexpectedly, I could find no substance to the Shakespeare legend.

*Richard Rook*

## THE CUTTING EDGE



*A Scandinavian boat axe showing use-wear. Picture courtesy Great North Museum*

A new joint project between Newcastle University and the Great North Museum has been cataloguing and studying a particular element of the Society's collections - those with sharp edges. They have been looking at stone and metal axes, and knives and weapons of various historical periods, and are creating a new online resource that will support teaching and research into the analysis of use-wear patterns on these objects. It will allow the comprehensive study of over a thousand objects, all photographed to high resolution.

The bulk of the British archaeological objects have come from our collection, while others came from the Natural History Society, and on loan from Laing Art Gallery, Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens and Arbeia Roman Fort.

'Use-wear analysis' means studying the traces of wear on the surface of archaeological artefacts, and comparing them with replicas to

find out how the wear will have arisen. For example, analysis of the damage to a Bronze Age spearhead has shown that it is consistent with its use as a slashing weapon, like a Zulu assegai, rather than for throwing.

You can find out more about the project, and see some of the fantastic photos, at <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/thecuttingedge/aboutourproject/>

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

May 2012



*One of the Lindisfarne sites recently surveyed. Picture courtesy David Petts*

Sarah Semple and David Petts spoke jointly about *Rethinking Yeaving and its Hinterland*. Sarah explained that the idea was to set Yeaving in its context, within a wider range of fieldwork. It was a site of national importance, though larger halls had since been found in Scandinavia and at Sutton Courtenay.

There had been some new fieldwork in 2006, including magnetometry and resistivity surveys, as well as the trialling of Ground Penetrating Radar and the use of LiDar data. The resistivity survey, done in mid-winter, provided excellent results revealing clearly the outline of excavated structures, although oddly the 'amphitheatre' had not shown up. There were some newly revealed features, especially

in and around the Great Enclosure. This evidence suggested that there had been more extensive and scattered early medieval settlement in the years before the royal building project had imposed an organised layout – possibly turning an ordinary farm into a formal estate centre. Most notable were the indications of additional features within the Great Enclosure, overlying the lip of the enclosure close to the modern road.

David Petts followed Sarah with a description of recent work at Lindisfarne. The ninth-century Welsh text, the *Historia Brittonum*, reported on a siege of Lindisfarne by Urien, suggesting that there was a power-centre on Lindisfarne before the monastery was established there. The obvious spot for this would be on the site where the castle was now. On the priory site, the later priory church and secular church had been aligned, and this might be following Anglo-Saxon predecessors, but the contexts were not known for any of the sculptures found on the island. There were late 14th century references to a cemetery of St Columba, but we did not know where that was.

A geophysical survey was planned for the autumn, sponsored by National Geographic, to concentrate on the west and north of the village centre. The dunes would also be investigated, something which had not been done in the past. David stressed that Lindisfarne was the focal point of the district of Islandshire, and this wider landscape was also being considered as one of a group of projects at Durham looking at medieval Northumberland landscapes.

Sarah can be contacted on [s.j.semple@durham.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.semple@durham.ac.uk), and David on [d.a.petts@durham.ac.uk](mailto:d.a.petts@durham.ac.uk). There is a summary of the recent work on Yeavering on the Gefrin Trust website, [www.gefrintrust.org](http://www.gefrintrust.org).

## June 2012

Typically, Alan Beale spoke on Reconstructing the Ancient Greek Olympics. The original games, he explained, were founded in 776 BC and only involved one event, a foot race, as part of a much bigger religious festival. As the athletics programme increased, so did the number of spectators – all men, with the exception of the priestess of Demeter. From 396 BC onwards, the first day included a contest for heralds and trumpeters. With no PA system available, that was very important. The second day was devoted to equestrian events and the pentathlon, the third was given over to



*An Olympic jumper with throwing weights, from a vase in the Shefton collection*

sacrifice and feasting, and the fourth to track events and combat sports. The final day was probably when victors were crowned.

We knew the Greeks were very strict about false starts, and there was evidence from archaeology of more than one experiment in building starting-gates. One, using a catapult mechanism, had been reconstructed and did seem to work.

It was possible to gauge the atmosphere of the Games from tenuous references in ancient writers but there were many gaps in our knowledge of the sports. We did not know, for example, what sort of back-up team the chariot racers would have had, or even where the horses were stabled. It was puzzling that the Greeks appeared to allow judges to whip athletes (normally a punishment for slaves).

We needed to be cautious about interpreting athletes' images from vase paintings and sculptures, Alan suggested. The famous Townley *Discobolus* sculpture in the British Museum, for instance, had been repaired in the eighteenth century using an antique marble head from another statue – facing the wrong way. Vase paintings showed long-jumpers using two weights, but no-one had been able to reconstruct a jumping style where holding such weights would enable one to jump further.

Finally, Alan pointed out that Olympic sponsorship was nothing new. Cities often richly rewarded their victors, for example with free meals for life. In more modern times, Oxo had supported the 1908 Olympics, and had provided athletes with flasks of its brew.

