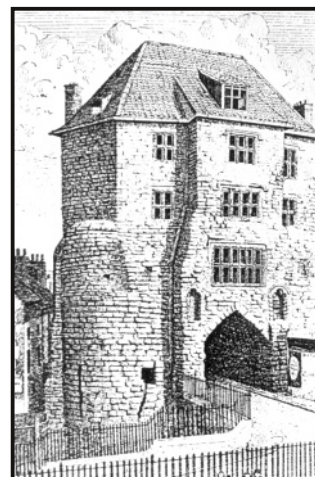


NEWS BULLETIN

THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.57 December 2014



From left to right; Lindisfarne coins on display at the Great North Museum; looking at rare books in our library; July's Family Fun Day. Pictures courtesy Sue Ward, Ian Bower, and Lindsay Allason-Jones

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SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE GOING UP – BUT THEY'RE WORTH EVERY PENNY

The new subscription rates explained in this year's renewal letter will come as no surprise – but they might still leave some people wondering what the money is spent on.

First of all, your subscription pays for your copy of our annual learned journal *Archaeologia Aeliana*. This publishes original papers on the archaeology and history of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon

Tyne. AA is a significant contribution to scholarship, and it could not continue without the support of members. Most learned journals cost significantly more than our subscription. You will be seeing the volume for the current year (2014) early in the New Year.

Next, we have a varied and interesting programme of high-quality lectures on the history and archaeology of the region and other topics, every month except December. We also have a full programme of coach outings, walks, and other social events – even a Family Fun Day at the Great North Museum.

Then there are our other book-length publications, and this News Bulletin, published each year in June and December. We also have a monthly e-bulletin and frequent e-circulars to give you news and information about forthcoming events. If you are not yet on the circulation list for these but would like to be, let us know at events@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk.

As a member, you have borrowing rights in our ever-growing library in the Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle upon Tyne. We currently have 30,000 books, including some rare and valuable ones, and take a wide range of journals. You also have free *online* access to some journals. We have major archives housed

AN INVITATION

The 2015 Anniversary Meeting will be on Wednesday 28th January, at the Mining Institute in Westgate Road. The speakers will be Richard Carlton and Les Turnbull, on *Excavation of the Bigges Main Waggonway*. Behind this title lurks the story of the discovery in July 2013 of 'the oldest example of standard gauge railway ever found'.

There will be a social evening after the

in Woodhorn Museum, where members have done much voluntary work cataloguing them in recent years.

Perhaps most important, you belong to a society which owns and continues to develop important collections, which inform scholarship and bring understanding and enjoyment of the history and archaeology of the region. You can see many of artefacts we own on display in the Great North Museum, to which we make an annual financial contribution. You can also enjoy seeing our historic bagpipe collection our collections in Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum. We actively work to ensure that significant items can be seen and studied there and elsewhere in the region – as we have just done with our successful appeal to secure the Mason coin hoard for the GNM. It is now reunited with the hoard found in the same house in 1962, and both will soon be on permanent display in the Museum.

Although we have passed over the leases of both the Keep and the Black Gate to the Old Newcastle Project, members retain free entry to Newcastle Castle. The Society is one of the three partner organisations on the Partnership Board which runs the Project, soon to come to fruition with a re-launch of the refurbished buildings in the Spring.

To help us run all this, we employ a part time administrator to provide a contact for members, maintain the membership records and to handle publications sales and event bookings. He provides the support for the network of volunteers on whom we depend.

Look on our website for more information about all our activities, www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk. Our full financial statements, as provided to the Charity Commissioners, are also available there. And if you have any specific questions, do please ask one of us.

*Derek Cutts, President
Simon Pallett, Treasurer*

lecture, upstairs in the Mining Institute's Wood Memorial Hall. We would be grateful if members would donate food for the buffet; please contact Freda Thompson 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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Derek and members at the President's Evening in the Black Gate in June. Picture courtesy Lindsay Allason-Jones

After the heady excitement of the very successful Bicentenary year, a quieter time was to be expected in 2014, but we are in sound health as a Society. Our membership is buoyant. We have had around forty new recruits in the last year, including members outside the region and even from overseas. We're especially pleased to welcome the students to whom we give bursaries (funded by donations) to cover their first year's membership. We have seen a net growth of just over 6% in the number of ordinary members.

