

NEWS BULLETIN



THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

No.61 December 2016

CONTENTS

Who we are and what we do.....	1
President's message.....	1
An Invitation.....	2
Country Meetings.....	2
Time Walks.....	3
Bureaucracy and Corruption on 18th century Tyneside.....	3
Creating our View of Hadrian's Wall.....	4
Help Needed!.....	5
More Research on Newcastle's Election History.....	6
News from our Collections.....	7
Great North Expo.....	7
Monthly Meetings.....	7
Deaths.....	11
Note from the Editor.....	12

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Membership of Newcastle Antiquaries is open to anybody with an interest in the history and archaeology of the North East, and our library at the Great North Museum: Hancock is open to the public. Our aim is to promote the preservation, study and enjoyment of historical and archaeological heritage in general, and of the North East of England in particular. We have approaching 800 members, and always welcome new ones. We are the oldest provincial antiquarian society in the country, founded in 1813. We have a full programme of lectures, walks and visits, and social events, and we keep members notified of other events of interest around the region.

For more information, look at our website, 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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I felt some trepidation when Derek Cutts asked if I would be willing to succeed him as President. Derek steered the Society with great finesse and has continued to contribute his experience to the Executive Committee and Council. All members will wish him a full recovery.

Our Society continues to flourish, with new members joining us. 2016 was a year of anniversaries, and the Activities Committee organised lectures on the tercentenary of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the Spanish Civil War and the Jarrow Crusade. Visits to historic houses and guided walks explored Roman, industrial and maritime heritage. Working with partners in Explore, our own Eighteenth Century



Richard Pears and Michael Darke at the final meeting of the Association of Northumberland Local History Societies

AN INVITATION

The 2017 Anniversary Meeting will be on Wednesday 25 January, at the Mining Institute in Westgate Road. The speakers will be from the Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group, on Beyond the Wall.

There will be a social evening after the lecture, upstairs in the Mining Institute's Wood Memorial Hall. We would be grateful if members would donate food for the buffet. We will also ask for a small donation, around £2, for each glass of wine. New members who have joined in the last year will be especially welcome.

Newcastle Study Group completed its work on the Northumberland Flood Papers, and successfully bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to start a new project to transcribe and publish online more documents from the Society's archives. A very successful Study Day in September highlighted new research into the eighteenth century, while music from the Society's collections was performed by renowned musicians at the Northumbrian Minstrelsy concert at the Sage in June. Lindsay Allason-Jones and I were honoured to attend the 150th anniversary dinner for our friends in the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. There was sadness, however, at the winding-up of the Association of Northumberland Local History Societies, after fifty years of organising projects and events across the region.

The publication of high quality scholarship in our journal *Archaeologia Aeliana* requires great skill and judgement in editorial work. We are fortunate to have Jenny Proctor as the new Editor, ably assisted by Roger Fern as Production Editor. Roger and I have continued work on the digitisation of *AA* and the Society's *Proceedings*. Communication is vital for a Society of our size; Sue Ward has expertly publicised the activities of the Society and other organisations through the *News Bulletin* and website, and further promotion takes place through social media.

There are many more examples of the Society's involvement within Newcastle and more widely. I have been glad to participate in the Heart of the City Partnership, in which the Society works with the City Council, St Nicholas's Cathedral, and independent trustees to look after our historic Castle and its flourishing programme of activities for locals, visitors and schools.

All of this work can only proceed with the dedication of Council, committee members and officers who give their time and expertise to the Society's administration, finances and activities and who I take this opportunity to thank on your behalf.

Richard Pears

COUNTRY MEETINGS



The group outside Temple Newsam

Once again we enjoyed lovely weather for both the 2016 Country Meetings. Temple Newsam, the impressive Tudor-Jacobean mansion near Leeds, was the backdrop for a fun run when we visited in May. Thankfully we were not expected to take part! Instead we enjoyed the 40 restored rooms, housing one of the most important collections of fine and decorative arts in Britain. Sadly, the hall was being used for a wedding and so was not open to us. We could, though, enjoy the blooming rhododendron walk and the gardens laid out by Capability Brown. The Walled Garden, where the herbaceous borders were well-stocked with delphiniums and chrysanthemums, was a peaceful retreat from the summer crowds.