Alan can be contacted on [a.beale664@btinternet.com](mailto:a.beale664@btinternet.com). His book *Greek Athletics and the Olympics* was published in 2011 by Cambridge University Press.

## July 2012

Author, archaeologist and teacher Max Adams spoke on *Thinking about Oswald – a biographer's view of early medieval kingship*. Oswald of Northumbria (c. AD 604–642), he said, was probably the first early medieval king of whom it was possible to contemplate a biography, although facts were sparse; the advantage of that approach was that more speculation was allowable than for an academic historian or archaeologist. Oswald was visually well-known, with representations of his head in the arms of Cuthbert, and his relics were widely dispersed.

Oswald's mother Acha's husband had probably murdered her father, and her brother was then the killer (in battle) of her husband. She had then fled to Dalriada with her children and stepchildren, so that by the time the young Oswald returned to Northumbria, he would have been thoroughly Irish, and had obligations to fight for his patron at the court of Dalriada, if he was ever to regain his kingdom. He had been baptised on Iona, and Max considered that the monks would have seen him as god-sent, and groomed him for later events.

His early nickname, Lamguin, could mean bright/ white blade, but also 'blessed arm'. That could connect him with a mythical Irish god who replaced an arm lost in battle with a silver one – and might then connect with the story of Aidan blessing Oswald's arm and it being enshrined at Bamburgh.

Oswald's defeat of Cadwallon at Heavenfield was a central part of Adomnan's narrative of the life of St Columba, with Oswald having a vision of the saint the night before, and raising a cross. Max suggested that Turret 25b on Hadrian's Wall might be the site of the cross, as it was in just the right place and had a large hole in the middle, dismissed by the archaeologists as 'post-Roman disturbance'. There was also a playing-card shaped enclosure visible at Heavenfield on aerial photos, as with Lindisfarne and Iona. Even more speculatively, might this be the site of the first monastery established by Oswald, an unsuccessful venture under Finan before Aidan's arrival?

Max can be contacted on [beatandtrack@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:beatandtrack@yahoo.co.uk) and has a website at [www.theambulist.co.uk](http://www.theambulist.co.uk)

## August 2012

Robin Taylor-Wilson, from the firm Pre-

Contract Archaeology, discussed the excavation of a former Quaker burial ground on Coach Lane, North Shields in 2010, ahead of a housing scheme.

Robin explained that the Society of Friends (the Quakers) had used the site as a burial ground from around 1711 and a plan of the burial ground drawn in 1822 shows 32 burial plots, many of them named. The burial ground probably closed formally as a result of *The 1853 Burials Act*, although it probably saw little use for several decades before this. Close liaison with the developer meant that the exhumation could be carried out in two stages, so that building could begin on one half of the site while the archaeological work continued in the other half.

236 burials were exhumed, mostly from simple 'earth-cut' graves. Most had wooden coffins, although timber survival was generally poor. There were also numerous charnel pits containing disarticulated remains from burials disturbed by later graves. Around 30% of the exhumed burials were infants or young children. Pathology was noted on many individuals, in many instances indicating the hardship of eighteenth-century life. One person's skull had been trepanned, and a small number of cases with jaws/teeth displaying evidence of excessive pipe smoking. Two graves – one an elaborate brick-lined and stone-topped vault – contained 'triple shell' coffins (wood-lead-wood). The vaulted grave was the only one to produce definite biographical information, with a plate on the outer coffin; it was of John Walker of Wallsend who died aged 77 in 1822. Apart from the many iron and copper alloy coffin fittings (handles, head rests, hinges, etc.), there were very few artefacts associated with the burials – the most notable exception being a pair of monogrammed gold cufflinks.

Robin can be contacted on [RTaylor-Wilson@pre-contract.com](mailto:RTaylor-Wilson@pre-contract.com).

## September 2012

Dr Erik Graafstal, an archaeologist with the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands, discussed new perspectives on the date and building order of Hadrian's Wall. He explained that he had led the team excavating a very large area to the west of Utrecht some years ago. They had discovered a line of early timber towers along the river Rhine, linked by roads and dating to the time of the Emperor Claudius. This led him to research on other Roman

frontiers and including Hadrian's Wall.

He began by reminding that just before and during the time when the Wall was built, c. 117/8 and then in the 120s, there was considerable unrest in Britain, probably in the northern frontier zone, perhaps originating among the tribes to the west, in what is now South West Scotland. The 'pacification' was considered important enough for a commemorative Victory coin to be struck in 119, but large extra forces from the continent seemed to have been needed in 123/4.

Hadrian's arrival in Britannia in 122, however, was not a spur-of-the-moment response to these difficulties, but had been planned from at least 120, and his visit to the Tyne-Solway frontier was the final stage of a long trip including a tour of Gaul. One purpose was to inspect progress on the Wall, a prestige project he had already put in train and was to be called by his name.