Our office in the Great North Museum is now open to members every Wednesday afternoon, and is becoming the base for the sale of publications as well as for general administration. It's helpful both for the administration and for our budget that the list of members opting for electronic communications is growing steadily.

My first President's Evening, in June,

allowed members to see the changes which have been made to the Black Gate since the Society moved out. We also held a special event for new members in the Library in September.

The digitisation project for AA and the Society's *Proceedings* continues steadily if slowly, and you can see some examples of what will be available on our website. We have also begun planning the next Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage. In 2019 we will be starting out from Newcastle and travelling westwards into the wind.

At the core of all we do is a body of volunteers; those who welcome members to lectures, stuff envelopes or organise events and outings, and act as members of Council and its committees. They all give their time and expertise for nothing more than the satisfaction of having done it. This is the Society's greatest resource. I hope that more members will feel able to become active in some aspect of what the Society does.

Finally, we have made a change to the programme cards for 2015. We have decided not to print a separate membership card, since in recent years it has been issued before subscriptions were received, and has carried neither members' names nor their membership numbers. Instead, a section has been incorporated in the programme card and will carry names and membership numbers. We hope that this change will be helpful to members as well as being a saving in administrative costs.

Derek Cutts

LINDSAY GOES TO THE PALACE



Our past president Lindsay Allason-Jones proudly displays her OBE (and her hat) after her visit to Buckingham Palace in June

TIME WALKS

You will need your winter woollies for our last walk of 2014, to be led by Anthea Lang on 27th December. We will discover Gateshead, a railway town and home of the arts, meeting at the west door of the Sage Gateshead at 10.30. The walk should last around an hour and a half, but that depends on the weather! We will probably follow the developing tradition and retire to a quayside haunt for lunch afterwards.

The weather may be kinder on 7th March when we visit Stewart Park in Marton (Middlesbrough) on a walk led by Francine Marshall, Park Education and Events Officer. We will explore the Victorian house and estate buildings, the park and arboretum, and the Captain Cook Museum. There is a café in the museum for lunch, or you can eat sandwiches by the lake whilst watching the wild fowl.

Elsbeth Gould will share her extensive knowledge of Seaton Delaval Hall and its environs on 16th May. This is a chance to explore the railway, Seaton Delaval Hall and grounds, Dene and Sluice. Bring sandwiches or get lunch at the hall. The walk should last around four hours.

High summer in Alnmouth will be hard to beat, when on 7th June we accompany Adrian Osler on an antiquarian amble around Alnmouth Bay. Explore a maritime landscape from the Mesolithic era through to the present day. The walk will be about five hours. You can bring a packed lunch but there are also cafés and at least one very good ice-cream shop in Alnmouth, where we plan to be at lunchtime.

Finally, in September we hope to explore the newly reopened Tyne Pedestrian tunnel. This one is builder-dependent so details will have to be confirmed later in the year. Keep an eye on the website and the next edition of the News Bulletin for more information about this and updates.

For more details or if you need or can offer transport, please contact me on 0774 979 8023 or e-mail at rosie.serdiville@gmail.com

Rosie Serdiville

COUNTRY MEETINGS 2015

The 2014 Country meetings were very well attended and much enjoyed. The May visit to the Burrell Collection was the second by the Society, and the eclectic collections held

something for everyone. The Collection is due to close to the public shortly for a much-needed refurbishment, and we are planning a further visit once it re-opens. Places for a very enjoyable Brantwood visit and Lake Coniston cruise were filled quickly and we even had a waiting list.

For 2015 we have arranged guided tours on 9th May around Mount Grace Priory, the best preserved Carthusian priory in Britain, and Guisborough Priory. This is one of the few monastic sites that has been subject to modern excavation and fabric research, and the excavator will give a tour of the remains. We will also be stopping for coffee at historic Crathorne Hall, now a hotel.

Brodsworth Hall is the destination of the meeting on 5 September. It is one of the most complete surviving examples of the Victorian country house, virtually unchanged for 150 years.