We were made very welcome by Sarah and the knowledgeable guides who showed us around Markenfield Manor, near Ripon in early September. Medieval moated halls were once common across lowland

England, and almost all have lost either their internal buildings or protective moats. The River Tyne is the northern-most boundary for their distribution, but the sole example in our area, at Wardley in Gateshead, has a small length of re-excavated ditch as the only evidence of the manor house. Markenfield is intact, and is one of the best examples in the country. The manor remains a family home and is open only for limited periods each year. The walk around the moat allows you to enjoy the beautiful setting of the manor, whose history has been both sad and turbulent at times.

The 2017 Country Meetings will be on 13 May, with a trip to Whitby, and 2 September, going to the Arts and Crafts Sion Hill House near Thirsk.

Denise Heslop

TIME WALKS

We had a lot of fun in 2016. In June we explored the Victorian estate buildings at Stewart Park, on the outskirts of Middlesbrough, with the help of Park Education Officer Francine Marshall, who also explained the plans for the renovation of the property. The pencilled graffiti in the rooms used as barracks in 1915, with scribbled names and messages, were particularly evocative. In July we followed up the lecture given by Greg Finch. Lost Industrial Hexhamshire was a chance to explore the smelting and lead carrying associated with Dukesfield arches plus the community archaeology project which has done so much to preserve its history.



One of the attic rooms at Stewart Park, lived in by soldiers during World War One. Picture Sue Ward

Our 2016 post-Christmas walk take place on 28 December. John Griffiths' Pits and Pubs: Mining heritage in a suburban landscape will take us along the route of the industrial trail from Fawdon, reaching South Gosforth in time for a pub lunch.

Alastair Fraser's lecture in April will cover the recent excavation work at Cocken Hall in April of the remnants of a World War One training camp, and before that in March we will visit the site. The remains of the seventeenth-century house with its gardens would be interesting enough in themselves, even without this.

We will explore the Town Moor in the year Newcastle is celebrating 800 years of Mayoralty and Freemen. "Newcastle's greatest asset" – a walk around the Town Moor at the end of September will be led by Denis Peel. He plans to lead us along the boundary of the City, exploring the outline of the Town Moor as we learn about its history.

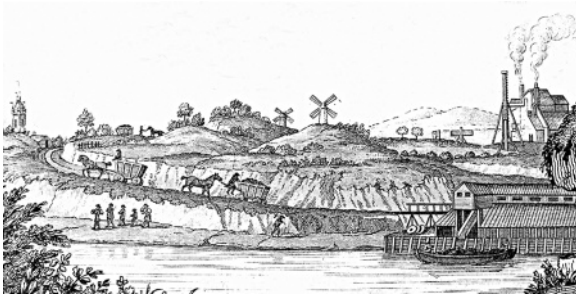
Full details of the walks can be found on our website. Anyone who needs more information or who needs (or can offer) transport should contact me on 0774 979 8023 or email at rosie.serdiville@gmail.com

Rosie Serdiville

BUREAUCRACY AND CORRUPTION ON 18TH CENTURY TYNESIDE

One result of our Bicentenary Exhibition in 2013 was a revival of interest in the Society's archive collection, particularly the items relating to the eighteenth century. At a workshop day on 24 September, an audience from the Society and of Explore heard about some of the work being done on this period by our own members.

Richard Pears provided a fascinating discussion of the history of the rise and fall of Anderson



The cartouche from the map of the coalfield dated 1787 by John Gibson, one of William Brown's apprentices.

Place, a site which dominated Newcastle's landscape throughout the century. Les Turnbull then talked of the innovative work of William Brown of Throckley, an unsung hero of railways and steam. After lunch Tony Barrow went through the resources available for those wishing to investigate the north of England's seafaring history at the time. Here is a rich vein to be mined by anyone interested in the region's history in general, not just the history of our links with the sea. Elspeth Gould's lecture on the Delaval Household revealed an extraordinarily detailed picture of family life in a

large house of the period, although some of the more scurrilous and entertaining snippets were probably not normal in the average household. The day finished with Sue Ward looking at the political world of Newcastle and showing that the title of the day was an accurate reflection of the politics of the times.

