

# NEWS BULLETIN



## THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.60 June 2016

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### NEW LOOK FOR THE NEWS BULLETIN

Welcome to the new *News Bulletin*. You will see we have a new look, with a single column across the page, a sanserif typeface, and colour pictures.

The main driver for this redesign is the growing number of members who do their reading online, whether on a laptop, a tablet, or a mobile phone. Documents on a screen are much easier to read if the words run across the page rather than being arranged in columns, and the received wisdom (though with some dissenters!) is that a sanserif typeface is also more legible. We can also now print in colour for the same price as black-and-white – so we've made that change too. We hope you like the new design; feedback would be much appreciated.

Please be assured; we are not planning to move away from print in the foreseeable future. We have e-mail addresses for fewer than half our members, and of those, a large group like to receive the *News Bulletin* and other material in print as well as electronically. Each member who does move over to electronic-only, of course, saves us printing and postal costs, but we have no intention of forcing people down that route. If you would like to make the change, or if you think we may not have your current e-mail address, please let us know.

Sue Ward  
Editor

### NEW FACES AT THE TOP

*Editor's Note; as foreshadowed in our last News Bulletin, we elected a new President in January this year, Richard Pears, and we also have a new Editor for Archaeologia Aeliana, Jenny Proctor. A warm welcome to them both.*

#### **Richard Pears introduces himself**

I was born behind the barred windows of Bensham Hospital and lived most of my life in Whickham before moving to Durham in 2008, to be closer to my work at Durham University, where I'm an Academic Liaison Librarian for Chemistry, History, Law and Music. My interests are history, architecture and archaeology and I'm a member of groups including the Northern



Architectural History Society and the North East Vernacular Architecture Group. I am also Secretary of Whickham Local History Society. My obsessions led me to embark on a PhD in History at Newcastle University at the age of 35 (with hindsight an early mid-life crisis), completing my thesis on the Newcastle architect William Newton in 2012. I've written articles for *Archaeologia Aeliana*, *Architectural History* and the Georgian Group journals, and I give talks to academic conferences and to local groups on historical topics – my history of the British toilet is by far the most popular. My wife and two daughters tolerate these activities as they do not involve football. I'm also a fan of Dr Who and Star Wars.

I joined SANT in 1995 and was a member of Council from 1999–2006 and again from 2010 onwards. I've been a member of the Library Committee since 1997. With Humphrey Welfare and Roger Fern I have been working to get the Society's *Proceedings* and *Archaeologia Aeliana* online, learning much about the publishing industry and online communications along the way.

*Richard Pears*  
President

**... and Jenny Proctor does the same**

I am delighted and honoured to have been given the opportunity to become the new editor of *Archaeologia Aeliana*, and look forward to being involved with many interesting projects over the coming years.

I grew up near Stockton on Tees and a childhood fascination with archaeology was sparked by many visits to Hadrian's Wall. My decision to pursue it as a career was made during a school trip to the nearby Iron Age site of Thorpe Thewles. In 1998 I moved to London to study for a BA at the Institute of Archaeology; *Archaeologia Aeliana* was a major source of research for my undergraduate dissertation on the Stanegate Frontier. I completed an MA in Scientific Methods in Archaeology at the University of Bradford in 1994, and then spent a year working at the Roman town of Heybridge in Essex. I began working for Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA), a newly formed commercial archaeology company, in London in 1995, working my way up to Senior Supervisor. During my time in London I published several sites in local and national journals including a prehistoric site near Tower Bridge, a Late Bronze Age site at Carshalton, medieval and post-medieval Thames waterfronts and post-medieval brick clamps in New Cross.

I returned to the north in 2000 to live in Northumberland and join the Northern Office of PCA, based in Durham. The first site I supervised, a rather unpromising evaluation at an opencast mine extension at Pegswood near Morpeth, turned into an extensive excavation of a Late Iron Age settlement. Following the birth of my first child in 2003, I took up a new role as Post-excavation Manager for PCA North, and more recently I have been appointed as Regional Manager.



*Jenny and colleagues at work on Faverdale finds, picture courtesy Pre-Construct Archaeology*

As a result I have been involved with a huge variety of projects from many different periods across the region. Three journal articles in *Archaeologia Aeliana* – covering an Iron Age enclosure in Berwick-upon-Tweed, extra-mural activity at Benwell fort and a waggonway and brickworks in Walker – are a good reflection of the range of projects that I have been involved with.