The Activities Committee have put together a tentative programme up until 2018, but any suggestions for country meetings would be welcomed – please email me at denise.heslop@ncl.ac.uk or phone on 0191 280 2665 (evenings).

Denise Heslop

ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN

This is the second edition of the *News Bulletin* to have an electronic version as well, with colour photos and hyperlinks built in. It's being sent out, and put on the website, on the day of the paper mailing. Around a hundred people so far have opted to receive it in electronic form only, giving us a welcome saving on paper and postage costs. If you are not in this ECO group but would like to join for future issues, please e-mail us at events@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk.

Copies of the latest edition are available in the library, where we also hold a full run of back copies. Librarian Denis Peel recently bound the latest volume, covering the ten years to 2010. Electronic versions, going back to June 2003, are also on our website. And there are no plans to cease printing.

HADRIAN'S WALL MATTERS

We have a special offer on our Guide to the Roman Wall, normally priced at £18. Society

members, students on Newcastle University's online course, and members of some other local societies, can buy copies for £5 plus postage and packing. You can also buy a copy direct (saving on postage and packing) by calling in at our Library during opening hours. Look on our website for more details.

Learning About The Wall

Hadrian's Wall: Life on the Roman Frontier was the topic for Newcastle University's first free online Futurelearn course, run over six weeks this autumn. The course was designed, presented and taught by myself and Rob Collins, alongside online teaching specialists led by Suzanne Hardy. People joined up from nearly a hundred countries and over a thousand participants clicked on the link to the Antiquaries' website. Each week there were around 20 'steps' to complete; participants might be invited to view a short video, read a text, explore a data set or undertake a quiz. Some of the linked discussion boards attracted over 4,000 postings. The final week included sections on the contribution of antiquaries to our knowledge of the Wall, and on major museum collections.

The course featured much-loved items from the Antiquaries' collections, and we are grateful to the Society and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums for their support. English Heritage, the National Trust, the Senhouse Roman Museum Trust and the Vindolanda Trust all generously made material available to the course, which was funded directly by the University. For those who missed it this year, the course will run again in June/July 2015. Details will appear on the Futurelearn platform <https://www.futurelearn.com>.

Ian Haynes

Hanging on the Wall!

In September, the Hadrian Arts Trust hosted a solo hang performance by Simon Wood in the evocative surroundings of the Roman bathhouse at Chesters Roman Fort, courtesy of English Heritage.

A Hang is an overtone-rich sound sculpture made from steel, invented in 2000. It is a tuned vessel that is played with the fingers. It looks like a battered wok but sounds like a harp. Its sound could be described as 'ancient future music'. It can be played slowly and meditatively and can put people in a dreamy, trance-like state, or it can be played



Simon Wood and his Hangs, courtesy Lindsay Allason-Jones

energetically in a highly charged foot tapping style. Simon played three Hang instruments, all in different tuning with different flavours at Chesters, to the delight of his audience.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Although Simon was playing solo, the sounds of the birds, trees and river at Chesters Bath-house provided a natural accompaniment; the result was a true symphony of sound.

Lindsay Allason-Jones

Wall Face



Ben Crompton at the launch at Housesteads; picture courtesy TWAM

2014 saw a unique exhibition from the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, mounted across the eleven museums along Hadrian's Wall. Each site hosted a portrait of an antiquarian relevant to its history as part of this dispersed exhibition.

Housesteads displayed William Hutton – whose publication of his walk along the wall in 1801 reads very much like a travel blog would today. Segedunum displayed a portrait of our founder-member John Hodgson, two hundred years after he identified the remains of a bath-house between the fort and the river.

He would have been gratified to know that volunteers with the Wallquest project spent the summer excavating that very bath-house!

The exhibition was launched in August by Ben Crompton, an actor in the *Game of Thrones* TV series, which centres around a fictional frontier inspired by Hadrian's Wall. The launch started at South Shields in the morning, and finished at Tullie House in Carlisle at teatime – surely setting a record, both chronologically and geographically.

The exhibition was a reminder of the fascination the Wall has had for generations of scholars. It has also demonstrated the ability of the different museums along the Wall to work as partners. The museums are now developing plans for future collaborations - so watch this space!