Everyone learned something new and came away wanting more. It also became clear that the Society holds important documents relating to the period, some of which will be explored through our new HLF funded project. Unlocking the Archives. We hope to hold another such workshop in the autumn of 2017, so we can once again immerse ourselves in the Tyneside of a period which to the original Society members would have seemed recent history but to us often seems to be 'a foreign land'.

Lindsay Allason-Jones

CREATING OUR VIEW OF HADRIAN'S WALL

In the 1830s, John Clayton inherited Chesters and he spent the rest of his long life buying up the central sector of Hadrian's Wall and excavating many sites along it. He created what was in effect an archaeological park, moving farms off the line of the monument.

In June 1848, John Collingwood Bruce set out to traverse the whole length of the Wall. He took his son Gainsford, his groom and two artist brothers, Charles and Henry Burdon Richardson. Henry had instructions to record Hadrian's Wall, putting archaeological accuracy before artistic licence. He turned his series of drawings into watercolours on his return to Newcastle, and brother Charles added a few more. Bruce used them to illustrate lectures for the next thirty-five years.

In 1849, Bruce began writing a book on Hadrian's Wall and chose several of Charles and Henry's paintings as illustrations. He asked another Newcastle artist, John Storey, to turn them into engravings. Storey returned to the field to re-draw the views, which means there are differences between the paintings and the engravings.

These illustrations were used in all six editions of Bruce's handbooks on the Wall and became the iconic views for the second half of the nineteenth century. Their cousin, George Bouchier Richardson, printed the first two editions of *The Roman Wall* before emigrating. He assiduously recorded the archaeology of Roman Newcastle and produced the first reconstruction drawing of the fort, published by Bruce.

These men helped to create the modern view of Hadrian's Wall. My new book *Hadrian's Wall: Paintings by the Richardson Family*, explores the creation of the paintings and the relationships between the author, the land owner and artists who recorded it. Many thanks to the Society for helping to fund it. The book is available from Birlinn Books, normal price £25, but there is 20% off if buying online. Enter discount code HadriansWall16 when prompted.

David Breeze

HELP NEEDED!

Are you a person with an outgoing personality, enthusiastic, motivated, possessing good communication skills and well organised and committed? If you fit the bill, you might like to join the Activities and Membership Committee and volunteer for one of the roles for which we need help.

Sadly Marion Whyte, who was appointed as Social Secretary last year, was unable to carry out the role owing to continued serious ill-health. Our best wishes to her for the future. So we need a new Social Secretary, with the role of organising our Summer Social Event (the new name for the President's Evening), the social gathering after the Anniversary Meeting in January, and New Members' Events from time to time.

The second role is a new one, the Other Events Secretary, whose task would be to organise events in addition to the regular calendar events, such as future Study Days, and we would also like to have some extra events to tie in with the 2018 Great Exhibition of the North.

We would really like someone with experience of dealing with external bodies and organisations, catering and drink suppliers, and an ability to write publicity material/flyers, but help and support will of course be available from other members of the Activities and Membership Committee as well as the Society Office. The Committee itself meets three times a year, usually on a Wednesday in the early evening.

If you would like to have a chat about what this would involve, or to put your name forward, please contact me on graeme.stobbs@gmail.com or his mobile, 07770 554625