My main focus of interest is in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods of the North East, and in particular the experience of the local indigenous population following the establishment of the Roman frontier zone. I have written two PCA monographs, on Pegswood Moor and Faverdale, detailing the excavations of two indigenous settlements with contrasting experiences in the early years of Roman occupation of the frontier zone.

Over the last sixteen years in the region I have built strong links with local archaeology groups and societies as well as the archaeology departments of both Newcastle and Durham Universities; I am an Honorary Research Associate at the Department of Archaeology, Durham University.

*Jenny Proctor*

### **...and some wise words from the last editor**

I was the Editor of *Archaeologia Aeliana* for only six years, a short time compared to my illustrious predecessors. Nevertheless, my stint resulted in about 70 papers published: nearly 2000 pages, and almost a million words. (That leaves aside those submissions that never saw the light of day, each of which still required some work.) The Editor's job is to assess and ensure the quality of the content, and so the first three months of every year have been dominated by reading, revising, and correspondence with authors and referees. Only then could I hand over the full bundle of papers to our Production Editor, Roger Fern, who takes it all through the press and prepares the index. If papers were published exactly as they are submitted (warts and all), readers would realise how much the editors do!



Some memorable submissions were a delight to read: clear expositions of original research that provided new insights and stimulated the imagination. Most, however, needed some revision, to improve clarity or to bring the text into line with AA's house style. Slavish adherence to house style has always scored highly with me: authors who had thought about this aspect of presentation had probably thought carefully about the quality of the rest of the content also.

It was often a great pleasure to be the first to read the results of research but the assessment of its significance (and thus its priority for publication) can be quite a challenge within a journal with a wide sphere of interest such as AA. The input of anonymous referees – each one a specialist in the relevant topic – is crucial.

AA occupies a high place among comparable journals, and it has been an honour and a privilege to be at the helm, a post I have only relinquished because living now on the Solway coast I am too remote to feel the pulse of the Society. I know, however, that in Jenny Proctor I have a highly professional successor.

*Humphrey Welfare*

## **SANT SUMMER EVENTS**

### **President's Evening**

Our new President's first Evening, on 17 June, will take place in St Mary's Heritage Centre, Oakwellgate, Gateshead – the striking church building on the southern bank of the Tyne next to the Sage. According to Grace McCombie's Pevsner Guide, the earliest fabric *in situ* is twelfth-century, but the tower was rebuilt in classical style in the eighteenth century and the whole church then severely damaged by the Great Fire of Tyneside in 1854. Restoration was done by John Dobson, and there has been much subsequent tinkering. After another major fire



*St Mary's Church and garden as it looked in 2003.  
Picture courtesy Tom Yellowley*

in 1983, the fittings were largely stripped out, and it is now a Heritage Centre for the local area.

The evening will include a visit and talk by our guide Lawrence Bryson, with a buffet and a chance to meet fellow-members socially over a glass of wine. You can book via our office at the Great North Museum; see the flyer (<http://bit.ly/1XBIWil>) on our website for details.

We are looking for ideas about where to hold future Presidents' Evenings. Ideally, they should be interesting venues, with good public transport links, and not generally, or not completely, open to the public. All suggestions will be gratefully received.

### **Northumbrian Minstrelsy Concert**

Just over a week after the President's Evening, on 26 June, we have our second *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* concert. The first took place during our Bicentenary Year in 2013, with an impressive line up of local folk-singing talent. This second one is equally impressive, with Johnny Handle, Jez Lowe, Stewart Hardie, Carolyn Robson, Andy May and the Border Directors all performing.

SANT is famous in the music world for its 1882 publication *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*. Under the auspices of the wonderfully-named Ancient Melodies Committee, this gathered together what folk song collector A. L. Lloyd called 'that astonishing treasure-cave' of ballads, songs and tunes of North East England. There will be songs from this, and also from some of the other important manuscripts and collectors connected with SANT. John Bell, our founding treasurer and librarian, amassed the manuscript scores of many song melodies, probably notating the tunes himself, and the Society purchased his collection in 1856. The Henry Atkinson manuscript (1694/5) is one of the earliest known fiddle tune books in Britain, with versions of Bobby Shaftoe and Sir John Fenwick. William Vickers' songbook is a record of almost 600 country dance tunes, compiled between 1770 and 1772, while Peacock and Wright's collection of tunes and variations is regarded as defining the repertoire of the Northumbrian small pipes.