Bill Griffiths

NEWS FROM THE CASTLE

Those who came to the Black Gate during the President's Evening saw the empty shell left after the refurbishment. It will look very different when it re-opens to the public in spring 2015. Together with the designers, Studio MB, we have been hard at work on the new displays there and in the Castle Keep.

Should we describe the Black Gate as an 'encumbrance' or a 'burden' on Patrick Black? Can we find an engraving to show the Keep's chapel before it was restored? How can we help people imagine life in the Castle Garth during its long period as an overcrowded slum? Learning Officer David Silk, myself, and a loyal team of volunteers have been spending our waking hours (and often our sleep as well) resolving questions of that sort. We were limited to no more than 100 or 120 words of text on most of the panels, which created quite a challenge!

Meanwhile, the Castle Keep remains open to the public and highly popular. Over the summer holidays, we ran a Knight School for children – though many parents also got involved. We have a monthly 'Combat Academy', training people in medieval swordsmanship and the techniques of stage fighting for film. Several members will be taking part in the BBC's series of Shakespeare history plays. So far in this autumn term, we have had visits from over 300 school children,



The Scots Flag being raised over the Castle Keep, picture courtesy Peter Cumisky

while paying visitor numbers are ten per cent up on last year.

Among a host of special events, October saw the SIEGE! Festival in the Castle Garth and the Cathedral. To commemorate the 370th anniversary of the Siege of Newcastle, over fifty re-enactors played the parts of the Parliamentarian Earl of Loudoun's Regiment of Foote, aided by the Time Bandits. After a noisy show of force with pikes and cannons in the Castle Garth, the royalists surrendered and the Scots flag was raised over the Keep. More peacefully, the Garrison Room on the ground floor of the Keep proved an excellent venue for evening concerts of early music linked to the period.

Our soon-to-be-launched website (www.newcastlecastle.co.uk) will give all the details of the Black Gate Visitor Centre's opening date in the spring. Meanwhile, you still have free entry to the Castle Keep, on production of your Antiquaries membership card. The Keep will be closed for several weeks at the start of 2015 to enable the re-fit to go ahead, so come before 22nd December to guarantee a last nostalgic look at the old displays.

*Kate Sussams
Project Manager*

WEST INDIES TO WESTMORELAND



Atkinson papers still to be researched; picture courtesy Richard Atkinson

One of my ancestors, Richard 'Rum' Atkinson (1739–85), was the most infamous contractor to the British army during the American War of Independence. I'm in the middle of writing a non-fiction book about the tangled inheritance that he left my family, the Atkinsons of Temple Sowerby near Penrith. The saga encompasses Jamaican sugar estates, feuding siblings, love affairs unrequited and otherwise, and forty years of Jarndyce v Jarndyce-style chancery lawsuits.

I'm lucky enough to be able to draw on thousands of letters. They are scattered all over the place, in more than thirty archives including some in the US and Jamaica. I discovered a handful of intriguing letters within the Antiquaries' archives at Woodhorn. One of these answered a question that had been nagging away at me, about the fate of a mixed-race boy, James Atkinson, a five-year-old orphan who was sent from Jamaica to Temple Sowerby to be brought up by his grandmother, Bridget Atkinson (1734–1814). She was my great-great-great-great-grandmother, and the first honorary member of the Newcastle Antiquaries. A voracious collector of shells and books, she was the friend of John Hodgson, one of the Society's founders.

Bridget is my favourite ancestor – she was wonderfully practical and plain-speaking. She had money, but there was nothing uppity about her; when she came indoors to drink tea after a hard day spent clearing the fields on her farm, her children would tease her that she stank of smoke from burning off the gorse, and she planted apple trees in the corners of all the fields, because she hated the thought of wasting the space where the plough couldn't reach.

Her eldest daughter, Dorothy, married Nathaniel Clayton, solicitor and town clerk of Newcastle, who kept the family lawsuits going. My book – *Mr Atkinson's Rum Contract* – will be published by Fourth Estate in 2016.