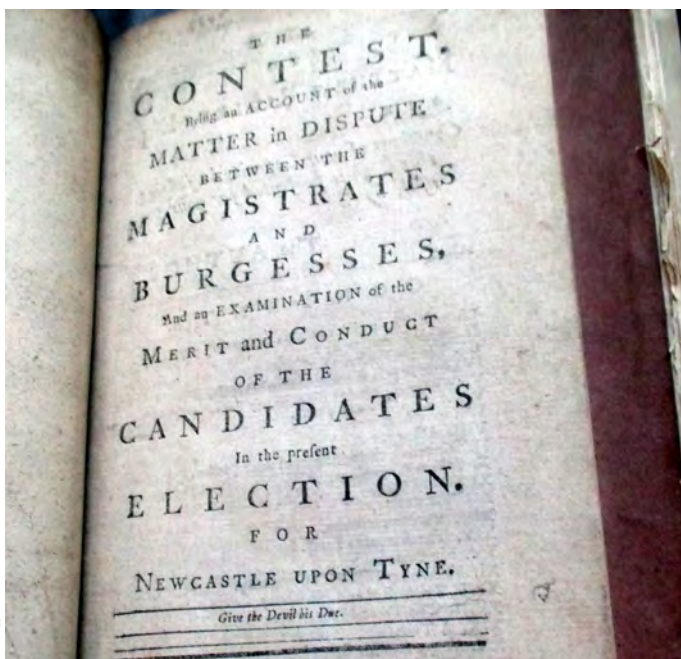
Graeme Stobbs

MORE RESEARCH ON NEWCASTLE'S ELECTION HISTORY

We think of Britain before the Reform Act of 1832 as a land of rotten boroughs, flagrant corruption, and a tiny electorate imposing their will on the people. However, the recent London Electoral History project shows that, in the metropolis at least, large numbers participated in the electoral process, and healthy democratic traditions were developing in civic and local elections, as well as in the great parliamentary contests.

The pre-Reform franchise was certainly very limited. Only men over twenty-one could vote, and most often they were from the upper or middling orders. There was a patchwork of different qualifications for voting across different boroughs and shires. But when elections were contested – which wasn't often, since they were hugely expensive – they were major events that must have drawn in almost the entire population.

In Newcastle only four elections were contested in the ninety-one years between 1741 and the Great Reform Act. These were extraordinary and controversial events, inspiring an avalanche of pamphlets and prints, broadsides and ballads. Voters were assiduously and publicly courted and 'treated'. They would process to the hustings in groups, and publicly avow



Title page of The Contest, a contemporary account of the bitter 1774 election in Newcastle

their choices. Their votes would be recorded in poll books which were afterwards printed.

A team at Newcastle University's Humanities Research Institute (NUHRI) is now looking for funding to research pre-1832 elections across the nation and to analyse their wider culture. Newcastle Antiquaries' digitised and transcribed copy of the annotated 1780 Poll Book, already on its website, provides a fantastic resource for this. The other two contested Newcastle elections, of 1774 and 1777, were the obvious choices for a pilot project. Over the winter we plan to digitise and transcribe those two poll books, and to look at who voted, when they voted, where they came from and whether particular kinds of voters supported particular candidates. We also want to situate these elections in their wider cultural contexts: collecting the printed matter published to comment on the candidates, investigating the electoral practices and rituals that surrounded the polls, recreating the music, and exploring the material culture from drinking vessels to banners, from cockades to chamber pots.

Dr Tom Schofield, from the University's Culture Lab, is designing a platform to bring together the polling data and the wider culture, allowing researchers and the public alike to discover more about the real nature of elections before the advent of mass democracy. Expect maps, analytical tools and visualisations as well as digital images of the original artefacts.

If you would like to be involved in the project, perhaps helping to check poll book transcriptions, please get in touch with me at m.o.grenby@ncl.ac.uk.

*Professor Matthew Grenby,
Director, Newcastle University Humanities Research Institute*

NEWS FROM OUR COLLECTIONS



*The Ord Finger Ring, photo courtesy of
Portable Antiquities Scheme*

struck in the 1250s. So the brooch was probably made between then and the 1270s, by removing the central portrait of the coin while keeping the outer ring that bears inscriptions on each side.

The gold finger ring pictured was bought from our funds. It was found at Ord in 2014 and has been dated to c.AD 1300–1500. The bezel is a rectangular pie-dish shape, which is raised around the glass or crystal inset and has crimping at the base. The shoulders of the hoop are decorated with incised patterns of crosshatching and arrows. This is a particularly attractive piece in remarkably good condition and I hope the members consider it worth purchasing!

*Lindsay Allason-Jones,
Keeper of Collections*

We are one of the few organisations in the region able to acquire artefacts which have gone through the Treasure Trove process, but our funds are limited. So it is particularly pleasing when the landowners and/or finders are willing to forego their reward and donate artefacts to us. This has happened recently with two items of medieval silver, a badge from Ford and a brooch made from a coin which was found at Hartburn. Thanks to Mr Gary Parkin and the Ford and Etal (Trustees) Ltd, and Mr Stuart Harbottle and Mr David Philipson for their generosity.

The Ford badge could have been produced any time in the 13th to the 15th centuries. It is in the shape of a bouge (a heraldic symbol of a yoke used for the carrying of water by pack horses). This was used by the Roos family of Helmsley during the 13th century, as well as the Lokey family.