Tickets for the concert are £14 (concessions £12), plus the Sage's handling fee. They are available from the Sage Box Office, open 12.00 to 8.00 on performance days, or on 0191 443 4661, [ticketoffice@sagesateshead.com](mailto:ticketoffice@sagesateshead.com), or [www.sagesateshead.com](http://www.sagesateshead.com), *not* from the SANT office.

*Kim Bibby-Wilson*



*The last Minstrelsy concert in 2013, picture courtesy Lindsay Allason-Jones*

## **Eighteenth Century Research Day**

Our Research Day, *Bureaucracy and Corruption on 18th Century Tyneside*, on 24 September, builds on the work done by the group transcribing the Flood Papers and the Poll Book, and explores other research done by SANT members on aspects of Newcastle and Tyneside life.

Richard Pears will kick off with a discussion of Anderson Place, the great house in the centre of Newcastle whose demolition allowed for the redevelopment of the town as we know it today. With a nod to 'Capability' Brown's tercentenary this year, Les Turnbull will then talk about another very capable Brown of the same period, William Brown of Throckley, a mining engineer known at the time as 'the father of the coal trade' and recognised as the authority on railways and steam engines. The Mining Institute has recently published Les's book about Brown, and he will be bringing copies which he will be happy to sign for purchasers.

After the lunch break, maritime historian Tony Barrow will talk about Eighteenth Century sources for seafaring history, followed by Elspeth Gould on the Delaval Household of the time. She has a long involvement with the National Trust at Seaton Delaval Hall, and is to be found helping in the car-park there on busy days as well as researching the Delavals in the archives! The day's final speaker will be Sue Ward on Newcastle Elections, picking up on the work done by the Study Group transcribing the 1780/84 Newcastle Poll Book, which can be seen now on our website.

The meeting place is the fourth floor of Commercial Union House in Pilgrim Street, a new venue for us. This is the home of Ampersand Inventions ([ampersandinventions.com](http://ampersandinventions.com)), who provide lecture rooms, studios and workshop space for a broad range of creative practitioners and for organisations such as the Explore lifelong learning programme. Since they will be opening their small coffee bar on the fourth floor before and during the event, and there are numerous cafés and snack-bars in the area, we are not providing refreshments or lunch. This means we have been able to keep the price down to a bargain £7 per person. Places are limited; look on our website for details of how to book.

## **Time Walks 2016**

Our programme of walks continues to attract a good cross-section of members. We ended December 2015 with our usual urban walk. RNLI Coxswain Martin Kenny took us on a tour of North Shields, looking at the fascinating history of shipwreck and rescue along this busy stretch of the Tyne. The highlight was a glimpse inside the RNLI station which highlighted how important the work of these volunteers remains. The walk ended at the Old Low Light ([oldlowlight.co.uk](http://oldlowlight.co.uk)), the new heritage venue on the Fish Quay whose galleries present over 900 years of maritime history on the Tyne. The well-renowned café would not normally have been open on that day, but the volunteers running it had kindly ordered in fish and chips for all of us.



*Tynemouth Priory from below, picture Sue Ward*

The next Time Walk will be to Stewart Park in Middlesbrough. Please note that the date has been changed to 18 June, to avoid clashing with the May coach trip to Temple Newsam in Leeds. The walk after that is on 3 July, starting at the Parish Hall, Leazes Lane, Steel, NE47 0HB, and visiting *Lost Industrial Hexhamshire*, picking up on the history of the lead industry which Greg Finch will discuss in our May meeting.

These June and July venues are a lesson in contrasts. At Stewart Park there is a café, visitor centre, and the Captain Cook Museum, while for the Hexhamshire walk you need to bring sandwiches and be prepared for the fact that there are no toilets along the 5–6 mile route!