Richard Atkinson

MONTHLY MEETINGS

May 2014



The Carnelian Ring from Binchester, picture courtesy David Petts

David Petts, from Durham University, talked about the *Durham Binchester Excavations: the First Five Years*. He explained that a team from Durham University and Durham County Council, working with members of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland and US students, had been excavating at the Roman fort at Binchester since 2009, in two main areas.

The first area, he explained, was in the eastern corner of the fort. They had unearthed the remains of a late Roman cavalry barrack, much altered over a long period of use. In its final phase, large quantities of butchered cattle bones were scattered around it. They had also found a well-preserved latrine, connected to drainage gullies within the fort from which water could be sluiced through the latrine and into the fort ditch. The other area of excavation was in the *vicus* that surrounded the fort, and fronted onto Dere Street. Two heavily robbed out strip-buildings had been excavated, and they had also found part of a bath-house, partially terraced into the hillside. Preservation was excellent and in places the wall survived to a

height of around two metres. This was where the carved stone head of a Roman god was discovered in 2013, to much press excitement.

... and an update from David

Since the lecture, we have had a highly successful sixth excavation season. We re-opened the trench in the barracks area to look at earlier phases. The building began as a typical Roman cavalry barrack, with rooms for the soldiers paired with stables for their mounts. Perhaps in the 3rd or 4th century AD, the building was narrowed, with an accommodation block for the commander of the *turma* at the northern end.

We have also found one of the corner turrets, and the inside of the curtain walls. The eastern curtain wall, which belonged to the earliest phase of the fort, was crudely built. The northern one, built later – probably when the fort contracted in size in the early second century AD – was far better constructed.

In our second trench, in the *vicus*, we concentrated on the bath-house. This was very well-preserved because the building had been filled in with rubbish, probably in the later 4th century. Clearing this out revealed a stone flagged floor, and we could see that the main room originally held a cold water plunge bath. At some point this became a changing room, lined with stone benches. Painted plaster work lining the room was covered over with a plain white plaster. There were two stone altars in the north-east corner of this room, so it seems to have acted as a shrine.

A small, almost pristine, plunge bath had been constructed in a later annexe, with a drainage hole linked to a neighbouring system of culverts. We could see that there were further rooms to the north and east, one containing another bath or water cistern, and retaining the bases of a stone arch or vault.

We found two phases of structures between Dere Street and the baths, which may have been used until the early 5th century AD. To the west of the bath-house, we found a crudely-built strip building, and what may have been the boundary wall for the complex, very well-constructed and surviving to the height of at least seven courses. This showed how much the Roman occupation surfaces had risen over by the end of the 4th century.

Our many finds included great quantities of animal bone from the rubbish in the bath-house. The highlight was a silver ring from the 2nd or

3rd century, from the barrack trench. Its carnelian gemstone carries the symbol of an anchor with two fishes suspended from it, an early Christian symbol. It is rare evidence for pre-Constantinian Christianity from Roman Britain.

You can find out more on www.binchester.blogspot.com

David Petts

June 2014



John Collingwood Bruce in the Castle doorway

Our Past President David Breeze spoke about *John Collingwood Bruce: A Victorian Polymath*. Bruce, he explained, was born in the year of Trafalgar, 1805, and lived into the last decade of the century. When he died in 1892, his funeral procession stretched from the Hancock Museum to the gates of Jesmond Cemetery, with crowds lining the streets. Four years later a memorial to him was erected in St Nicholas Cathedral. How, David asked rhetorically, could an archaeologist get such a send-off?

Bruce was, of course, very much more than an archaeologist. His parents had run an 'Academy' in Percy Street, which he inherited and at which many of the great and the good of

nineteenth-century Tyneside were educated. He wrote a history textbook for his pupils, and through this became interested in the Castle Keep, producing a guidebook in record time; this was one of the factors leading to the Society taking it over. In 1848 he was prevented from travelling on the Continent by the 'year of revolutions' and so visited Hadrian's Wall instead. He rapidly produced a report on it, illustrated with engravings taken from Richardson's paintings, and this was followed by later editions, a series of pilgrimages, and excavations funded by the wealthy John Clayton of Chesters.