The silver annular brooch from Hartburn was made from a Long Cross penny of Henry III,

GREAT NORTH EXPO

It was announced in October that Newcastle-Gateshead would host the Great Exhibition of the North in summer 2018. The Exhibition will focus on creative, cultural and design sectors in the city and the entire North of England. Plans include three walking circuits around Tyneside focusing on arts, design and innovation; an exhibition hub at GNM: Hancock (home to our society's collection), artistic and creative commissions; and a "summer camp" at Exhibition Park for families.

Much media coverage looks back to the 1929 NE Coast Exhibition in Exhibition Park, but Newcastle has a much longer history of holding major expos. The park in 1887 hosted the Royal Jubilee Exhibition of Mining and Engineering, of which the bandstand and perhaps the name are legacies. Possibly the first non-art exhibition was held in 1838 in the News Room (today's Central Arcade) to show 'philosophical instruments, models of inventions, products of national industry etc'. Exhibits included Edmondson's ticket machine and architectural models of the Greens' proposed viaducts at Byker and Willington, and Grey's Monument, then being built.

This was followed in 1840 by the much larger Polytechnic Exhibition, in premises on Blckett and Nelson Streets, linked by a temporary structure spanning High Friar Street. It was an wide-ranging display of items industrial, artistic, historical and more, and included a substantial number loaned by the Antiquaries, covering not only our usual interests in the classical and medieval north, but more eclectic items as well, such as a straw case with three Peruvian arrows. Could these still be tucked away in our collections?

A further exhibition was held in 1848, but on this occasion – were we huffed? were we not invited? – we supplied not a single item. But I hope that the Society and its members will take the opportunity to participate fully in 2018, to celebrate the North's heritage and our part in defining that heritage. Members' suggestions for 2018 activities would be very welcome.

John Griffiths



The Lady Mayoress Stirs the Pudding in 1929, from Northumbria's Spacious Year by Sir Arthur Lambert

MONTHLY MEETINGS

May 2016

Greg Finch spoke on Owners and Agents; managing a large lead business in the 18th century North East. He explained that around thirty volunteers had been working on the archives of the lead-mining industry in Hexhamshire and Allendale over several years, and were still continuing despite the formal end of the HLF grant-funded Dukesfield project a year ago. They had transcribed 1.6m words, with more to come, concerning the industry between 1650 and 1850. All the transcriptions were on the Dukesfield Documents website, with links to the original documents and explanations of the context.

In the 1660s, Sir William Blckett had around £1800 available for investment, and used it to buy up lead-mining leases in Allendale and Fallowfield. Although the return on lead investments was probably similar to that for coal, there were many fewer players so that he could rapidly come to dominate. His production and exports grew more than five-fold over twenty years, while other merchants stagnated. He had a geographically integrated large-scale business, involving a complex supply chain, with lead ore coming from Allendale and Fallowfield, to be smelted at Dukesfield Mill and the smaller Plankey Mill. The workforce must have been around a thousand.



Sir William Blackett I, attributed to John Riley. Picture courtesy Sir Hugh Blackett

Tyneside was in the vanguard of industrial management at the time, and the surviving letters of Blackett's second son, Michael, show that Blackett built a sophisticated management structure and reporting system to control his growing lead business. Michael was required to visit each of the agents at the different working sites each month, obtaining reports in a standardised form. His older brother Edward's neat ledgers enabled him to analyse unit costs and reach the decision to close Plankey Mill and build a new smelting mill much nearer the Fallowfield mine, near Acomb.

However, the second Sir William was as extravagant as he was commercially-minded. He left his son, the less able third Sir William, a difficult inheritance which was even more encumbered by the time of his own death in 1728. The family's accumulated debt of £77,000 was bequeathed to his nephew Walter Calverley Blackett. Fortunately he also inherited a very able cashier, Joseph Richmond, who became the bedrock of the Blackett business. Richmond combined management

discipline with sound strategic judgement over the thirty-five years in which he acted as Blackett's chief agent from his house in Newcastle's Pilgrim Street, adjacent to the grand Blackett mansion.

The structure of the business in the mid-eighteenth century was still recognisable as the one established by the first Sir William Blackett nearly a century earlier, and perhaps one of his most enduring legacies. If Blackett was the most important figure as founder of the family's fortunes, Richmond was arguably the second, quietly and thoroughly overseeing the restoration of the family's affairs after the troubled days of the early eighteenth century.