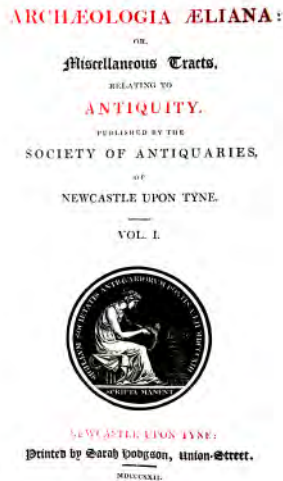
Full details can be found on our website. It would be helpful if anyone planning to attend let me know in advance, so that the tour leader can have a rough idea of numbers. In addition, I

would be glad to hear from anyone who needs or can offer a lift. You can contact me on 0191 230 3797 or at [rosie.serdiville@gmail.com](mailto:rosie.serdiville@gmail.com).

We had hoped to include the newly re-opened Tyne Pedestrian tunnel in this year's activities. Sadly, work on the Tunnel remains in abeyance as a result of financial problems. We wish them well and hope it will not be too long before this local landmark is once again accessible. As soon as it re-opens, we'll be going in.

*Rosie Serdiville*

## WHEN WAS *ARCHAEOLOGIA AELIANA* FIRST PUBLISHED?



If you look at the title page of the first volume of AA on the SANT Library shelves in the Great North Museum, you will find it is dated 1822. So is this not the answer to the question above? Well, not necessarily....

Those who spend a portion of their time, for work or recreation, looking up journal references will know that sometimes editors choose to publish journals in parts. Many have assumed that AA was like this initially and that Part 1 of Volume 1 came out much earlier than 1822. After all, the Society was established in 1813. This view is strengthened by the fact that in 1833 John Sykes wrote in Local Records (Volume 2), that 'The first part of the Society's Transactions was published in Newcastle in 1816, under the title of *Archaeologia Aeliana*.'

So is this the answer to the question? Not necessarily either....

*Archaeologia Aeliana Vol 1, with a date of 1822; picture Howard Cleeve*

At this point I must acknowledge my many thanks to Margaret Forster, of Snitter near Rothbury who, in 2014, gave to the Library a complete set of the unbound parts of volumes 2 and 3 of AA. It was only after I had studied these in detail

that I became determined to find the journal's first date of publication – unequivocally. In fact, I have discovered not only the date when Part 1 of Volume 1 went on sale, but also how many pages it had and its price for non-members – not to mention why all our bound copies of Volume 1 are dated 1822. I am hoping that all will be revealed in the 2017 volume, which might be a clue to the year in question!

*Howard Cleeve  
SANT Librarian*

## DE-LUXE SHELTER FOR THE (EX-)PRESIDENT

Should anything untoward happen to Berwick-upon-Tweed, our past President Lindsay Allason-Jones will be one of the best protected residents – for the moment, at least.

Lindsay has recently moved from Newcastle to Berwick, and was aware before she moved in that there was a complete and intact air-raid shelter in her back garden. Few such shelters survived intact for long after World War Two; most were quickly demolished and the corrugated iron put to other uses. So as Lindsay explained to the local newspaper,

As I am a retired museum archaeologist, I realised that this would be a good project for students and arranged for three postgraduates from Newcastle University to come up to stay with me for a week to expose the shelter, so that Beamish Museum would be able to come up to assess its condition with a view to acquiring it for their planned 1950s town.

Surprisingly, though, the structure turned out to be a deluxe 'Wilmott' shelter designed to keep out all but direct hits from German bombs, and with a putative anti-aircraft gun emplacement alongside. (The nearby Royal Border Bridge was considered a possible target.) Research revealed that the house and shelter belonged to Major Alexander Steven, the then editor of the *Berwickshire News* – clearly a man who knew how to build an air raid shelter!



Whether the shelter will now get to Beamish will depend on its state once fully excavated. The concrete is actually of poor quality, so it may be possible to shift it without destroying it.

*The shelter's entrance with the putative anti-aircraft gun emplacement to the right. Picture Lindsay Allason-Jones*

You can follow this link for the full story as covered in the *Berwick Advertiser* (<http://bit.ly/1TZX9mb>).

## NEW HOME FOR THE ROMAN WALL HANDBOOK

We have been making new arrangements for the storage and sale of our *Roman Wall Handbook*.

In 2006 the Society published the thirteenth edition of John Collingwood Bruce's famous *Handbook to the Roman Wall*. First published in 1863, this has been revised at intervals by a series of editors to reflect new archaeological thought and discoveries on the Wall. The *Handbook* was brought up to date by our Past-President David Breeze and in the ten years since its publication it has continued to sell steadily.