By 1857 Collingwood Bruce was the Secretary of SANT, and an acknowledged expert on the Wall. He was also a leading light of the Presbyterian Church, and sat on the boards of any number of worthy causes in the region. He chaired his last meeting of SANT in January 1891, at the age of 85. After his death, young bloods were champing to reinterpret the Wall, and there was a great burst of activity and research. His papers are now in the South Shields archives, and we have the benefit of a worthy biography by his son Sir Gainford Bruce.

Professor Breeze can be contacted on Davidbreeze@hotmail.co.uk.

July 2014



Peter the Regimental Cat, picture from the regimental archives

Roberta Goldwater, Assistant Curator of the Northumberland Hussars, Light Dragoons and 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars Museum,

based in 'A Soldier's Life' gallery of the Discovery Museum spoke on *Hidden Histories of World War I*. She was able to draw on their remarkable archive of photographs to illustrate her talk.

The Hussars, she explained, began life in 1819 as the Newcastle Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, a volunteer body of part-time soldiers. In 1831, the regiment put down strikes by keelmen and dockers. In 1876, it was renamed the Northumberland Hussars (NH), and at some point gained the nickname of 'the Noodles'. The soldiers trained every year on the Town Moor and had a drill hall on Northumberland Road (now part of Northumbria University). Yeomanry regiments like the NH supplied many recruits in the Boer War.

In August 1914, the regiment was quickly mobilised after the declaration of war and by October they were in Zeebrugge – complete with regimental cat, Peter, who went right through the war with them. The war of movement, in which cavalry could be employed, soon turned into a static one, and the NH were used for ambulance-driving and transport, as well as in the trenches. They already had a cycle unit and now developed a motorbike unit. A German field hat given to a British soldier during the 1914 Christmas truce is on display in the Museum.

Roberta highlighted the story of Private Herbert Pocock, who took a Kodak Vest Pocket Camera to the front and sent back a roll of film to his wife in North Shields. She was related to Dixon Scott, later the founder of Tyneside Cinema, and presumably through this contact managed to have the pictures shown in a local cinema. People were horrified by conditions in the trenches. Although she was not prosecuted, the authorities rapidly made clear that this was against wartime censorship laws. None of the pictures have survived except one anodyne one of three 'chums' posing together.

After seeing service also in the Second World War, the 'Noodles' are now a Territorial Army squadron, equipped with armoured reconnaissance vehicles.

Roberta can be contacted on roberta.goldwater@twmuseums.org.uk

August 2014

Distinguished food historian Peter Brears spoke on *Northumbrian Food*, providing a running buffet of samples of the food he was talking about!

Peter explained that the popular image of historic food was based largely on TV, films, and re-enactments at historic sites – much of it very misleading. There was no such person as a standard 'Georgian' or 'Victorian'. The middle- and upper-classes had uniform eating habits throughout the country, but studying food for the working classes meant looking at different geographical and occupational groups over time. For Northumbria in the period 1800–1920, there was much information including government statistical surveys, and – uniquely in Britain – a pictorial record of working class life in the images created by Bewick, Luke Clennell, Ralph Hedley and others.

During the early part of this period, pitmen in the North-East were high-wage earners and high-spenders, with as much as 60% of their income going on food, including a considerable amount of meat. Their work, of course, demanded huge amounts of energy. In contrast, lead miners, in whom gradually accumulating poisons meant they felt permanently ill and lacked appetite, ate very much less.

Pitmen, he went on, insisted on soft white bread made as oven-bottom cakes (the term stotty was only invented in the 1930s). When times were hard and they were provided with barley flour rather than wheat, it caused riots. Others ate different forms of rye and oat bread, which being low in gluten often came in thin tough slabs. For festivals and fairs, there were brandy-snaps and gingerbread, with a saffron-coloured 'dead-cake' served at funerals. The 'singing hinnie' was a rich girdle-scone, sweetened with currants; sugar or honey in a girdle-cake would merely burn up, so they were rolled in sugar afterwards.

Peter's book, *Traditional Food in Northumbria*, is published by Prospect Books, and is available from them or in Beamish Museum's gift shop.

September 2014

Dr Scott Ashley, Lecturer in Medieval History at Newcastle University, spoke on *Unearthly Emptiness: Late Antiquity in Bede's Northumbria*.