Greg can be contacted on gregpfinch@hotmail.com and the Dukesfield Documents website is at <http://www.dukesfield.org.uk/>

June 2016



One of the many objects found in the Tees at Piercebridge, picture courtesy Philippa Walton

Philippa Walton spoke about Gifts to the Gods: interpreting the Romano-British finds assemblage from the River Tees at Piercebridge. She explained that in the 1980s, divers Bob Middlemass and Rolfe Mitchinson had begun to retrieve objects from the river. They had now found 3,000 or more including 40 kilos of pottery and 1,374 coins. These were currently being processed as treasure at the British Museum, and the project was still ongoing.

Piercebridge was part of a rich Roman area, close to the Iron Age settlement of

Stanwick, and on the important river crossing of Dere St over the Tees. However, there was no evidence for an early Roman fort at the site, though there was an official presence from the late second century onwards. The remains of a Roman fort from the later third century remained visible around the modern village. On the Tees' southern bank there was an elaborately decorated villa and bathhouse.

Some scholars had argued that the finds were rubbish deposited from the settlement, or washed down by flooding. Deposition was more likely to be deliberate, however, since many finds were bedded into an accretion of burnt organic material. Most came from close to an early Roman timber bridge, possibly with an altar. There were parallels in Roman London and Trier.

The bulk of the deposit dated from the late second and early third centuries, by which time the stone bridge further downstream was in use, and the old timber bridge might have become part of a religious area.

Many objects had religious significance, including curse tablets and small statues of Mars and Mercury, and items of military equipment. Two spearheads had been deliberately mutilated. Coinage might be appropriate for Mercury as god of trade. The coins' dates peaked in the reigns of Antoninus Pius, Septimius Severus, and Severus Alexander. The first two could be explained by military activity at the time, but the third seemed never to have been in Britain. The high proportion of silver denarii again suggested a military context. Many coins had been pierced, cut or bent, rare in Britain but known in other watery contexts. There were also a number of precious metal objects like rings.

The objects might be offerings to propitiate a river prone to sudden flooding, part of a rite of passage on the way to or from the dangerous Northern frontier, or a ritual associated with creation or maintenance of military identity. Indeed, they could be a mixture of all three.

Philippa can be contacted on philippa.walton@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

July 2016

David McGlade, Trail Manager for the Hadrian's Wall Path, spoke about Hadrian's Wall Path and the Roman Wall; your heritage in our hands. The idea of recreational long-distance paths, he explained, came originally from the United States, and the first British one (along the South Downs) was proposed by the National Parks Committee in 1931. The Hadrian's Wall Path had to wait until 1994 for approval, and was not finally opened until 2003. There were now over 3,000 km of national trail routes, but crucially, no requirement for State funding.

There had been protests and doubts about the Hadrian's Wall trail when it was first proposed, given the fragility of the landscape with archaeology beneath, and the interests of the farming community around it. An

alternative, of open access but no specific path, was proposed but fears were largely allayed by a submission to the Government by the relevant authorities in 1993, stating that 'All sections of the route will be managed and maintained to the highest of standards'. However, after generous funding to start with, in March 2003 the tap was turned off, and there was no money to implement the management plans. It took 18 months for the budget to be restored, and the effects were marked. The Path was now managed by a partnership, with funding from Natural England, but their finances were being squeezed and the budget had been reduced by close to 50% within the last five years.

The path was now maintained as greensward wherever possible, and there had been dozens of archaeological investigations with archaeological consultant Rachel Newman (appointed in 1996) heavily involved. Maintenance involved micro-management and leaflets and notices asking visitors to co-operate by avoiding pinch-points and not walking in single file. However, the increase in visitor numbers, increased popularity of winter walking, and much increased rainfall, were all taking their toll. The initial staff team of five was now down to David and a maintenance ranger. With no co-ordinator available it was not possible to make the best use of volunteers. Capital funding was going into projects like The Sill at Once Brewed, but it was far harder to obtain the necessary amount of revenue funding. 'Hard landscaping' might be the only solution in the future.