However, we do not have a professional staff who can effectively market the book and administer direct sales, and storage costs continue to rise. So we have come to an arrangement with Archaeology Plus, a well-known archaeological bookseller, who will be distributors for the remaining stock. All future enquiries about purchasing the Handbook should now go to:

Archaeology Plus Ltd  
95 Brodrick Rd  
Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 9NY  
United Kingdom, phone, 01323 507712, e-mail [archaeologyplus@btconnect.com](mailto:archaeologyplus@btconnect.com)

*Nick Hodgson*

## 150 YEARS OF THE CWAAS

2016 is a special year for SANT's sister body, the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (CWAAS), marking 150 years since it was established to 'investigate, describe and preserve' Cumbria's heritage. While it comes nowhere near SANT's 203 years, this is no mean achievement for any historical society, and demonstrates the continuing interest that many people share in Cumbria's past.

To celebrate, CWAAS has arranged a number of events throughout the year including a series of exhibitions in museums, libraries and archives throughout Cumbria. Each exhibition tells the story of



*CWAAS exhibition at Carlisle Archives in January, picture courtesy Sarah Rose*

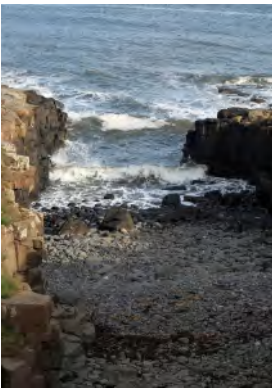
CWAAS and highlights the contribution of the Society to the collections in that particular location. Discovering Cumbria's past on foot is also being encouraged through a series of excursions to look at aspects of Cumbria's Roman, medieval and industrial heritage.

The highlight will be a special anniversary conference and dinner on 9–10 September in Penrith. Expert speakers will discuss the Society's contribution to research and scholarship in Cumbria over 150 years and our anniversary book, which explores and evaluates the many changes that have taken place over the Society's long history, will be launched.

CWAAS has amassed a significant archive in its 150 years, and this has now been properly catalogued to help those researching its history and preserve it for the future. CWAAS's journal, called *Transactions*, has also been digitised. Articles in over one hundred volumes are now available to download, helping to ensure the relevance and accessibility of this invaluable source. For more information, please visit our website, [cumbriapast.com](http://cumbriapast.com).

*Sarah Rose*  
CWAAS press officer

## PLACES AND PEOPLE IN 1860



*A deep Chasm, in  
the Rocks, between  
high and low water  
a short distance south  
of Oxberry Law.  
A Ship named the  
"Liverpool" was driven  
in here and wrecked,  
hence the name.*

*The Embleton Name Book explains the origin of the name  
Liverpool Hole, near Craster, pictures Diana Whaley*

The Ordnance Survey Name Books are records of fieldwork on an extraordinary scale: the Royal Engineers' survey of Britain and Ireland which formed the basis for the First Edition Six Inch and subsequent maps. Of all the English counties, only the four northernmost and part of Hampshire have surviving nineteenth-century Name Books: 468 books (104 of them covering Northumberland), are shelfmarked OS34 in The National Archives, Kew.

While some of the content is routine, many entries contain fascinating insights into the landscape, antiquities, buildings, and industrial and social history of the period. From the Newcastle Name Books, for instance, we can learn about long-gone pits, pubs and ferries, about 'a row of mean looking dwelling houses' called Pity Me, and about the sad story behind Lambert's Leap in Sandyford. In Longhorsley, Chirm Wells is 'a small stone building erected in 1836', occupied by Mr Corrie and owned by Mr Straker, and named from nearby springs which were used for 'drinking and bathing in a peculiar sort of water ... said to be very conducive to health' until the stream was diverted by coal mining; Chirm Pit is described as a small coal-pit worked by a gin and a horse. The Embleton book explains the odd name of a feature on the coast, Liverpool Hole, while that for Farne cites the octogenarian William Darling as an authority for local names, and recalls the wreck of the SS *Forfarshire* in 1838 and the bravery of his daughter Grace.