The 'unearthly emptiness', Scott explained, was what seemed to be a strong resistance at Wearmouth and Jarrow to the miraculous and the veneration of relics and saints. There were no stories about Wearmouth founder Benedict Biscop performing miracles during his



The western tower of St Peter's Wearmouth, picture courtesy Sue Ward

lifetime, or healing miracles associated with him at death. Elsewhere in the Late Antique world, including other parts of Northumbria such as Lindisfarne, these elements were seen as central to the church's role. Wearmouth and Jarrow seemed to be following a different tradition, perhaps that of the Southern Gaul monastery of Lérins, where Benedict Biscop had been tonsured and another place where the cult of relics and miracles were not favoured.

Scott pointed out that in Bede's Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth-Jarrow, there were no miracles, no visions of the otherworld, simply holy figures dying in bed surrounded by their community and giving advice to the next generation – very austere scenes. Possibly Jarrow was not enjoying its effective takeover by Wearmouth, and an emphasis on relics and holy power might exacerbate the situation.

There was also a tendency for holy power and family power to fuse, with successors able to claim inheritance of some of the charisma of their ancestors. Bede's late letter to Archbishop Aelbert showed how unhappy he was at the way that aristocrats were gaining control of monasteries. He went so far as to include in Benedict Biscop's final words a strong prohibition on keeping the monastery in the family, whereas in fact Biscop had handed over control to a cousin, a nobleman called Eosterwine, when he went abroad on one of his trips.

Scott can be contacted at scott.ashley@ncl.ac.uk

October 2014

David White, Somerset Herald of Arms, spoke on the *Development of English Heraldry*. At the time of the Norman Conquest, he pointed out, helmets did not cover the full face so that any knight could be recognised. That may be



The Arms of Sir William Mills, copyright The College of Arms

why once closed helmets came in, the heralds who were responsible for organising tournaments needed another way of identifying contestants, and so the practice of putting devices on shields developed. At first they were very bold and simple, but the rule that each member of a family needed a slightly different shield led to a burgeoning of very similar devices. A wealth of manuscript sources details them.

By the sixteenth century coats of arms were more a matter of prestige than of identification, and the nouveau riche family of Tudor times might be granted an elaborate design. Older families sometimes felt they had to 'trade in' the old simple one for something similar. By the time of the Georgians, highly detailed 'landscape' heraldry was the vogue. New families such as the Nelsons adopted the arms of unrelated gentry with the same names. When Horatio Nelson came to the College of Arms for a design, the heralds began with a similar device, but added bombs on a sash across the shield, a sailor as a supporter at one side, and a picture of the Spanish ship he had seized, the *San José*, as the crest. Each new honour given by the crown to Nelson resulted in a more elaborate shield.

Victorian times saw an explosion of heraldry with the expanding middle classes, and this has continued in more recent times. David concluded with the example of Sir William Mills, who invented the Mills Bomb – and had

a coat of arms full of them, designed in 1922 after the end of the First World War.

David can be contacted via the College of Arms, at www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/

DEATHS



Picture courtesy Lavinia Faulkner

Dr Tom Faulkner, 1943–2014

Tom Faulkner joined the Society on 26th June 1991. Tom's academic career as a historian of art, design and architecture began with a post as a lecturer at the then North Staffordshire Polytechnic. In 1974 he became Senior Lecturer in the History of Architecture and Design at Newcastle Polytechnic, later Northumbria University. After retirement in 2004, he became a Visiting Fellow at the School of Historical Studies in Newcastle University.

He was an excellent public speaker, totally in command of his subject. This made him popular as a lecturer both with the general public and undergraduate and mature students. Many will remember him fondly for his enthusiasm, and for the informative field trips that formed an integral part of his teaching.

Tom was a NATFHE union representative at Northumbria, and active in both local history societies and national cultural organisations. He was Chair of the local branch of the Victorian Society (1986–9), and later of the Northern Architectural History Society (1996–2003).