Erik suggested that the reasons for the various changes in design of the wall lay in this sequence of events. As a result of the unrest in northern Britannia, Hadrian had ordered the construction of a barrier sufficient to keep out armed raiders. Work had begun on this immediately, with local field commanders who understood the specific security threats deciding on priorities. Milecastles and turrets overlooking steep denes where visibility was otherwise limited were in a number of cases constructed well before the linking walls. The lengths of Wall in the west and east which ran across low-lying ground that would be easier for raiders to cover were constructed first, with the high level central section being left till later. When Hadrian arrived, he insisted on several changes of plan, especially moving forts up to the line of the Wall from Stanegate, and the workforce had to be switched to this. That meant that in some lower-priority areas, there was a considerable hiatus between commencement of Wall works and their completion.

An article by Erik about these ideas is to be published in *Archaeologia Aeliana* in due course. He can be reached at [e.graafstal@ziggo.nl](mailto:e.graafstal@ziggo.nl)

## October 2012

Dr Rosemary Mitchell spoke on *Marginal Masculinities: Regional and Gender Borders in William Bell Scott's Wallington Scheme*. She explained that Scott was commissioned in 1856 by the Trevelyan family to paint eight frescoes

in the central hall at Wallington. The pictures highlighted incidents in Northumbrian history, and gave the cultural achievements of border communities and men priority over national topics.

Rosemary suggested that Bell Scott felt marginalised within the artistic world, as the first master of the Art School in provincial Newcastle. His images asserted the value of living outside London, but he always seemed to feel that he had missed his mark. His image of himself was as the *pictor ignotus*, the 'unknown painter', described by Robert Browning, feeling himself to have been excluded from the developing Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and eclipsed by the celebrity of his fellow painter-poet, D. G. Rossetti. He preferred Northern Renaissance masters such as Durer to the Italian Renaissance artists, who were, he said, 'in everything except their paintings, cretins'.

The images he produced at Wallington reflected these feelings, and were more complex than first appeared. For example, in the picture of King Ecgrith pleading with Cuthbert to become bishop, Cuthbert's image was constructed as a feminine type, challenging the authoritative and military manhood of the king. The picture of the *Death of Bede* again suggested an alternative style of manhood, a vision of the saint as civiliser. In the Grace Darling picture, Grace herself was only a small figure in the distance, while Bell Scott simultaneously universalised both her heroism and the responses of the shipwrecked figures in the foreground'.

*Iron and Coal* celebrated Tyneside's importance as an industrial centre of national importance. However, it was focused on workers not capitalists, and there were elements of instability and ambiguity which challenged the contemporary male role models of both the military man and the captain of industry, for example the little girl in the foreground sitting on an Armstrong gun.

Rosemary can be contacted at [r.mitchell@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:r.mitchell@leedstrinity.ac.uk)

## OBITUARY; BRIAN DOBSON (1931–2012)



*Brian Dobson (on the left) with Professor David Breeze*

The death was announced in July 2012 of our former President Brian Dobson. Brian was born in Hartlepool, educated at Stockton Grammar School, and in 1949 went up to Hatfield College, Durham University, where Eric Birley was Master, to read Modern History. After his PhD, National Service and a short period as a research fellow in Birmingham, Brian returned to Durham University in 1960 to take up an appointment in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies as an adult education lecturer in Archaeology, covering County Durham. He spent the whole of his working life in that post, retiring in 1990. In this capacity, he ran the adult education training excavation at Corbridge until 1972.

In 1968, Brian launched a week-long study tour of Hadrian's Wall and Hadrian's Army. These courses were expanded to include expeditions to other frontiers, notably in Europe, where the whole of the line from the North Sea to the south of Hungary was explored. The Roman Army school continues to this day.

In 1972 Brian founded the Hadrianic Society to further the study of Hadrian's Wall and the Roman army, and although ill, was able to deliver the main speech at the 40th anniversary celebrations in Durham earlier this year.

Brian's early publications included a revision of Domaszkeski's classic work on the officers of the Roman army, *Die Rangordnung des Römische Heeres*. His first publication on *Hadrian's Wall* was in 1969. In 1976, he collaborated with myself on the production of *Hadrian's Wall*, now in its fourth edition. In 1980, the University of Durham recognised his contribution to scholarship by the award of a Personal Readership in Archaeology.

Brian was the Society's President from 1993 to 1995, and President of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland from 1983 to 1987. He was also a member of several local trusts, including those of Chesters, Corbridge and Maryport museums. He took particular pleasure in his membership of the Vindolanda Trust from 1996 to 2011.

*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 1NQ, phone 0191 232 2968, or e-mail me at sue.ward@phonecoop.coop.*

*Deadline for the next edition is 3rd May 2013. The mailing date will be 12th June. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Secretary by 5th June. The Spring Mailing will be on 13th March, and inserts must be with the membership secretary by 6th March. Anyone who wants an insert included in either mailing should contact the Membership Secretary in good time for details of the requirements. An electronic copy of any insert should also be provided (as a Word document or pdf) so that it can be included on the website.*