The Northumberland Name Books project seeks to make this valuable resource available to researchers and a wider public, beginning with a pilot phase involving transcription of all the indexes (so producing a searchable Northumberland gazetteer) and a representative selection of whole books. Since an introductory meeting on 21 April, a strong team of volunteer transcribers is emerging, many of them SANT members. A generous donation from Jim and Mary Ann Wilkes to the English Place-Name Society will fund research assistance and IT support, and the support of Explore is also gratefully acknowledged.

Any queries or offers of help, please, to [Diana.Whaley@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Diana.Whaley@ncl.ac.uk)

*Professor Diana Whaley*

## PROCEEDING ONTO THE WEB

During much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as our learned journal *Archaeologia Aeliana*, SANT printed and sent out a monthly report of its activities. These reports were then bound into annual volumes called the *Proceedings*. All these volumes have now been digitised, and the results will soon be available on the Archaeology Data Service website. In advance of this, the pdfs have all been mounted on a Dropbox website as a taster for members.



The *Proceedings* are an Aladdin's Cave of the history and antiquities of the area and occasionally further afield. As well as the monthly lectures, the Country Meetings (outings) are also reported,

with detailed site notes, and the on-the-spot thoughts of some of the Society's great names, including W. H. D. Longstaffe, Canon Greenwell, J. R. Boyle, and John Collingwood Bruce.

The August 1855 edition (<http://bit.ly/1W3JM82>) in Volume 1, for example, gives a detailed if rather arch account of the Society's first Country Meeting, a trip to the Wall (of course), in 1855, which involved a special train from Newcastle and a sumptuous champagne lunch provided by Mr. Clayton 'to prevent them dying on the floor of Housesteads, his famous city'. The December 1885 edition (<http://bit.ly/1W3K6Uf>) has reminiscences of the first Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage in 1849, as well as abuse of the 1858 alterations to Hexham Abbey by that 'body of Goths and Vandals, who styled themselves "A Restoration Committee", and who acted under the advice of the most eminent local architect of the day' (John Dobson). The March 1885 edition (<http://bit.ly/1W3JxK9>) has a report of the formal opening of our Museum in the Black Gate, with many details of its contents.

Many sets of *Proceedings* (including the set assembled for digitisation) have extras bound in, such as the watercolour above of the now-demolished Gunner Tower, by leading local artist of the time, Sheriton Holmes, SANT's Treasurer from 1890 until his death in 1900.

Putting *Proceedings* on the web is a prelude to putting *Archaeologia Aeliana* itself online. A small working group is actively engaged in this process which has had its ups and downs – perhaps more downs than we ever expected – but is now nearing fruition.

*Roger Fern*

*Editor's note; individual members can access the Dropbox files by logging in to the website (on the sidebar to the left of the screen) and then going to Proceedings on the drop-down menu under Publications. You can't at this stage search across the PDFs, however, so unless you know the date you are looking for, it's something of a lucky dip.*

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### November 2015

There was a full house in Newcastle University's large Herschel Auditorium for our Public Lecture speaker, Professor Jim Dickson of Glasgow University, on Oetzi the Iceman. It was nearly a quarter of a century since the discovery of Oetzi's body, he explained, in a findspot on the borders of Austria and Italy. He was pulled out of the ice rather than excavated, and a copper-headed axe found nearby was taken away at an early stage by a policeman, delaying the realisation that the body was ancient.

Oetzi was lying prone, draped over a large boulder. A quiver, longbow, axe and backpack were spread out over several metres nearby. He lived 5,200–300 years ago and was wearing three layers of clothing, including suspenders for his leggings, all made of skin, grass, and bark fibres. He could have been a hunter, and was in his mid-40s, quite small, slim but sturdily built.

A moss from his clothes, and fragments of it from the intestines were of a type that grows only at lower altitudes, and prefers woodland sites, showing that he had come from the south on his last journey. His right hand had been badly cut two days or so before his death, but it was a flint arrowhead which killed him. He had been shot in the back just under his left shoulder, the very place most likely to cause death, and then suffered several blows to his head. He was almost certainly an archer himself. He seemed to have been seriously ill several times in the last few months, with internal parasites, bad teeth, blackened lungs from camp fire smoke, and clogged arteries. Despite this, his leg bones showed he had an active life in the hills.

His blood group was O, and he was probably lactose intolerant. His diet included dried Alpine ibex meat – almost rendered extinct by hunting – and his stomach was full. There was also bran from primitive eikhorn wheat, and bracken spores, and one chewed spruce needle.