David can be contacted on David.McGlade@nnpa.org.uk. Individuals and organisations can donate to the upkeep of the Path via its website at <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrians-wall-path/donate>. David Breeze has also written a note for our website, explaining who and how to



The Infamous Dutch Bankers, press cutting courtesy David McGlade

lobby in Government for better funding for the Trail, see <http://www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk/index.php?pageId=743>

August 2016

Paul Gething spoke on Bradford Kaims, a prehistoric landscape. He explained that the excavation at this site, near Lucker in north Northumberland, was part of the Bamburgh Research Project. The prehistoric landscape included a series of burnt mounds – piles of burnt stones – which could be securely dated to periods between the early Neolithic to Bronze Ages, with a limited amount of Mesolithic material. In one area there seemed to be a continuous sequence from the immediate past back to the Neolithic.

The bog extended for about 16 kilometres, coming to a pinchpoint between two valleys, with lakes dotted throughout. With the rise and fall of the water table, the top 3 metres of peat had turned into a narrower band of mineralised clay, where they had found medieval and Roman-period pottery. Below this, the prehistoric landscape remained.

Mound 1, the first one excavated had proved to be a whole series of smaller burnt mounds, with at least five phases. It included an extensive timber platform, built from round-wood branches pegged into the upper peat layers. On its surface they found a timber paddle, asymmetrical in shape, perhaps one of a pair used for picking up heated stones. In Mound 2, on slightly higher ground, they had found a sandstone slab set on edge, at the head of a well-cut trough.

Were these vast amounts of burnt stone for heating sweat lodges, for brewing or for cooking? Experiments had shown that it was possible to brew a drinkable beer using barley, elderflower and heather in a trough of water heated with hot rocks, or cook surprisingly large joints of meat. But overall the site had few animal bones or artefacts, and so little clue about its purpose or inhabitants.

Paul can be contacted on gething1966@gmail.com, and full details of the excavations are on http://bamburghresearchproject.co.uk/?page_id=26.

September 2016



Our speaker Lewis Mates

Lewis Mates spoke about From Tyneside to Fratricide: north-easterners in the Spanish civil war. Around 4,500 people had gone to Spain from Britain, or had volunteered but been refused, he explained. Of the 2,500 or so International Brigaders, 120 came from the North East, along with some doctors supporting Spanish Medical Aid. Others had been unable to get to Spain, having been turned back by police or border officials.

Volunteers from the area were almost exclusively working class. The *Daily Mail* in particular had portrayed them as young men looking for adventure and employment, without much idea of politics, and some of their relatives had also suggested this, but this had been angrily refuted elsewhere in the press.

According to Lewis' analysis, the average age was 29, and a few had military experience from World War One.

Some but by no means all were long-term unemployed.

Only two came from Jarrow, perhaps because of the strong

Catholic presence in the town. There were also very few from the mining areas, perhaps because they lacked the contacts to enlist successfully. In terms of political affiliation, the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM) had a stronger presence than the Communist Party (CP) locally.

Around 30 from the region had died, and others had been captured. There were some very sad stories, and considerable anger against the CP for the lack of information given to the families. Family conflict over the issue could last years, for example over the death of Cliff, brother of miners' leader Will Lawther. Returning volunteers had often been inspired, but also psychologically and physically scarred. Another cost of the Spanish Civil War locally had been the loss of good militants, to the CP but perhaps even more to the NUWM.

In 1986, a tree was planted in the grounds of the Civic Centre as a permanent memorial. In November 2016 a memorial plaque was unveiled by the Lord Mayor, listing the names of the men from the North East who died with the International Brigade in Spain.

Lewis is the author of *The Spanish Civil War and the British Left*, published 2007 by Tauris. He can be contacted on lewis.mates@durham.ac.uk.

October 2016

Our annual Public Lecture at Newcastle University was given by historic landscape surveyor Nick Owen, on Alnwick, Rothley and Kirkharle – the three Northumberland landscapes of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. None of these landscapes remain as they were in Brown’s day, and Nick combined historic plans, photos of how they look now, and his own watercolours to explain and expand on the documentary material.

Brown’s early career, up to the age of 23, had been spent at Kirkharle where the owner was undertaking a massive programme of improvement, which would have been very good training for his later career. Once he moved south, he was soon remarkably successful; his work at Blenheim was worth £30m in today’s money, in construction costs and fees. He had an ability to play with our sense of perspective, making landscape pictures intended to be seen through the windows of the houses at the centre of the landscapes. He also liked to make divided views, with each view having a contrasted subject and character.