He organised some influential local and national conferences, and together with Andrew Greg a major bicentennial exhibition on John Dobson in 1987 at the Laing Art Gallery,

leading to their joint book on Dobson. He was also active in heritage and conservation matters, for example representing The Georgian Group and The Victorian Society on the Newcastle City Council Conservation Forum.

Tom's early interests were the Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts Movement and Modernism, but his focus later shifted towards the mid-18th to the mid-20th century in the North-east of England. His work, often in collaboration with colleagues from different disciplines, broadened and deepened our understanding of the cultural heritage of the region. He published whenever opportunities arose and the award of a doctorate by publication by Northumbria in 2000 was just reward for a lifetime committed to the pursuit of scholarship. Publication of the second edition of *Newcastle and Gateshead; Architecture and Heritage* in October 2014 was a fitting finale to his life's work and his love of the North East and its architecture.

Sue Ward (edited from Hentie Louw's tribute at Tom's funeral).

“Gil” Gilmour, 1923 to 2014

Gil joined SANT on 25th Jan 1967. Born in 1923 in Hartlepool, he left school in 1937 and became apprenticed in the railways. I first became aware of him when he used to blow his whistle driving his railway engine over the High Level Bridge when I was digging with Barbara Harbottle in the Castle Garth in the late 1960s. From the start of the country walks in the 1970s, Gil was a regular attender. He rose to the dizzy heights of driving some of the famous steam locos, but in 1987, when about to retire from the railways, he was one of the volunteers for a rota to open the library three times a week. Other volunteers came and went but Gil stuck it out until the last session in October 2008, even coming in to the Black Gate the day after a prostate operation. He would climb the 62 steps to the library, usually arriving out of breath with the comment “the stairs are getting steeper”.

Gil also served as Honorary Keeper of Coins from 1994 to 2010. During his tenure he oversaw the completion of an inventory of SANT's coins, listing each coin and its location. This was no easy task, given the many thousands of coins in our collection and the varied locations the coins were kept in at that time. He was responsible for managing the ‘great migration’ of the coin collection

associated with the move out of the Black Gate, the closure of the Museum of Antiquities, and the opening of the Great North Museum. Gil's work has put us in a position to take the coin collection into the digital era.

Gil was also a noted local self-taught artist and very knowledgeable on heraldry. During his time as Keeper of Coins, he spent many hours in the library doing minute drawings of the coins he listed.

He was a regular attender at our monthly meetings, last attending in February of this year, and will also be remembered for completing the New Year walk round Gosforth in January, manfully getting around with his 3 wheeled "zimmer".

Denis Peel with Rob Collins

David Gardner-Medwin, 1936–2014

Our member David Gardner-Medwin was a mainstay of the Bewick Society and the Natural History Society of Northumbria.

He was also a most distinguished paediatric neurologist, who radically improved the situation for children with muscular dystrophy. He came to Newcastle as a research fellow in 1965, setting up a multidisciplinary service to help the children and their families. 2009

research by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign showed dramatic improvements in life expectancy for child patients treated in the way that David set out – an average age of death of 30 in the North East of England, compared to only 19 in the south-west. He was a founder-member of the British Paediatric Neurology Association.

Born in London but brought up in Canada, Barbados and Edinburgh, David became an avid birdwatcher during his time in Edinburgh, and received a copy of Bewick's *History of British Birds* for his 21st birthday, creating a lifelong interest in both book-collecting and Bewick. Almost as soon as he retired, he became involved in the public enquiry about the expansion of Otterburn army ranges, and subsequently undertook much research into Bewick's antecedents. Among his other researches, he discovered the original pamphlet of radical Thomas Spence's lecture of 1775 to Newcastle Philosophical Society, *Property in Land Every One's Right*, in the Lit and Phil's archives; previously only a later edition dated 1793 had been thought to survive.

Sue Ward (with thanks to Alisoun Gardner-Medwin and the Daily Telegraph obituary dated 2 July 2014)

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@phoncoop.coop.

Deadline for the next edition is 4th May 2015. The mailing date will be 11th June. All inserts must be delivered to the office by 4th June. The Spring Mailing will be on 11th March, and inserts must be with the office by 4th March. Contact the Membership Administrator in good time for details of the requirements. We also need an electronic copy of any insert so that it can be included on the website.