All in all, Professor Dickson concluded, more was probably known about Oetzi than about many living people, and there was probably more yet to be discovered. Professor Dickson can be contacted at [prof.j.h.dickson@gmail.com](mailto:prof.j.h.dickson@gmail.com), and for further reading, see his *Ancient Ice Mummies*, published 2011 by the History Press; Stroud.

### January 2016

Matt Perry, Reader in Labour History at Newcastle University, spoke on *Commemorating the Jarrow Crusade*. He pointed out that there were many resonances between now and the 1930s, with financial collapses worldwide and the use of austerity and means-tests to 'rescue' sterling. 3.4m people had been registered as unemployed in 1932, with 80% unemployment in Jarrow. As an illustration of the level of inequality in the 1930s, Jarrow's perinatal mortality rate was twice that of small market towns, or nearly four times in the poorest wards. When the marchers arrived in towns like Market Harborough in Leicestershire, they would immediately seek out the Medical Officer of Health's mortality statistics and use them in speeches at public meetings to get sympathy. Marchers put on weight and improved in health simply from having regular meals.

There were many prosecutions for crimes of poverty in Jarrow, such as 'stealing' coal from the coal company – that is, picking it off slag heaps. Non-payment of rent led to fines which then also could not be paid. The magistrates' bench was dominated by Conservative councillors or ex-councillors, even after they had lost control of the council in 1932, and some were also landlords.

Ellen Wilkinson, MP for Jarrow, was a controversial character, seen alternatively as Red Ellen or Wee Ellen. In some ways the Crusade rendered her toothless by turning her from a radical politician to a fey one. Her famous phrase, 'the town that was murdered', was highly political. Her later book with that title was one of the key texts, along with *Love on the Dole*, and *The Road to Wigan Pier* for shifting the consensus so that the Beveridge report could be produced and implemented.

Matt added that he was now working with a project in South Tyneside focusing on who the marchers were, to lead to an exhibition at South Tyneside Museum. Tracing participants was not always easy; some people had given false names so they would not be penalised by the means-tests authorities.

Matt's biography of Ellen Wilkinson is published by Manchester University Press. He would like to hear from anyone with information about the Jarrow Marchers, and can be contacted on [matt.perry@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:matt.perry@ncl.ac.uk).

### February 2016

Dr Roz Southey, of Newcastle University, spoke about *A Good Night's Entertainment: Music in Eighteenth Century Newcastle*. She explained that there was a considerable amount of musical entertainment in a city like Newcastle, much of it high quality, with 'gentlemen amateurs' holding much higher social status than professionals. Music societies might engage a professional musician to make sure that they had the right music and players, and would attend his concerts in return. Amateur males might occasionally play in public, but would never

be named; they did not want to be seen to have put in an effort to reach a required standard. Ladies would never perform in public – that would have suggested their morals were loose. They would also avoid anything which required energetic movement or puckering up the face, such as playing wind instruments.

Social exclusivity had to be tempered with practicality in provincial society, Roz went on. Servants might be chosen for their musicianship. George and Mary Bowes at Gibside, for example, had a cello-playing footman who would join them in string trios. High ticket prices for London concerts were intended to keep out *hoi polloi*, but Newcastle ticket prices had to be much lower to attract enough of an audience.

At the bottom of the social scale, there were pipers, ballad singers, and fiddlers, who would wander the countryside playing at weddings at feasts, and at the big houses. The Gibside accounts showed frequent payments to such musicians. Slightly further up the scale were the waits, employed by the town council to play at civic ceremonies but poorly paid, only £5 a year. Dancing masters were on the same level, but might need to visit London to bring themselves up to date. Church organists were on the level of respectable tradesmen. They were required to improvise two organ voluntaries at each service. Charles Avison held this role at St Nicholas' Church, and also organised local concerts and taught the Bowes family, but most of all he wanted to be known as a composer.