Nick Owen’s watercolour of Kirkharle as it would have been, looking east

Keeping control of these three Northern projects at such a distance from London was not easy for Brown, and he relied heavily on trusted foremen to supervise the work. All three of them involved the creation of river-lakes, and at Alnwick he worked with James Brindley, the canal engineer. The three Northumberland commissions were very different, with contrasting topographies and existing land-uses – wild moorland at Rothley, farmland at Alnwick, a formal landscape at Kirkharle. His solution for each was also different, responding to the particular capabilities of the site.

Nick can be contacted on nickowen20@gmail.com

DEATHS

Stephen Speak, 1953–2016



Steve expounding on the beach, picture courtesy Jane Speak

“Steve the Dig”, Steve Speak, was born in Lancashire. His parents soon moved to London, and then to the North-East when Steve was 11. As a teenager he joined one of Colin Burgess’s classes in prehistory at the Department of Adult Education, Newcastle University. He quickly gained excavation experience on Colin’s digs at Hetha Burn, Ell’s Knowe and Fenton Hill. By the age of 19 he was working as an archaeologist for the Nene Valley Research Committee’s excavations near Peterborough.

Between 1975 and 1978 Steve studied for a degree in Archaeology and Geology at Bristol University. His final year dissertation was on Scooped Settlements of the Border Region, reflecting his lifelong interest in the prehistoric archaeology of our region. He continued to excavate under Burgess in the summer months, assuming increasingly more responsible roles, at Kilellan Farm, Islay, and Meldon Bridge,

Peeblesshire, and was employed for three years (1978-81) to deal with the post-excavation work. The final excavation report on Meldon Bridge ran to 118 pages.

Steve was encouraged by Colin to take over the teaching of evening classes in archaeology at various places in Northumberland. Over the years he developed and gave classes in a wide variety of archaeological topics, for several different authorities, making many loyal friends throughout the region. His classes were informative, lively, and well-received.

From the early 1980s onwards, Steve worked with Paul Bidwell at Tyne & Wear Museums on the Romans, and was briefly curator at Arbeia in the 1990s. Steve progressed to the post of Senior Keeper of Field Archaeology and helped build up an archaeological team based in Jesmond Cemetery Gates. This carried out many important excavations in the region, including those in advance of opencast mining and housing developments north of Newcastle in 2002-4. These revealed the longevity and complexity of Iron Age settlement in lowland Northumberland. He retired early from TWM in 2009, after a diagnosis of an incurable heart condition.

Steve had many other interests too. His love of walking, and the hills and moors and prehistory of our region, led to him and his wife Jane becoming Voluntary Rangers for Northumberland National Park in 2002. He was a lifelong supporter of Newcastle United and of the RNLI, had a great interest in military aircraft, was a knowledgeable and enthusiastic amateur astronomer and enjoyed relaxing with friends over a pint of beer.

Gordon Moir

Geoffrey Briggs



Chillingham Castle, one of the many slides bequeathed by Geoff to the Antiquaries

Geoffrey Briggs, who died in the spring of this year at the age of 80, was a physical chemist who, like his dowsing brother Denis, had a long interest in medieval architecture. He had a very good eye for details, as shown in his *Archaeologia Aeliana* contributions on such subjects as Widdrington, Bolam and Corbridge. He also wrote a good general guide to Northumberland's medieval churches in 2002, as well as turning his AA papers into individual Guides to various churches; the one on St Andrews Bolam, dated 2003, remains on sale there today. He was a good example of the way in which that earlier generation, though amateur, could produce very professional archaeological and historical work.

Geoffrey's collection of slides, of buildings and places in Northumberland and elsewhere, has come as a bequest to the Society's library. In due course we will be looking for volunteers to help us scan and classify them – watch this space.

Richard Bailey and Denis Peel

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am always 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.

Copy deadline for the next edition is 12 May 2016. The mailing date will be 7 June. All inserts must be delivered to the Membership Administrator by 31 May. The Spring Mailing will be on 15 March, with inserts required by 1 March (two weeks before). In both cases, if you want an insert included, please 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.

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