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### March 2016

Jonathan Bush, of Ushaw College, spoke about *Hidden Gems: The Manuscripts and Rare Books in Ushaw College Library*. He outlined the history of the former Roman Catholic seminary of Ushaw College and the library, before going on to examine the collections themselves. There were those which told the history of the college, including its architecture, college life and the recreation of the seminarians, along with the management of its finances and estates. Then there were collections with wider implications for our understanding of the Catholic Church at the local, national and international level, including archive records of notable Catholic individuals and printed works on theology and church history. One example was *A sincere and modest defence of English Catholics*, written by William Allen in 1584; the Ushaw copy has annotations by Sir Richard Topcliffe. Another was a very attractive manuscript score of *Te Deum Laudamus*, copied in 1783 from the English Dominican Processionals in use at Bornhelm in Flanders.

Finally, the library also housed a vast selection of archives and early printed books on secular subjects, including history, early travel, science, and English and European literature.

Jonathan also explained Durham University's role in managing the collections and making them accessible online. Although nothing concrete has yet been decided, plans for a long-term sustainable future for both the library and the college are currently under negotiation between the trustees of the college and the university, and these should be finalised by the end of 2016.

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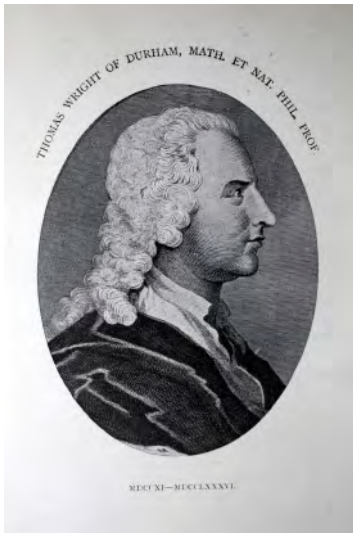
### April 2016

Andrew Fletcher, of Newcastle University, spoke on *The Cosmos, Kant and Thomas Wright of Durham*. He explained that Wright (1711–1786) was local to the North East, and though little known outside the history of astronomy, developed important theories about the nature of the cosmos.

After Galileo's discoveries with the telescope, astronomers had realised that the Milky Way was a band of stars across the sky, but had disagreed on whether stars were fixed in the sky or in motion, and if so, how. Descartes had used deductive reasoning to work out that the stars were centres of motion, but Newton's view was that they were fixed within the universe, with the 'hand of God' intervening to keep them in their places when his own laws of gravity would



*Ushaw students skating on the frozen lake; picture from Ushaw archives*



*Thomas Wright of Durham, engraving provided by Andrew Fletcher*

mean they were moving towards each other. Wright's contribution was a theory about the reasons that we see many stars in some parts of the sky, especially along the broad stripe of the Milky Way, and far fewer in others. If stars including our own were distributed on planes within the cosmos, he pointed out, we would see them thickly clustered when looking along the plane, but much more thinly visible when looking either side of it.

Wright was largely self-taught, having attended Bishop Auckland Grammar School until the age of 14 and then been apprenticed to a watchmaker. For a period he ran his own school in Sunderland, teaching mathematics and navigation, and in 1742 turned down the offer of a Chair in Navigation in St Petersburg. He made a living giving lectures and working as a tutor within various noble families, but was turned down for a fellowship by the Royal Society. Immanuel Kant came across Wright's work in a German precis lacking any of his very clear diagrams, and used it in his own *Natural History*, acknowledging Wright's ideas. This was however not translated into English until 1900, delaying the recognition Wright was due in his own country. Durham University Library holds two boxes of his archives, including most of Wright's publications, some with manuscript annotations by him, while

there are eight more volumes of his manuscripts in Newcastle Central Library.

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## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

*The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne promotes the preservation, study and enjoyment of historical and archaeological heritage in general, and of the North East of England in particular. We have nearly 800 members, and always welcome new ones. We are the oldest provincial antiquarian society in the country.*

*We have a full programme of public events, lectures, walks and visits, and social activities. We are also guardians of world-class collections of antiquities and archives, and of a library of over 30,000 books and journals. We sponsor and publish research into North East history and archaeology of all periods.*

*For more information, look at our website, [www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](http://www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk) or contact us at SANT, Great North Museum: Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT, phone 0191 231 2700, e-mail [admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](mailto:admin@newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk)*

## 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](mailto:sue.ward@phonecoop.coop).*

*Deadline for the next edition is 18 November 2016. The mailing date will be 14 December. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Administrator by 7 December. If you want an insert included, contact the Membership Administrator in good time for details of the requirements. An electronic copy of any insert must also be provided (as a Word or pdf document) so that it can be included in the electronic mailing.*